

From the **Executive Director**

Earmarks and Transportation Funding

By **Victor Lindenheim**

*Executive Director,
Golden State Gateway Coalition*

“Earmarks” refer to federal funding allotments (or tax breaks) for specific projects requested by individual members of Congress.

Most earmarked money goes to worthy projects of great benefit to many constituents in a congressman’s district or state. Funding for a specific transportation project is a typical example of the good that can be delivered via earmarks.

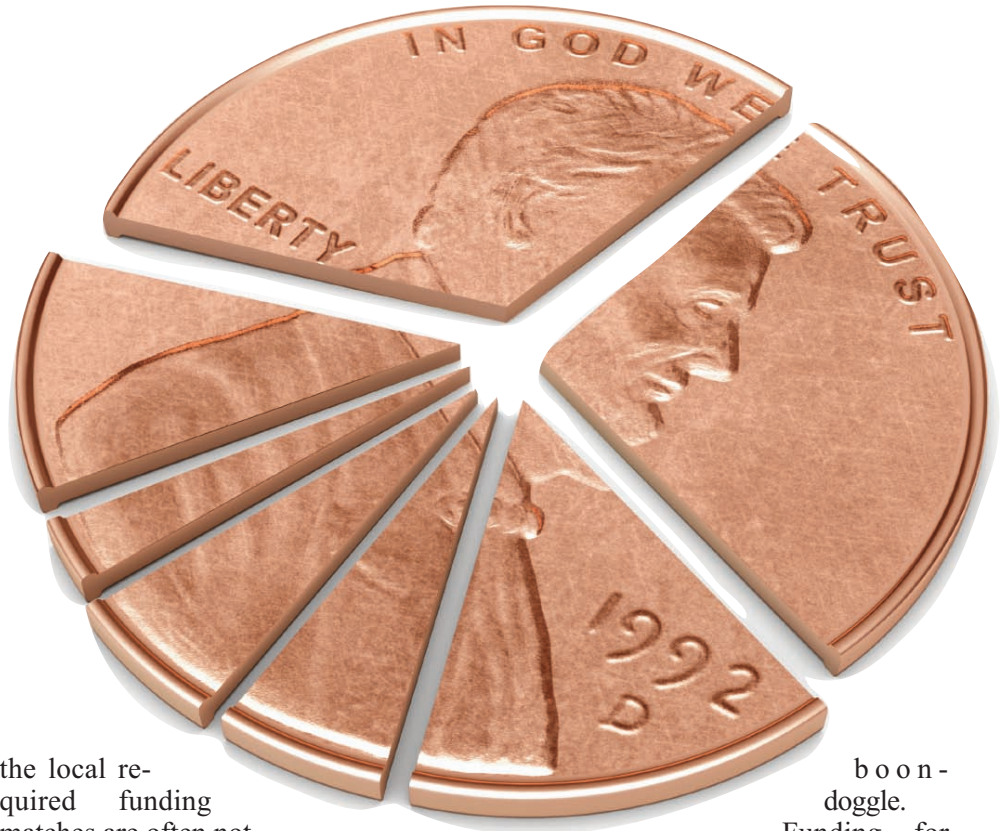


Victor Lindenheim

In northern Los Angeles County, think roadway improvements to Interstates 5 and 405, Highway 101 and the Cross Valley Connector in the Santa Clarita Valley.

On the surface, earmarks seem to work nicely when there is a strong economy, a seemingly steady funding source (e.g. federal gas tax revenue) and projects of broad public benefit, creating jobs and generating economic growth. Unfortunately, every news outlet and blog will remind you that this is not the case today.

The economy is generally weak and gas tax revenues are flat or declining. Certainly in transportation, the projects in need of federal funding are there, but



the local required funding matches are often not.

So, the mere appearance of a special deal for individual members of Congress does not sit well with many, even if it is for a worthwhile, beneficial roadway, bridge or transit system improvement. We’ve become jaded by reports of bridges to nowhere and make-work landscaping projects paid for by our hard-earned tax dollars.

In a competitive funding landscape one legislator’s justified priority may be viewed by another as a tax-dollar-wasting

boon-doggie.

Funding for roads, no matter how well-demonstrated the need and benefits, has become a victim of the “everybody needs to take a haircut” mentality.

