

# Interchange



News and updates from a coalition of community and business leaders focused on the health and vitality of California's transportation backbone — Interstate 5

Volume 10, No. 1

Spring 2012

## A Road Map for the Future

### Also Inside

From the Executive Director: Realistic Optimism for 2012 — Page 2

Transportation Leader Profile: Memorial Tribute to Larry Zarian — Page 5

Coalition & Partners Celebrate Successes — Page 6

The Case for I-5: Roundup of the Top 10 — Page 10

From the Chairman: Significant Progress in 2011, More Ahead in 2012 — Page 12



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**SCAG Releases Draft of Regional Transportation Plan —  
What Does It Mean for Mobility in the Southland?**

Cover Story, Page 3

# An Optimistic Realist: The State of L.A. County Transportation in 2012

By Victor Lindenheim  
Executive Director,  
Golden State Gateway Coalition

With a nod to Larry David, those of us who are professional transportation advocates know very well how to curb our enthusiasm. On the other hand, we also know when to moderate our pessimism.

When it comes to transportation advocacy in 2012, I am an optimistic realist. Over the past nine years of working with a creative and tenacious team to move the I-5 Gateway Improvement Project forward, we have seen the economy go up and go down. We have seen transportation funding flow; then dry up, only to bubble up again.



**Victor Lindenheim**

Now, it seems like construction cranes have reappeared along Los Angeles transportation corridors like so many wingless steel phoenixes (e.g. I-5, SR 14, SR 170, SR 138, I-405) and progress continues. The tenacity and creativity of our elected officials, local and state transportation agencies, the Gateway Coalition, a supportive public and many other fine organizations has been rewarded, producing results where expectations had been lowered.

The way I see it, there will be some



more tough sledding in 2012, but ultimately, I believe it will turn out OK for transportation in north L.A. County and Southern California.

In Washington, the struggle continues with efforts to pass a national surface transportation bill. The current program reflects multiple extensions of the bill signed by President Bush in August 2005. The good news is that federal transportation funding allocations continue to dribble out, albeit at levels far below what is really needed to properly maintain and expand our nation's infrastructure.

Unfortunately, the Highway Transportation Fund (HTF) — where our federal gasoline tax dollars go — is not in good shape. In fact, the HTF, the main source for federal transportation dollars, is projected to be insolvent by the end of 2012. Yet, there are ARRA funds still

being allotted for projects, there is bipartisan agreement on the need for a dramatic TIFIA (low-cost loan) program expansion, and implementation of a fourth TIGER transportation grant program.

The silver lining here, as I alluded earlier, is that substantial investment of public funds by Caltrans and Metro in L.A. County infrastructure continues, as it should. When local projects are expedited, local jobs are created, local traffic congestion is mitigated and local safety is improved. Measure R seems to be working. Kudos all around.

In a parallel transportation-related recent development, it has been reported that Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler are all profitable and looking at a wave of substantial new hiring. Let's hope that the rest of the U.S. economy follows suit.

Here's to optimism in 2012!

'Professional transportation advocates know very well how to curb our enthusiasm. On the other hand, we also know when to moderate our pessimism. As I see it, there will be some more tough sledding in 2012, but ultimately it will turn out OK for transportation in north L.A. County and Southern California.'



# Beyond Mobility

## SCAG's Draft Regional Transportation Plan Outlines the Southland's Future Mobility and Further Envisions Housing and Land Use Policies Designed to Promote Sustainable Communities

By **Tim Whyte**  
*Interchange Editor*

With apologies to the memories of Oldsmobile, this is not your father's transportation plan: The Southern California Association of Governments has released its Draft 2012 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy for public review, and the new plan goes well beyond plotting new roads and bus service.

It's the "Sustainable Communities Strategy" part of it that represents the 21st century approach to transportation planning. This RTP not only tackles issues of mobility, but also recognizes that mobility is intertwined with other issues that impact quality of life, including land use, housing and environmental quality.

All of it is wrapped up in a package designed to promote sustainability — communities that will be livable both in the short term and the long one.

SCAG, the nation's largest metropolitan planning organization, represents six counties, 191 cities and more than 18 million residents, including everyone who calls northern Los Angeles County home.

The organization released the draft RTP in November, and as of Interchange press time the draft is undergoing a series of public review workshops designed to gather citizen input before the plan is finalized later this year.

