

Transportation Forum Unites Public, Private Sectors in I-5 Improvement Quest

Government officials, business representatives, community leaders and other concerned Californians gathered at the Hyatt Valencia Hotel on October 24 to talk about what can be done to improve mobility in Southern California, focusing on the Interstate 5 corridor from SR-14 to the Grapevine in particular. Over 100 guests heard unified calls to action at the North Los Angeles County Transportation Forum, organized and sponsored by the Golden State Gateway Coalition (GSGC).

The session opened with supportive remarks from Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon, State Assemblyman Keith Richman and Newhall Land CEO & President Gary Cusumano, who serves as the volunteer president of the Coalition. The program was moderated by Connie Worden-Roberts, who chairs the Santa Clarita Valley (SCV) Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee and co-chairs the SCV Transportation Alliance.

Keynote speaker Thomas McKernan, Jr., CEO of the Automobile Club of Southern California, spoke about the "Quiet Crisis" besieging Southern California's citizens and businesses. "Transportation is an essential public service," he told the audience. "And when funding priorities are considered, its importance has not been properly reflected." He continued, "In 1964, per capita highway spending in California averaged \$60 per 1,000 miles. In 2000, investment in highways was down to \$4 per 1,000 miles. If current roadways are inadequate for the current population, how can we begin to accommodate the future population and vehicular growth that is projected for the region?"

"Project readiness" is the key, according to forum panelist Wally Baker, senior vice president with the L.A. County Economic Development Corporation. "This group seems to have its act together," he commented, while stressing the importance of the I-5 corridor to goods movement and the economy of California. Baker also suggested that California's considerable "political muscle" — six committee chairs in the U.S. Congress — be tapped to move things forward.

Lancaster Mayor and MTA Vice Chairman Frank Roberts also emphasized the importance of the I-5 in California's economy. He noted that California is ranked at the very bottom (50th of 50) in per capita spending on highways and questioned whether North Los Angeles County is getting its fair share from MTA relative to the urgent and ever increasing need for improved and expanded roadways.



Panelists at the Transportation Forum.

Photography by: Fleetwood Communications

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CTC Planning Santa Clarita Meeting in 2004

As a result of efforts by the Golden State Gateway Coalition, supported and augmented by the City of Santa Clarita, the California Transportation Commission is planning to hold its June, 2004 meeting in Santa Clarita. This will allow the nine-member Commission and staff to see and learn first-hand about the need for Interstate 5 transportation corridor improvements through the North Los Angeles County region.

"The City is honored to host the Commission meeting," says Cameron Smyth, Mayor of the City of Santa Clarita. "We recognize the opportunity it provides Santa Clarita to demonstrate the significant transportation needs of North Los Angeles County and to showcase the many transportation improvements being funded in the Santa Clarita Valley through innovative public/private funding partnerships."

The Commission is responsible for programming and allocating funds for the construction of highway, passenger rail and transit improvements throughout California. It advises and assists the State's Transportation Secretary and the Legislature in formulating and evaluating state policies and plans for California's transportation programs. The Commission is also an active participant in the initiation and development of State and Federal legislation that seeks to secure financial stability for the State's transportation needs.

Look for further details in future issues of *INTERCHANGE*. ♦

Coalition Membership Nearly Doubles with 11 New Members

Word is getting out that "somebody is doing something" to relieve traffic congestion in the Interstate 5 corridor . . . and support for the Golden State Gateway Coalition is growing as a result.

Members that have joined since this Summer include: KB Home, Spirit Properties, BRE Properties, New Urban West, William Lyon Homes, FountainGlen Properties, CH2M Hill, Richmond American Homes, Psomas, John Laing Homes and the Southern California Contractors Association.

Founding members of the Coalition, which was established in 2002, are: The Automobile Club of Southern California,

Consolidated Waste Disposal Service (Chiquita Canyon Landfill), Newhall Land, Lennar Communities, Pardee Homes, Regency Centers, Tejon Ranch Company, Ecology Auto Parts, Six Flags Magic Mountain, Advanced Bionics Corporation, Remo, Inc., Aerospace Dynamics International, Building Industry Association of Southern California and Connie Worden-Roberts.

Know a forward-thinking organization or individual that should be part of the Coalition? Let us know by contacting us at (661) 775-0455 or via e-mail at vlinden@goldenstategateway.org. ♦



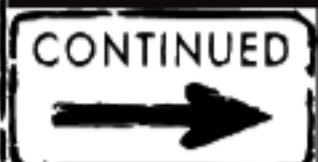
Board Actions: Mission Statement Approved

The following statement of purpose was reviewed and approved by the Coalition Board of Directors at its July 30 meeting:

The Golden State Gateway Coalition is a non-profit organization of business and community leaders with a common interest in regional transportation issues and opportunities. Our education and advocacy work focuses on the Interstate 5 corridor, including arterial roads, from northern Los Angeles to Kern County.