The problem is, transportation, including roads and transit, has been taking a proverbial haircut for a long time, in both good times and bad. We spent the money on other things. Things that were deemed more important by those who had the power or the authority to

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The BIG Picture

With the Midterm Elections in the Rearview Mirror and a Persistently Challenging Economic Environment, What Does the Post-2010 Political Climate Mean for Transportation Improvement Efforts Like the Interstate 5 Gateway Improvement Project?

By **Tim Whyte**
Interchange Editor



‘From an economic development and construction point of view, it’s going to continue to be very difficult.’

Hunt Braly
Legislative Advocate

Kids, cover your eyes. We’re looking at The Big Picture. With the midterm elections of 2010 complete and legislators jockeying for position in Sacramento and Washington amid an economic climate that continues to pose challenges, what is the outlook for transportation?

In short: The big picture is fuzzy.

“From an economic development and construction point of view, it’s going to continue to be very difficult,” legislative advocate Hunt Braly told the Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce’s Transportation Committee in a recent special presentation on the transportation funding outlook. He was joined by political and transportation consultants Scott Wilk and Arthur Sohikian.

Braly said California’s political landscape over the next couple of years doesn’t make it look any easier for major infrastructure projects to be brought to fruition, considering the state’s budget woes and the Legislature’s increasingly limited flexibility in terms of raising taxes and fees without a two-thirds majority vote.

He said continuing political gridlock in Sacramento may hamper economic development efforts for now.

“It will be very difficult to get new projects approved, to build new roads,” Braly said, adding that the face of northern Los Angeles County’s representation will continue to change, as political reform and redistricting by an independent citizens commission are expected to alter the statewide political landscape.

“It’s hard to believe that whatever they come up with will not be more competitive, more competitive seats,” he said. “It could affect Santa Clarita because we are not enough of an area for one district.”

Another factor affecting change in California will be the new voter-approved open primary, in which the top two vote-getters will advance to the general election regardless of party affiliation. The goal of the new system is to produce a Legislature that is less likely to be hamstrung by partisan gridlock, and is more flexible and responsive.

The wild card in the open primary, Braly said, will be the approximately 20 percent of California voters who have declined to state a party affiliation.

“What are they going to do?”

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Scott Wilk told the Chamber Transportation Committee the Washington outlook is of course challenging, but maybe not as much as you might think.

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‘You will have to expect some federal cuts this year. Minimally, we know we’re going to get *some* kind of a haircut.’

— Arthur Sohikian
Transportation Consultant

Cover Story

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“I’m actually quite optimistic that we’re going to be able to function,” Wilk said of the new climate in Congress, where the Republicans established a new majority in the November election while the Democrats maintained a 51-47 edge in the House.

Despite widespread concern about the congressional ban on earmarks, Wilk said he doesn’t think earmarks will be gone permanently. “They are going to be renamed,” he said.

With the facelift Congress received in November, will we see gridlock or compromise?

Compromise will happen, Wilk said, but added he expects Congress to “punt” on many major issues until after the 2012 presidential election.

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Arthur Sohikian agreed compromise is on the horizon in the newly blended Congress, but added, “How all that trickles down to transportation is really hard to see right now.”

He said it’s vital for local leaders to take every available opportunity to remind their elected representatives that transportation is important, especially in a political environment where everyone is expecting their favorite programs or projects to endure some kind of

spending reduction.

“You will have to expect some federal cuts this year,” Sohikian said. “Minimally, we know we’re going to get *some* kind of haircut.”

But, he said, it’s cyclical. “I’ve been around transportation funding now for 20 years. It goes in cycles with the economy.”

One of the non-cyclical challenges, he said, is the fact that the federal gas tax is a flat amount per gallon, rather than a percentage.

“There’s just no ability to want to raise taxes and the highway trust fund is losing money as we speak,” Sohikian said, adding that modern cars’ increased fuel efficiency is actually translating into fewer dollars for highway improvement.

“We’re buying less gas, so we’re paying less tax,” he said. “Eighteen cents is the federal tax. That hasn’t changed since the early ’90s. I can’t imagine that anybody is going to bring it up in the next several years and say, ‘We need to increase the gas tax.’”

That’s the bad news for transportation funding. The good news? Infrastructure improvement is a popular notion among leaders of both parties — and where there’s a will...