SCAG is required by law to update the Southern California Regional Transportation Plan every four years.

"The 2012 draft plan differs from past plans because it includes development of a Sustainable Communities Strategy," SCAG said in a prepared statement announcing the 230-page plan's release. "The RTP/SCS incorporates land-use and housing policies to meet the greenhouse gas emissions targets established by the



California Air Resource Board (CARB) for 2020 (8 percent reduction) and 2035 (13 percent reduction)."

The draft plan presents housing and transportation options that encourage creation and revitalization of communities that are bike and pedestrian friendly, affordable and sustainable.

"This will result in people spending less time in their cars and

**See COVER STORY, page 4**

# 01 VISION



## Towards a Sustainable Future

SCAG has prepared and adopted Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) since 1990. Throughout this history, SCAG has considered the RTP primarily as an investment in the six-county (Inland, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura) region's mobility. The RTP identifies critical future projects and improvements in order to reduce traffic and generally make it easier to get around. As the process has evolved and RTPs have been updated, we have gradually broadened our viewpoint, particularly by placing air quality considerations in the plan. This evolution has now culminated in the 2012 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), which has mobility as an important component of a much larger picture that incorporates added emphasis on sustainability and integrated planning. The vision that RTP/SCS encompasses three principles as the key to our region's future: mobility, economy, and sustainability.

The RTP/SCS is an investment in the region's future well-being through 2050. It contains projects, policies, and strategies that will address a range of positive outcomes when implemented. In one sense, the RTP is an accounting of revenues and expenditures. It identifies our available and reasonably foreseeable sources of funding, and checks that funding to multi-modal transportation projects that benefit our communities. The RTP/SCS strategies and policies are designed to assure that, in the greatest extent possible, the money we spend has the best chance of achieving our shared objectives.

In a broader sense, the RTP/SCS is a blueprint for improving the quality of life for our residents by making the best transportation and land-use choices for the future and supporting those choices with wise investments. The RTP/SCS will result in more and better travel choices as well as safer, secure, and efficient transportation systems that provide improved access to opportunities, such as jobs, education, and healthcare for our residents. Furthermore, the RTP/SCS will create jobs, assure our region's economic competitiveness through strategic investments in our goods movement system, and improve our personal and health outcomes for 22 million residents by 2050.

### Our Vision – Mobility, Economy, Sustainability

Our vision is built upon themes regional leaders discussed at the 2011 General Assembly. The vision has been further shaped by an expert considered level of outreach and direct

To download a copy of the 230-page draft RTP and obtain information on workshops leading to the plan's completion, visit:

[www.scag.ca.gov](http://www.scag.ca.gov)

**SCAG's Draft Regional Transportation Plan includes not only a broad vision of the Southland's transportation future, but also detailed analysis of steps that may be taken to accomplish that vision.**

## Cover Story

Continued from page 3

thereby reducing traffic congestion and pollution and benefiting from a healthier environment," SCAG's statement said.

SCAG President and Santa Monica City Council Member Pam O'Connor said the plan is a transformative one.

"California has the second highest unemployment rate in the nation with 2.1 million unemployed," O'Connor said. "This plan proposes solid investment in transportation projects that aids in stimulating the economy with the creation of between 150,000 to 180,000

jobs annually. In addition, it capitalizes on Southern California's position as the nation's international trade and manufacturing center."

So, what does all this mean for the Interstate 5 North Los Angeles County Improvement Project?

Victor Lindenheim, the Coalition's executive director, said the most important thing for the Coalition to monitor is any possible impacts the plan could have on the timing of funding for the I-5 project.

"The Gateway Coalition's challenge will be to ensure that the funds committed to the I-5 project in north L.A. County are available when they are



needed," Lindenheim said. "For the second phase of the project, the new carpool lanes and existing pavement rehabil-

itation, that means the money needs to be there in 2014, when construction is scheduled to begin."

**'The Gateway Coalition's challenge will be to ensure that the funds committed to the I-5 project in north L.A. County are available when they are needed.'**

**— Victor Lindenheim**

*Executive Director, Golden State Gateway Coalition*

# Zarian Remembered for Lifetime of Service

Former Glendale Mayor,  
Metro Board Member  
Built 30-Year Record of  
Transportation Advocacy

Larry Zarian, the charismatic former Glendale mayor and board member of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, is being remembered throughout the state for his lifetime of public service, particularly in the area of transportation.

