

Fairway Drive rail-underpass in Industry gets \$71 million funding from California commission

By [Steve Scauzillo](#), San Gabriel Valley Tribune

Posted: 07/05/14

In about 10 years, the number of trains barreling through the intersection of Fairway Drive in Industry each day will nearly double, from 49 to 91. Per year, that amounts to 33,215 trains mixing it up with traffic.

But motorists won't have to worry about stopping, nor engineers about blowing their horns or slamming on their brakes if a car is stuck on the tracks. That's because a rail-railway underpass will be built to accommodate the estimated 26,500 cars and trucks per day that will pass under the raised train bridge.

In an effort to keep the San Gabriel Valley and Inland Empire well ahead of the freight train onslaught emanating from the two bustling ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the Alameda Corridor East Construction Authority will build a four-lane underpass and a double-track train bridge at the at-grade intersection located north of the 60 Freeway.

The project received a boost last week when the California Transportation Commission voted to allocate \$71 million to the underpass-building agency after ACE Chief Executive Officer Mark Christoffels demonstrated to the commission that the project was shovel-ready.

"They don't get you the cash until you meet certain requirements and until all plans are done, all rights-of-way and lands obtained. I got those. I went back to them. I fulfilled my part. I said: 'Can you hand me the cash?' Here it is."

The rest of the money needed to build the underpass will come from Measure R, a half-cent sales tax measure approved by Los Angeles County voters in 2008, he said. The project is expected to cost \$143 million.

Because of the allocation, Christoffels can go out to bid on the project in a few weeks. He hopes to collect all the bids and award the contract to the lowest qualified bidder by late September. The project may break ground in late December or early January, he said.

Once completed, engineers estimate it will trim about 27.6 vehicle-hours of delay per day from the busy intersection, because trains and vehicles will no longer have to stop. The project is expected to be built in about four years from today, said El Monte City Councilwoman Norma Macias, chair of the ACE Board of Directors.

State funds originate from the Proposition 1B Trade Corridor Improvement Fund.

The state is funding the project in order to keep traffic flowing on both sides of the major rail routes that cut through the belly of the San Gabriel Valley: the Union Pacific Railroad, Alhambra Subdivision and the Union Pacific Railroad, Los Angeles Subdivision. Both parallel each other from Monterey Park to Pomona, but the two tracks narrow between Industry and Diamond Bar.

Planners want to ensure that goods from China not only reach the ports, but can be carried by train and for closer routes by truck through the San Gabriel Valley, Inland Empire and across the United States. The ports are the nation's busiest, handling 44 percent of the country's container imports and 90 percent of California's imports.

Of those, about 60 percent of the containers move inland along what's called the Alameda Corridor-East Trade Corridor, according to ACE.

This will mark the seventh underpass project running consecutively. The others under construction are: Ramona Street, Mission Road, Del Mar Avenue and San Gabriel Boulevard in San Gabriel; [Baldwin Avenue](#) on the border of El Monte/Temple City and [Nogales Street in Rowland Heights](#). Completed underpasses include: Brea Canyon Road in Diamond Bar/Industry, Sunset Avenue in Industry, Ramona Boulevard in El Monte, Nogales Street in West Covina and Reservoir Street and East End Avenue in Pomona, according to ACE.

ACE is designing underpasses at railroad tracks in on [Puente Avenue](#) in Industry, Durfee Avenue in Pico Rivera, Fullerton Road in Industry and Hamilton Avenue in Pomona.

The agency has committed \$1.6 billion for these projects.