“The good news for transportation is that typically pouring concrete is a bipartisan issue,” Sohikian said. “They still want to spend that dollar. The question is who



gets to spend more of it.”

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So where does Interstate 5 fit in the broader context of the post-2010 political climate?

“Like everyone else, we are carefully watching what’s happening in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.,” said Victor Lindenheim, executive director of the Golden State Gateway Coalition.

Fortunately, environmental clearance has been secured and funding sources have been identified for the first phase of the Interstate 5 Capacity Enhancement Project/Gateway Improvement Project.

“Construction of the new truck lanes could begin as soon as next year,” Lindenheim said.

But, he added, the Coalition

remains watchful of the “Big Picture.”

“Of course our top priority is the I-5 enhancement project, and we’ll be working to get everything in order for the next phases — including high occupancy vehicle lanes — that are scheduled to be built after the first truck lane phase,” Lindenheim said.

“But we are also mindful of the importance of not just this project but also all efforts to improve mobility and facilitate economic development through transportation improvements,” he said. “What happens with our elected leaders in Sacramento and Washington over the next couple of years can have a profound impact on the future of transportation — locally, regionally and nationally.”



Shake Hands With a New Type of Partnership

Report & Analysis

By Tony Harris

Chief Operating Officer,

Planning Company Associates

Traditionally, we think of business relationships between the public and private sector in the form of public-private partnerships (PPPs), contracted relationships between a government entity and one or more private companies. Generally, PPPs emerge from a government entity's request for proposals referring to a defined scope of work.

However, the demanding economic landscape we experience today has spurred the need for alternative symbiotic relationships between the public and private sectors.

Doug Failing, executive director of the Highway Program at Metro and former Caltrans District 7 director, has valuable insight into the situation.

"Right now," he says, "no one en-

'The demanding economic landscape we experience today has spurred the need for alternative symbiotic relationships between the public and private sectors.'

tity has the resources or decision-making authority to deliver alone. We need the private sector as much as they need us, which ultimately creates an ideal situation for public-private partnerships."

Los Angeles expects population growth of nearly 3 million people by 2040. Population growth, increased goods movement, and economic expansion have put a massive strain on the I-5 corridor in northern Los Angeles County. More than 200,000 vehicles depend on this stretch of highway

every day, 19,000 of which are trucks devoted to goods movement.

That's over 7 million trucks per year, 73 million vehicles per year total.

In response to this need, the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) allocated \$56 million of Measure R transportation funding to finance the construction of new truck and HOV lanes on I-5 between State Route 14 and Lyons Av-

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Partnerships

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enue/Pico Canyon Road. This funding commitment is specified in Metro's 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The plan is a 30-year blueprint for the future of transportation in Los Angeles County. According the MTA, new truck and HOV lanes for this corridor would increase road capacity by a staggering 50 percent.

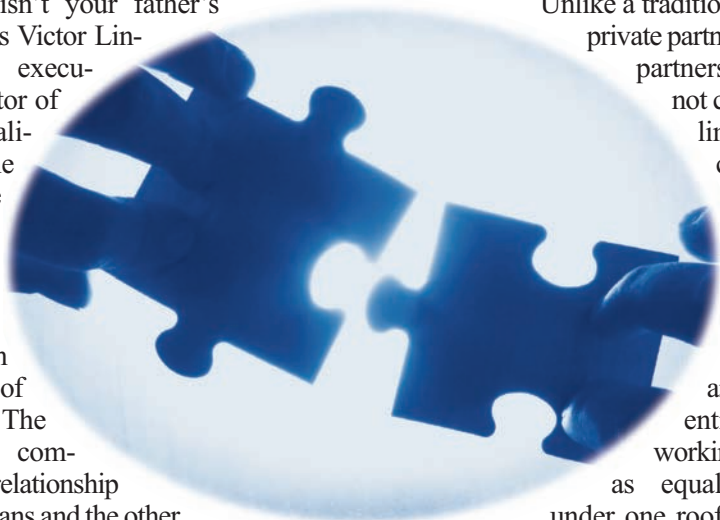
One of the challenges at hand is that the project is estimated to cost approximately \$543 million in an economic climate that is far from providing. This is where a new way of doing business steps in.