Zarian died Oct. 13 at age 73.

“Larry was especially beloved in his home community of Glendale, but his influence extended well beyond that,” said Victor Lindenheim, executive director of the Golden State Gateway Coalition. “He was not only a friend to our organization, but he was a tireless advocate of improving mobility for all Californians.”

In a fitting tribute to Zarian’s role in improving transportation for the public, the City of Glendale in November honored his memory by renaming the Glendale Transportation Center: It’s now the Larry Zarian Transportation Center.

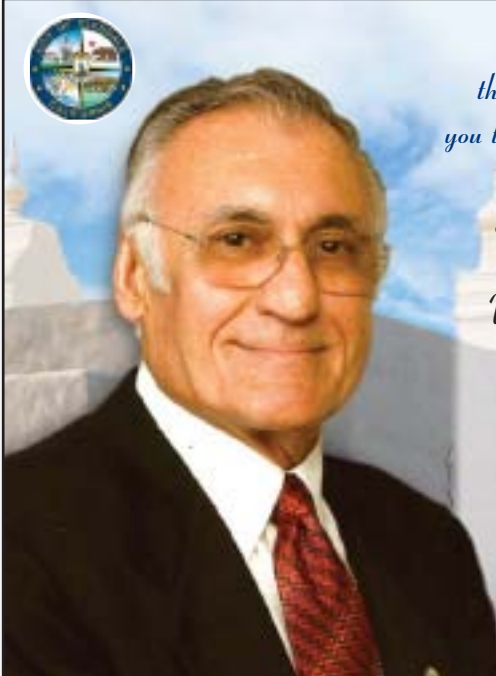


*The following is an excerpt from a statement released by the City of Glendale upon Zarian’s passing:*

Larry Zarian was born in 1937 and was a California resident for over five decades. He was first elected to the Glendale City Council in 1983, serving for a total of 16 years, including four terms as Glendale’s Mayor.

Larry’s lifelong philosophy — that one should give back to one’s community — has earned him numerous recognitions throughout his career. His public service was recognized by such elected officials as President Ronald Reagan, President George Bush, Gov. George Deukmejian, Gov. Pete Wilson and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

He was one of Southern California’s most respected leaders and had an ex-



*The Mayor and City Council of  
the City of Glendale cordially invites  
you to attend a dedication ceremony honoring*

## *Larry Zarian*

*Wednesday, November 30, 2011*

*3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.*

*Glendale Transportation Center  
400 West Cerritos Ave.  
Glendale, California*

Light refreshments will be served  
Please RSVP to:  
ZarianDedication@ci.glendale.ca.us

## Transportation Leader Profile

*This issue, in memoriam:*

**Larry Zarian**  
*Former Glendale Mayor*

tensive background serving on local and national levels in the area of transportation, highways and airports, dating over a period of 30 years.

He served on the National Highway Safety Commission for four years, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority for six years, and more recently was a member of the State of California’s Transportation Commission. During his tenure on the Glendale City Council, he was instrumental in the start-up of the City’s own public transportation system, the Bee-line buses.

In addition to his efforts toward improving Glendale’s public transportation system, Larry was instrumental in

Several ceremonies were held in Glendale honoring the memory of former Glendale Mayor Larry Zarian, a respected transportation advocate and six-year board member of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.



obtaining the funding to renovate Glendale’s Transportation Center and the restoration and certification of Deukmejian Park as a Wilderness area.

At the time of his passing, Larry was one of the most popular and respected cable talk show hosts and producers in the Southern California area.

Larry is survived by three sons: Vincent, Gregory and Lawrence, a daughter-in-law, and two grandsons.



# Hitting the Roads

## New Construction and Technology Will Help Keep Californians on the Go

*Courtesy of the Automobile Club of Southern California.*

California's roads and highways face a crisis. As the economy slowly improves, more people are using roads and taking more trips, freight traffic is growing as California businesses compete in the global economy, traffic congestion is on the rise, the quality of our roads is deteriorating, and new highway construction continues to lag behind population growth.

