

Transportation Funding Means Jobs for the San Gabriel Valley

By Senator Ed Hernandez, O.D.

Anyone who lives in the San Gabriel Valley knows we have a number of challenges facing us when it comes to transportation. With over two million residents, six major freeways, and billions of dollars of goods moving through our region from the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach every year, the San Gabriel Valley has more than its fair share of unmet transportation needs. We have the traffic, long commutes, and pollution to prove it.

At the same time, we are still mired in the same recession affecting the rest of the state and the nation. The most recent unemployment numbers in the San Gabriel Valley, while down from last year, are still pegged at 12.2 percent.

The good news is that over the last few years, federal, state, and local officials in the San Gabriel Valley have successfully lobbied for the funding necessary to address some of our transportation challenges. It has taken a coordinated effort, with officials from all levels of government speaking with one voice when it comes to making our region a priority. It has also required voters, whose overwhelming support for Measure R made it clear that people want to see more investment in transportation, even if it means paying a half cent more in sales tax. This influx of federal, state and local dollars for our region's transportation projects will not only speed up our commutes, but may help speed up our local economy as well.

One area where we have seen some real progress is with our highway funding. We have fought to secure over \$78 million in state funding to improve the heavily congested I-10/ 605 Freeway interchange. The construction of the new interchange is slated to begin in 2013, with an anticipated completion in Fall of 2015. We were also successful in securing funding for the \$450 million extension of the carpool lanes along the I-10 between the 605 and 57 freeways, with the last section expected to be complete by early 2017. These new carpool lanes, in conjunction with the interchange improvement, should provide some welcome relief for commuters in the San Gabriel Valley. These projects will also provide well over a thousand construction jobs while restoring more than two million hours of productivity every year that would otherwise be lost to traffic delays.

Another way to further relieve traffic congestion and improve our economy is to get more people out of their cars and into alternate modes of transportation. That is why it has been one of my priorities that our commuter rail projects here in the San Gabriel Valley have the requisite funding and regional support to ensure residents are provided a real alternative to their cars.



Phase 2A of the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension from Pasadena to Azusa is already under construction, with over \$730 million in Measure R funds allotted to the project. While under construction, this project will mean nearly 7000 jobs and almost \$1 billion dollars in economic benefit for our communities. Additionally, future commercial and housing developments adjacent to stations along the new line are expected to create many more permanent jobs and generate millions of dollars every year for local cities.



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Still another transportation success story here in the San Gabriel Valley is the Alameda Corridor-East (ACE) Construction Authority. Recently awarded an additional \$336 million dollars in state funds, the ACE Project is working to increase safety and improve mobility at 39 railway crossings throughout the San Gabriel Valley, including 20 different grade separation projects. With rail traffic from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach expected to increase by as much as 160% by 2020, the ACE Project is playing an integral role in preventing against an estimated 300% increase in traffic delays at railroad crossings. In addition to the thousands of construction jobs the ACE Project brings to the region, it also helps protect 634,000 existing jobs by keeping our railroads moving and traffic flowing.

Taken together, the wide variety of transportation projects slated to begin and already underway in the San Gabriel Valley will serve to ease traffic congestion, provide viable transit alternatives, and give an important economic shot in the arm to our local communities. With an ever growing population and a still sluggish economy, we cannot afford to rest though. We need to keep the pressure on to ensure that existing projects are completed and our ongoing transportation issues are addressed. Our highest priority should be to continue a cooperative effort amongst all levels of government in our region so we can advance vital transportation initiatives, maximize the effectiveness of our projects, and create the jobs and economic development we need both now and in the future.

Alameda Corridor-East

San Gabriel Valley



The busy Brea Canyon Road grade separation project in the Cities of Diamond Bar and Industry is used daily by 21,000 motorists, three-dozen freight trains and over a dozen commuter trains.

The ACE Project:

- ❖ **Increases Safety**
Construct railway-roadway grade separations at 20 crossings and safety enhancements at 39 crossings
- ❖ **Cuts Congestion**
Eliminate train delays of up to 10 to 24 minutes at the busiest crossings
- ❖ **Improves Air Quality**
Eliminate 221 tons of pollution annually by reducing traffic delays
- ❖ **Fosters Economic Vitality**
Help preserve 192,000 new jobs in the San Gabriel Valley

Grade Separations Under Construction



Current Situation at Crossings



www.theaceproject.org

(888) ACE-1426