In order to ensure delivery of this much-needed project, a non-profit organization was formed in 2002 to forge a partnership between the private and public sector. The Golden State Gateway Coalition consists of 60 members — 40 are community and business leaders and 20 represent the public sector.

Acting as a non-profit transportation, education, and advocacy organization based in Santa Clarita, the Coalition is committed to ensure that the design, funding and construction of the I-5 HOV and truck lanes project takes place.

At the core of this partnership is the idea of doing business differently.

"This isn't your father's PPP," says Victor Lindenhein, executive director of the Coalition. "The private and public sectors have invested together in the future of the area. The business community's relationship with Caltrans and the other agencies is very natural, stemming from mutual interests — improved mobility, cleaner air and job creation."



Planning Company Associates' Team Leaders

Tony Harris and David Grannis lead Planning Company Associates, which is working with Caltrans, Metro and the Golden State Gateway Coalition to bring the I-5 Improvement Project to fruition.

Tony V. Harris, P.E.

Chief Operating Officer

Tony is one of the nation's most respected transportation professionals and has demonstrated his keen understanding of this complicated industry in many high-profile positions throughout his career.



Over the last 20 years, his public sector experience at the federal and state levels enabled him to develop consensus among diverse constituencies for various transportation projects. Prior to joining Planning Company Associates, Tony was chief deputy director for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) where he managed the daily multi-modal operations of the country's largest state transportation department. As a licensed civil engineer and experienced program manager, Tony brings creative and practical skills to projects.

David Grannis

Chief Executive Officer

David Grannis founded Planning Company Associates, Inc. to bring a strategic private-public partnership approach to solving critical urban infrastructure and land-use problems.



Building on his over twenty years of both public and private sector experience, Grannis specializes in developing and implementing public-private partnership resulting in approval, action and implementation of creative and effective solutions. A self-described "generalist", Grannis evaluates problems and designs comprehensive operational, safety and mobility solutions. He also oversees the programming, funding and implementation of those solutions, thus providing "start-to-finish" services for his clientele.

The cooperation of the private and public sectors to form a unique partnership signals a new path for providing for the community at large.

Unlike a traditional public-private partnership, this partnership was not created as a limited exchange of capital for specific services rendered. Rather, the public and private entities are working together as equal partners under one roof to ensure effective delivery of the project.

The Coalition works with L.A. Metro, Caltrans, the Southern Cali-

fornia Consensus Working Group, and other agencies to secure federal, state and local funding as the project moves forward. Already, the approved environmental document has been delivered in nearly half the expected time, demonstrating the efficiency and benefit of this distinctive way of doing business.

"A partnership like this engages the private and public sectors in a way that allows both parties to do what they do best," says Failing. "Both sides are vested in this. We are both committed to project delivery."

With over 30 years of experience in project delivery, Failing feels that this type of arrangement should last well into the future for projects that can benefit from it.

Projects outside of California are using similar partnerships to expedite the delivery of projects and ensure

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We'll Need Interstate 5 Even More When...

By Tim Whyte
Interchange Editor

In the 1990s and the first half of the past decade, growth in northern Los Angeles County was THE hot local political topic. The debates raged: How could the region's infrastructure catch up to — much less keep pace with — the area's growing economy and population?

And, how much growth would be allowed, and where?

Those debates may seem like ancient history now, as for the past few years the economic slowdown has put the brakes on growth.

In the context of the current and recent economic conditions, it may seem counter-intuitive to say, "One of the top 10 reasons to support improvements to Interstate 5 is to accommodate growth in commerce and population."

But, it's true.

"Santa Clarita is part of a vibrant, growing region and growth will continue to occur in our community," writes Paul



Brotzman, Santa Clarita's community development director, in an article explaining the joint Santa Clarita-Los Angeles County plan for the future, called, "One Valley, One Vision."

Experts agree: The recent economic slowdown is not the end of it all for Santa Clarita and the rest of northern Los Angeles County.

Locally, the area surrounding the Golden State Gateway segment of Interstate 5 is primed for both economic and residential growth.