Almost all trips in Southern California use our highway and arterial network, which hosts private vehicles, buses, bicyclists and pedestrians. Everyone is a road user, so we must increase the capacity of our roads and highways and improve their performance. We can do this by:

- Building more roads and widening existing ones where possible.
- Using technology to better manage traffic flow on freeways and major streets.
- Committing additional resources to ensure that roads and bridges are adequately maintained and repaired.
- Providing alternatives to driving so more people can make travel choices that alleviate congestion.

### Growing Pains

Between 1965 and 2007, California's highway capacity increased by 35 percent, but our population increased by nearly 130 percent, the number of registered vehicles by 138 percent, and our annual vehicle miles traveled by over 300 percent. Over this same period, California's roads and bridges plummeted from a national model to among the worst in the country. Important strides have been made since then, but much more work remains to be done.

### Technology to the Rescue

New technologies show great promise to improve road use. The following ap-



The performance and condition of California's roads and freeways will need to improve in order to stand up to the challenges of increased traffic and goods movement.

proaches use a combination of existing and emerging technologies to move cars more efficiently and safely on our roads:

- **Improved Traffic Signals.** Traffic speeds can be increased with coordinated traffic signals, which use data provided by in-pavement and overhead sensors, shared traffic information, and direct commands from traffic management engineers.
- **Better Incident Management.** Pavement sensors, closed-circuit video cameras, roving tow-truck patrols, and better coordination among traffic and safety agencies can quickly detect and respond to accidents, blocked lanes and other incidents that cause nearly half of congestion on Southern California freeways.
- **Increased Driver Information.** Data collected by thousands of traffic sensors, highway-monitoring cameras, traffic engineers, law enforcement, media helicopters, and mobile phones can provide drivers with current information on road and traffic conditions via the radio and the Internet. In addition, message signs on freeways and major streets can provide accurate, detailed reports on traffic conditions. This information can be combined with computer mapping and satellite-based navigation systems to give drivers

alternatives to congested roadways.

Many of these congestion-busting strategies are made possible by computerized traffic management centers. TMCs run by Caltrans and some large cities collect traffic and highway performance information from various sources and use it to optimize traffic flow. Engineers at TMCs dispatch tow trucks and emergency vehicles to accident scenes, change traffic signals and ramp meters, and provide advice to drivers via changeable message signs and radio traffic reports.

### HOVs and HOTs

High-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes, more popularly known as carpool lanes, are commonplace on Southern California freeways. There are about 1,500 miles of carpool lanes either operational or under construction in California and, if the system is built as planned, there will be more than 1,200 miles added of both HOV and High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes in the future. HOV lanes usually move more people than adjacent lanes, and recent surveys indicate most drivers support completion of the region's HOV lane network.

HOT lanes allow drivers to pay a fee, **See ROADS, page 11**

## By the Numbers

■ **800,000** — The number of jobs lost throughout Southern California during the Great Recession.

■ **4 million** — The number by which the Southern California region's population is expected to grow by 2035.

■ **446 million** — The number of miles driven each day throughout Southern California.

— Source: SCAG



### 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](http://www.goldenstategateway.org)

## QuickTrips

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



## City Breaks Ground on Lyons Landscaping

The City of Santa Clarita broke ground in November for its portion of a \$900,000, 3-acre Lyons Avenue/I-5 landscaping project being done in cooperation with Los Angeles County.

“The City, the County and the West Ranch Town Council all strongly agree the Lyons/I-

5 corridor represents a significant gateway into our communities,” Santa Clarita Mayor Laurie Ender said at the groundbreaking ceremony. “These landscape enhancements will distinguish this key entry point into the City.”

— Artist rendering courtesy of the City of Santa Clarita.

## City Stats: Local Traffic Collision Rate Drops

The City of Santa Clarita reports the rate of local traffic collisions relative to population has been declining. It's not possible to conclude what has caused the decrease, but Senior Traffic Engineer Ian Pari says the city has implemented several measures that tend to help reduce numbers of traffic collisions, including:

- Installation of protected left-turns (red arrows) at key intersections.
- Red-light photo-enforcement cameras.
- Ongoing enforcement by Sheriff's Department.
- Analysis of high-accident locations every six months. If an intersection has a high rate of



accidents, the City reviews to determine if any improvements are appropriate.