Our objective is to ensure the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services throughout the Interstate 5 corridor. We will do this by making certain that needed improvements to the Interstate 5 are approved, designed, funded and built as soon as possible.

Our members recognize the importance of the Interstate 5 corridor, which links the economy of Southern California with the rest of the state and with neighboring states and nations. ♦



Coalition Included Among Mobility 21 Sponsors

On November 17, the LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and the LA Area Chamber of Commerce presented *Mobility 21: LA County Moving Together*, with the Golden State Gateway Coalition participating as an underwriting sponsor. Coalition Executive Director Victor Lindenheim serves on the Mobility 21 Executive Committee, providing guidance and direction to the event planning staff.

Mobility 21 is a county-wide effort to bring together elected officials, transportation providers, businesses, local municipalities, and labor and community leaders to develop solutions to the transportation issues facing Los Angeles County. This initiative, led by the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and the MTA in

partnership with the Automobile Club of Southern California, commenced at the first Mobility 21 transportation summit on November 18, 2002.

Over 500 people attended the summit and the group developed resolutions on land use, public transit, streets and highways, goods movement, aviation, transportation financing and coalition building. A key recommendation included in the resolutions was to launch the Mobility 21 Coalition. The other resolutions have served as an advocacy platform for the Mobility 21 Coalition, which has developed recommendations on various policy issues at the federal and state levels of government. ♦

Coalition Represented at Kern County Transportation Foundation Event



On November 7, an audience of about 75 government officials, business people and consulting engineers heard speakers on transportation issues affecting Kern County residents and businesses. Included in the panel of speakers was Arthur Sohikian, Senior Vice President of the MWW Group, who provided an overview of the Golden State Gateway Coalition for the Bakersfield/Kern County audience. The kickoff speaker was Stephen Finnegan, Senior Transportation Analyst from the Automobile Club of Southern California, who addressed "The Increasing Demand for Transportation." The keynote speaker was Eric Haley, Executive Director of the Riverside County Transportation Commission. Panel discussions focused on various modes of transportation, and the impact of transportation issues on the economy.

Coalition members Tejon Ranch and the Automobile Club were among the event's sponsors. ♦



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Palmdale Mayor and North County Transportation Coalition Chairman Jim Ledford spoke of the need to build a consensus and speak with a unified voice when it comes to North L.A. County's transportation requirements, specifically referencing Interstate 5, SR-14 and State Routes 126 and 138, which affect transportation mobility in the north county region as a system.

Santa Clarita Councilmember Frank Ferry personalized the situation, referring to the traffic-induced stress of moving children to and from school. He urged the community leaders in the audience to "think ahead" on the area's transportation needs, citing the progress on the Cross Valley Connector, the long anticipated future connection from Interstate 5 to SR-14, as evidence of such an approach.

The Transportation Forum was supported by, and presented with the cooperation of The Automobile Club of Southern California,

The Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Valley Industrial Association of Santa Clarita (VIA). Next year's program is scheduled for Friday, October 22. ♦



Keynote speaker Thomas McKernan, Jr., CEO of the Automobile Club of Southern California.

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State Assemblyman Keith Richman
Photography by: Fleetwood Communications



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Actions Taken on I-5; Federal Funding for The Cross Valley Connector Secured

The Golden State Gateway Coalition's (GSGC) initial goals, include adding the following to Interstate 5: northbound and southbound carpool (HOV) lanes from SR-14 to SR-126; and northbound and southbound truck lanes from SR-14 to Calgrove Boulevard – the Newhall Pass.

Actions taken so far this year to move the project forward:

- The Project Study Report/Project Design Study (PSR/PDS) was approved by Caltrans in March, establishing Coalition-endorsed I-5 improvements as a viable project.
- Caltrans has applied to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) for design and environmental work funding on the project.
- GSGC has begun pursuing federal funds for design work and construction through several avenues. For example, earlier this year, presentations regarding north Los Angeles County's transportation funding needs were made to House Transportation Committee chairman Don Young by the Coalition and the cities of Santa Clarita, Lancaster and Palmdale.
- Contacts with MTA were made, and both verbal and written comments on the agency's Short Range Plan were offered. Interstate 5 improvements are included in the draft plan.
- Efforts to ensure inclusion of north county I-5 improvements in the Southern California Association of Governments' Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) are under way.

In the meantime, \$3 million in federal funding has been earmarked for continuing work on the Cross Valley Connector, the road that will link Interstate 5 with SR-14. This 8.5 mile stretch of road will move traffic more efficiently through the city of Santa Clarita, relieving pressure and congestion on other roads.

Kudos and thanks to Congressman Buck McKeon for his leadership and perseverance on this matter, and to his colleagues in Congress who helped make this possible: Rep. Ernest Istook, Rep. Jerry Lewis, and Senator Diane Feinstein. Also, thanks to Santa Clarita Councilmembers and City staff who coordinated the effort and visited Washington, DC to make the case for federal assistance.

At press time, the Conference Committee-endorsed funding authorization was awaiting House and Senate approval, and the President's signature. ♦

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