Even though the commercial real estate market has been in the doldrums lately, in the coming years the region is expected to experience economic growth that will

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Top Ten Reasons to Support Improvements to Interstate 5

The Golden State Gateway Coalition believes there are many great reasons to favor I-5 improvements in Northern Los Angeles County, and these are the Top 10. We take a closer look at one in each issue of Interchange:

1. Relieve congestion and improve mobility (Spring 2008)
2. Public safety (Summer-Fall 2009)
3. To facilitate goods movement (Winter 2008)
4. Jobs and economic development (Winter 2009)
5. **THIS ISSUE:** To accommodate growth in commerce and population
6. Air quality and pollution abatement (Spring 2009)
7. Energy conservation (Summer 2008)
8. Homeland security and strategic importance (Winter 2010)
9. Facilitate access to basic services: health care, education, police and fire department (Summer 2010)
10. Improve the quality of life for Californians and everyone who uses the I-5

'According to the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp., the county's population is expected to increase by nearly 2 million from now through 2035.'

By the Numbers

■ **50,000** — The number of people, according to L.A. Metro, who use Los Angeles' Union Station each day.

■ **5,474** — The number of fatalities nationwide last year that were the result of "distracted driving" related to cell phone use and texting.

■ **18.4 cents** — The amount, per gallon, of the federal tax, which is not indexed for inflation and has remained unchanged since 1993.



Would you like more information about the Golden State Gateway Coalition?

If you are interested in supporting the Coalition's efforts to improve transportation in northern Los Angeles County, please visit our website:

www.goldenstategateway.org

QuickTrips

A roundup of North Los Angeles County transportation issues and roadway project updates

Sacramento: November Election Aftershocks

The November 2010 election included the passage of Propositions 22 and 26 in California. Proposition 22 protects funds designated for local purposes, including transportation; Proposition 26 redefines certain fees as taxes, requiring a two-thirds vote on such provisions (where a simple majority was previously required).

A gas tax swap was put into place in 2010 by the previous administration and Legislature to provide more flexibility with the revenue, while maintaining an equivalent revenue stream for transportation projects.

It was essentially a technical exchange to replace an existing tax at the gas pump that made no difference in the consumer price of gasoline.

The tax revenue generated by the replacement excise tax (17.3 cents per gal-

lon) provides substantial funding for the State Transportation Improvement Program, the State Highway Operations Protection Program, local street and road repairs, and public transit operations.

The tax swap also provides relief to the general fund by allocating revenues from the new excise tax on gas to pay for (bond) debt service, facilitating much-needed transportation bond sales.

In order to be retained, the fuel tax swap must be passed again in the legislature, this time with a two-thirds majority, as required by Proposition 26.

Why is this an issue?

If the fuel tax swap is not passed by legislators with a two-thirds majority, transportation funding for California highways, streets, roads and transit will be reduced approximately \$2.3 billion in the next year.

Obama Seeks \$53 Billion for High Speed Rail

President Barack Obama is calling for a six-year, \$53 billion spending plan for high-speed rail, as he seeks to use infrastructure spending to jump-start job creation.

An initial \$8 billion in spending is part of the budget plan Obama released in mid-February.

Although funding sources for the balance have not been specified, future federal budgets and transportation bills would likely be tapped for core support.

Obama's call for increased spending on high-speed rail projects is nothing new.

He's long seen the sector as an area for creating jobs and improving the nation's transportation system. His administration awarded \$10 billion in grants for high-speed rail projects last year, including \$2.3 billion for California's controversial project. Florida got \$1.25 billion for a rail line to connect Tampa to Orlando, eventually connecting with Miami.

Last summer, Obama had also laid out a plan to invest \$50 billion in high-speed rail, highways, bridges and airports, to be included in the first year of a six-year transportation bill reauthorization.

Transportation Highlighted in State of the Union

Investments in innovation, education and infrastructure, including transportation, were called for in President Barack Obama's Jan. 25 State of the Union address. He said:

"The third step in winning the future is rebuilding America. To attract new

businesses to our shores, we need the fastest, most reliable ways to move people, goods and information..."

He continued: "We will put more Americans to work repairing crumbling roads and bridges. We will make sure

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QuickTrips

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that this is fully paid for, attract private investment, and pick projects based on what's best for the economy, not politicians.”

The specific reference to roads and bridges, while encouraging, is not the whole story. There were repeated specific references to high-speed rail projects as a White House transportation priority: “Within 25 years, our goal is to give 80 percent of Americans access to high-speed rail, which could allow you to go places in half the time it takes to travel by car... as we speak, routes in California and the Midwest are already under way.”