— Chart courtesy City of Santa Clarita.

## Update Your Address Books! Coalition Offices Have Moved

The Coalition moved its office in November, to reduce fixed costs and increase efficiency. Our new physical address is:

Golden State Gateway Coalition, 25030 Avenue Tibbitts, Suite K, Valencia, CA 91355.

The Coalition's phone number is 661-775-

0455 and its fax number is 661-295-5908. Our website URL remains the same:

[www.goldenstategateway.org](http://www.goldenstategateway.org)

Please note that our fax number has changed; our telephone number remains the same.



# Point by Point, We've Made the Case for I-5

By **Tim Whyte**  
*Interchange Editor*

Several years ago, as we planned the content for future issues of “Interchange,” we decided to include in each issue a “closer look” at one of the “Top 10 Reasons to Support Improvements to Interstate 5.”

The reasons are plentiful — and these 10 were the ones that seemed most important to “The Case for I-5.” They still are.

They appear at right in no particular order. Most of them affect not only motorists who use Interstate 5 every day, but also literally every person who lives in northern Los Angeles County.

And, some have impacts reaching well beyond the north L.A. County region. For example, the improvements for goods movement and economic benefits will reach well beyond the borders of Los Angeles County and arguably will benefit the entire West Coast and even the nation.

Some of the Top 10 are obvious and direct impacts of any highway improvement project. Relieving congestion and improving mobility — shortening commute times for people who sit in traffic now — are



likely to be the first things that come to mind. Identifying those as positive impacts of a freeway improvement project is akin to swinging at a waist-high fastball.

Others are less obvious, but no less impactful. For example, if the commuters are spending less time in traffic, then that means the lanes are less likely to be jammed in the event of an emergency.

It also means there are fewer vehicles sitting still, spewing pollutants into the air while not moving. Smoother-flowing traffic equals better air quality, and it also means improved energy efficiency.

And, it means more productive hours for workers, and improved efficiency for businesses, which leads to a stronger economy... You get the idea: This is one compelling Top 10 list, and if you haven't taken a good look at it already, we encourage you to check it out in our past issues of “Interchange.”

## 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 took a closer look at each of them in past issues 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. To accommodate growth in commerce and population (*Spring 2011*)
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 (*Summer 2011*)

You can read a closer look at any of the 'Top 10' by viewing back issues of Interchange on the Golden State Gateway Coalition website:

[www.goldenstategateway.org](http://www.goldenstategateway.org)

# Council of Governments Hosts Transportation Summit

The Main Ballroom of the Airtel Plaza Hotel in Van Nuys was packed Nov. 10 as more than 300 people showed up to share their ideas about the future of transportation in north Los Angeles County. From congressmen to county supervisors; from visioning experts to political mavens; all were there — and more miraculously, most were given the opportunity to speak.

The lead organization is the recently formed San Fernando Valley Council of Governments, whose executive director, Bob Scott, has worked with the Golden State Gateway Coalition to develop a framework for economic development along the Interstate 5 corridor in north L.A. County.

The Golden State Gateway Coalition was represented by Executive Director Victor Lindenheim, who provided an overview of the I-5 north capacity enhancement project.

Lindenheim said: “It was encouraging to see such a large turnout for a first-time transportation forum. Congratulations to Bob Scott and his



The recently formed San Fernando Valley Council of Governments drew more than 300 people to its summit on the future of transportation in northern Los Angeles County. Photo courtesy SFVCOG.

colleagues for a splendid program and a substantial turnout.”

Santa Clarita was well-represented, with its own cadre of community leaders at the Gateway Coalition table, including current and former mayors Laurie Ender and Marsha McLean, Smyth/Antonovich staffer Jarod DeGonia, Newhall Land CEO Greg McWilliams and SCE public affairs manager Anna Frutos-Sanchez.

Transportation is a pretty specialized topic, but there was a lot of “pent-up energy in the room,” according to Scott.

“The Valley region has been waiting for nearly a century to have an official government agency such as the Valley Council of Governments through which to speak with a unified voice.”

Many, if not most of the relevant government and civic organizations were represented — and a good number, including the Gateway Coalition, sponsored the event.

It was a constructive and innovative event, perhaps signaling a new sophistication in the region’s approach to civic and political issues. The topics spanned areas extending from

the Port of Los Angeles to the reaches of the LOSSAN rail corridor in San Luis Obispo — and up into the high desert areas of the Antelope Valley.

The summit covered virtually all existing rail, road, freeway, air, ground access and goods movement projects in the region. The main premise was to view these projects from the perspective of the Santa Clarita and San Fernando Valleys. Participants were interested in how the county’s northern region could work together for transit and transportation improvements.

According to Scott, “With California’s Central Valley High Speed Rail line currently at the \$100 billion mark, there is a general sense that the project no longer makes economic sense. Many were interested in how to redirect this momentum and funding into more practical uses such as LOSSAN, missing connectors, upgrading existing rails to express, toll-transit projects, and the elimination of gaps and pinch-points in existing highways.”

## Roads

Continued from page 11

which varies according to time of day and congestion in adjacent freeway lanes, for the advantage of a faster trip. Southern California’s HOT lanes include the Interstate 15 express lanes north of San Diego, which allow solo drivers to “buy in” to the HOV lane, and the FasTrak lanes on Highway 91 in northern Orange County (10 miles), which were built to be HOT lanes.

Los Angeles County plans to begin operating HOT lanes this year on the I-110 Harbor Freeway and I-10 El Monte Express Lanes. The Inland Empire is also considering extending the SR-91 express lanes into Riverside and extending the I-15 lanes northward from San Diego.

## Dealing With Truck Traffic

Big trucks move a huge volume of goods and services in Southern California. Nationwide, trucks carry about 70 percent of all freight by weight. Between 1980 and 2007, trucking miles grew by 98 percent, according to the Federal Highway Administration. American Trucking Association’s 2011 freight forecast indicates trucking will continue to grow an average of 3.3 percent each year until 2016 as the nation undergoes some economic recovery in manufacturing industries.

The I-5 North L.A. County Improvement Project is among the efforts to address the need for more goods movement corridors during this period and beyond. In addition, public agencies, the trucking industry, and business interests need to work together to improve commercial ve-

hicle operations to reduce congestion.

## The Bottom Line

Another way to improve traffic flow is to not load up roads as much in the first place. Much can be done to reduce demand during peak commute hours, including having more riders in vehicles, flexible work hours, telecommuting, living closer to work, and expanding public transit.

Maintaining and improving economic opportunities and quality of life for California’s growing population, however, largely depends on our ability to increase the capacity and efficiency of transportation systems, including roads and highways. Improving traffic flow and safety on our roads will have an immediate and significant impact on the lives of the vast majority of Southern California’s motorists.

## From the **Chairman**

# Taking Stock and Anticipating I-5 Progress in 2012

By **Tom DiPrima**

*Chairman,*

*Golden State Gateway Coalition*

**A**s we start a new year, and while very close, we still await Caltrans action to award the construction contract for the first phase of the Interstate 5 project. It's a good time to reflect on what the Golden State Gateway Coalition has accomplished so far.

Through completion of our project environmental approval and design, a major portion of improvements to Interstate 5 is soon to get under way. The project will help relieve traffic congestion; expedite freight movement and services delivery; improve the quality of life for residents, employers, employees and all freeway users in north L.A.



**Tom  
DiPrima**



County; and, it will also help improve air quality.

Through our unique, successful partnership, we have demonstrated a template for future public/private partnerships. This merger of talent and resources shows how the public and private sectors can work together

to ensure that a much-needed infrastructure project of great public benefit can be designed, funded and built.

The Golden State Gateway Coalition helped unify and motivate a community to take action that resulted in expediting the project — and, saved the taxpaying public considerable time and money in the process.

As with any project of this magnitude, some speed bumps are expected to be encountered along the way. While we haven't yet put a shovel in the ground, we remain confident we will do so this year.

Please accept our very special thank you for your continued support, as a Coalition member and ally. Your help and support has been vital to get us to where we are today.

I hope we can count on your continued support as we move to achieve our goal, and see the reality of a completed project.

Thank you again; we hope 2012 is a happy and prosperous year for you and your family.

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**On the Web:** [www.goldenstategateway.org](http://www.goldenstategateway.org)

**Golden State Gateway Coalition**

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For additions, deletions, change of address or to receive this publication via e-mail, please contact us at the address above or via e-mail at:

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