New House Rules: Just Say No to Earmarks

Last year, House Democrats banned for-profit earmarks; this year, House Speaker John Boehner trumped them by banning all earmarks.

At the time, House GOP appropriators were not consulted, but they bit their tongues, not wanting to undercut their then minority leader.

Boehner, who never requested earmarks, went on to achieve a House ban on earmarks as Speaker.

To their credit, House Republicans have tried to come up with a conference-wide earmark reform plan, albeit unsuccessfully.

SCV Newspaper Supports I-5 Project

In an editorial published on Jan. 9, Santa Clarita's daily newspaper, The Signal, touted the benefits of the I-5 capacity enhancement project and applauded the Gateway Coalition's efforts to expedite it.

“The benefits to Santa Clarita Valley commuters who daily slog over the (Newhall) pass into Los Angeles are innumerable... avoiding the daily

sparrring for space with big rigs means a faster commute and safer road conditions. The air they breathe while heading to work every day will be less polluted with diesel particulates and other unhealthy pollutants. And their quality of life will improve as they are able to arrive home earlier to enjoy more time with their families.”

The Signal's editorial continued: “From the commerce point of view, the all-important I-5 north-south corridor — on which goods from the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach make their way northward, and with which aerospace industries in the Antelope Valley and elsewhere are connected to Los Angeles — will see improvement in the flow of products.”

Roundabouts Coming to Santa Clarita

Construction is anticipated to begin in 2012 on a traffic roundabout, located at the Newhall Avenue and Main Street intersection in front of Hart Park.

If built, it would be Santa Clarita's first. A second roundabout is under consideration at a busy Canyon Country intersection.

Roundabouts keep traffic moving continuously through an intersection at about 15 mph, according to Ian Pari, the city's senior traffic engineer.

A modern roundabout has a large center island that forces drivers to slow down and turn slightly to the right. More than 1,000 modern roundabouts have been built in the United States in the last 10 years.

Experts say that roundabouts save on fuel, get drivers to their destinations more quickly, and cut down on traffic collisions and injuries.

I-5 HOV Update: SR 118 to SR 170

This \$138 million project will build a high-occupancy vehicle

(HOV) lane in each direction along the Golden State Freeway (I-5) between the Hollywood Freeway (SR-170) and the Ronald Reagan Freeway (SR-118), a distance of 6.8 lane miles (3.4 miles in each direction).

It will also widen four undercrossings and reconstruct the connector to allow HOV-to-HOV transfers (known as a direct HOV connector) between I-5 HOV lanes and SR-170 HOV lanes. Additionally, Caltrans will replace sections of the concrete pavement.

Construction began in summer 2010, and is anticipated for completion in spring 2015.

I-405 and I-605 Projects Under Way

Construction is moving forward on three freeways comprising one of the busiest gateways between Los Angeles and Orange counties.

When completed in 2014, the so-called West County Connector project built by the Orange County Transportation Authority will create a seamless link between carpool lanes and ease rush-hour bottlenecks on the 405, 22, and 605 freeways.

The \$277 million project is similar in concept to what is being done at the I-5/SR 14 interchange in north Los Angeles County: carpool-to-carpool lane connectors involving construction of ramps and overpasses to traverse existing major freeways.

Rule XXI Suspension Aimed to Curb Spending

Intending to control spending, the House voted Jan. 5 to eliminate House Rule XXI, which made it a violation of House rules to fund highway, transit and safety programs at levels below the authorized level — the dollar amount set by the authorizing legislation.

In the past, the rule was established to prevent the reallocation of trans-

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Roundup

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portation dollars for other purposes. The current thinking behind the rule's suspension is to ensure that funding commitments are not made in excess of available funds.

CHSR and Metro to Buy LA's Union Station

In a local development, on Jan. 19, California's High Speed Rail Authority announced it is earmarking more than \$30 million for land acquisition

and related projects in the Los Angeles area, much of it expected to go toward buying Union Station.

The historic rail hub, and the 38-acre site it is on, which would be jointly purchased with L.A. Metro, is planned to be a major stop in the planned 800-mile statewide bullet train system.

According to Metro, 50,000 people a day use the station now.

In Brief...

Curb Your Enthusiasm: LA No Longer No. 1 In Traffic Congestion.

A new study shows that motorists in the Greater Los Angeles area in 2009

experienced fewer delays than other parts of the country.

Released on Jan. 20, the latest Annual Urban Mobility report from the Texas Transportation Institute states that Chicago and Washington, D.C., surpassed the Los Angeles area in the amount of time individual motorists were stuck in travel during peak periods.

Reported In The Washington Post.

"Distracted driving" as a result of cell phone use and texting behind the wheel led to 5,474 deaths last year — one in six of all traffic fatalities, the federal government said. Auto accidents caused by cell phones and texting also led to 448,000 injuries.

Top 10

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bring with it new commercial development and office space — and will thus create jobs and new demands for housing.

And, growth in other areas will contribute to the greater need for capacity improvements on Interstate 5 as well. Similar economic engines are expected to get started in the coming years in southern Kern County.

In other words, as those projects come on line, the need for capacity on I-5 will be greater than it is now.

Victor Lindenheim, executive director of the Golden State Gateway Coalition, said

change is certainly on the way.

"The City of Santa Clarita and the business community, through the recently formed Santa Clarita Economic Development Corp., are working aggressively to obtain and attract commercial development and jobs," Lindenheim said. "Change will come, and when it does, things will start to happen very quickly."

Considering the fact that I-5 capacity enhancements would be needed even if no additional growth were to occur, it's clear that future growth in population and commerce will further contribute to the need for expanded freeway capacity.

It's not just in the northern Los Angeles County region, either. According to the Los

Angeles County Economic Development Corp., the county's population is expected to increase by nearly 2 million from now through 2035.

Airport passenger and cargo traffic is expected to double in the next 20 years, and seaport traffic is expected to triple.

I-5 is of course a major artery for cargo being transported between Los Angeles and points north.

It's expected that by 2030 approximately 40 percent of all I-5 trips south of Magic Mountain Parkway will be "through trips" — vehicles that are "just passing through" on their way to destinations outside northern Los Angeles County.

The overall traffic on I-5 through the Santa Clarita Valley in 2030 is expected to top 318,000 average daily vehicle trips, up from an estimated 199,000 in 2006.

The I-5 already carries more than 7 million truck trips per year in northern Los Angeles County — a number that is only expected to increase as the seaport-generated cargo traffic continues to grow.

In other words: While things have slowed down in the past few years, it's clear that regional economic and population growth will continue to contribute to the need for an Interstate 5 that is built to handle the additional car and truck trips that will accompany that growth.

PPP

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public needs are met.

For example, the CREATE light rail program in Detroit, the Indianapolis Bicycle and Pedestrian Network, the Appalachian Regional Short-Line Rail Project, the Port of Gulfport Rail Improvement Project in Mississippi, and several other proj-

ects were selected for discretionary grant money by the Obama administration because of their participation with the private sector.

Building from this opportunity, U.S. Department of Transportation officials have strongly emphasized these types of cooperative partnership as a key goal for the second Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery discretionary grant program last summer.

With the advent of these innovative

types of partnerships, bolstering the environmental and economic health of our communities can be achieved by taking new paths. In the case of the Golden State Gateway Coalition, a dearth of funding spurred creativity.

Now, public and private sector entities are crossing previously impassable boundaries with ease with the end goal of imparting a sustainable infrastructure onto growing communities.

McKim Brings Experience to Caltrans Helm

Cindy McKim *knows* Caltrans. In her more than 30 years of experience with the California Department of Transportation, McKim has served in a series of high-profile positions with ever-increasing levels of responsibility.

McKim was appointed as the director of the California Department of Transportation on May 27, 2010. As director, McKim is responsible for the maintenance and operations of more than 50,000 lane miles of roadway in the state highway system, a budget of more than \$13.8 billion, and providing leadership to more than 22,000 employees.

The experienced leader knows how much transportation means to Californians, not only in terms of getting from one place to another but also in terms of economic development.

“From one end of the state to the other, transportation projects are providing jobs and improving mobility for people and businesses in California,” McKim said in



Caltrans photo

Cindy McKim

Transportation Leader Profile

This issue:

Cindy McKim *Caltrans Director*

January as Caltrans announced the California Transportation Commission’s allocation of \$1 billion to 107 transportation projects throughout the state.

Victor Lindenheim, executive director of the Golden State Gateway Coalition, said McKim’s extensive knowledge of California’s transportation needs bodes well for projects like the Interstate 5 Capacity Enhancement Project/Gateway Improvement Project.

“Ms. McKim gets it,” Lindenheim said. “She has a great big-picture view of not only Caltrans’ operations and procedures, but also the transportation needs of our vast state.”

Prior to her appointment as Caltrans director, McKim served as the chief deputy director, a role in which she advised and assisted the director regarding

all aspects of Caltrans policy and operation.

McKim’s other roles with Caltrans have included chief financial officer; deputy director for rail, transportation and aeronautics; deputy director for policy and administration; assistant director of the Administrative Service Center; Accounting Division chief; Rail Division chief; Mass Transportation Division chief; and assistant director for management and policy planning.

As CFO, McKim was responsible for Caltrans’ financial management and policy, including oversight of an annual operating budget of nearly \$13.8 billion. She was also responsible for programming state and federal transportation funds.

As division chief for accounting and assistant director of the Administrative Service Center, McKim was responsible for implementing business process improvements that streamlined delivery of administrative services.

McKim earned her bachelor’s degree from the University of San Francisco. She also holds a certificate in public administration from the California State University, Sacramento.

Source for biographical information: Caltrans.

Lindenheim

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make that determination.

What are the alternatives to earmarks?

One alternative to earmarks would be distribution by formula — a percentage of a fixed, ostensibly smaller total funding allotment based on factors to be determined, going to each state or political subdivision (e.g. congressional districts?).

Another alternative suggested would be distribution through the agency or agencies with administrative oversight authority (e.g. DOT?). These alternatives, some would argue, would not be immune to congressional influence and

tinkering. The result would be earmarking by a different name.

A colleague of mine recently noted that elimination of federal earmarks by itself would not necessarily reduce spending. Setting priorities is one way to reduce spending and setting priorities for any organization is hard.

Admittedly, agreeing on project priorities among 535 federal legislators is even harder, bordering on the impossible. But, it has been done. And the earmarking process, I believe, can be improved and adapted to current realities. Dealing with egregiously conflicting political philosophies is another matter altogether, an issue I won’t even attempt to address. But, as has been said, transportation needs transcend politics — highways aren’t

red or blue.

Earmarks, done with transparency and based on merit, are good. There are certainly enough examples of that. The examples of earmark abuses, although far less numerous, are ample enough and cited often enough to give traction to the idea of banning them altogether in the House of Representatives.

So now the engine, instead of being repaired, is being thrown out with the oil change, so to speak.

In the context of transportation funding, earmarks are examples of a good idea gone wrong. I hope that Plan B, whatever that turns out to be, works out better for the nation, for California and for northern Los Angeles County.

From the **Chairman**

Keeping a Steady Course in a Changing Environment

By **Tom DiPrima**

Chairman,

Golden State Gateway Coalition

The “big picture” described in this current issue of *Interchange* looks at how political shifts, economics and government policy priorities could affect transportation funding.

It is good and necessary to be aware

of these changes and to understand their implications — especially if you are running a business and working to improve roadway transportation.

We at the Golden State Gateway Coalition remain committed to ensuring that funding for the I-5 Capacity Enhancement Project/Gateway Improvement Project remains intact.

Our mission is clear and our resolve is firm. Now, we are rapidly moving toward the goal line: a 2012 groundbreaking for new I-5 truck lanes in northern Los Angeles County.

Over the years our members have contributed and shown support in a variety of ways. You have attended our transportation forums. You have written letters. You have given your name and your company’s name to

our roster of supporters. And, of course, you have made financial investments in the organization.

Your past contributions and investments of time and money have made a difference. That is how we maintained and grew the organization into the effective and influential transportation advocate it has become.

And that is how we got to where we are today — partnered with Caltrans and Metro, planning for the day the advocacy stops and the construction starts.

Thank you for your support and continued investment in the Coalition.

Don’t stop now. We are on the threshold of achieving something of great benefit to many people: truck lanes added to Interstate 5 that will relieve traffic congestion, improve highway safety and help clean up the air. Let’s stay the course together and get this done.

Please renew your Gateway Coalition membership today!



Tom DiPrima



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