

The ACE Project in the City of Industry shows the Nogales Street grade separation under the railroad tracks.



PHOTOS BY TOM THOMPSON



CAROL HERRERA

ACE goal oriented

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A \$46.1 million grade separation project at Nogales Street and Valley Boulevard in Industry/West Covina will be completed by the end of the year, said Carol Herrera, the newest member of the eight-person Alameda Corridor-East (ACE) Construction Authority Board.

The Nogales Street project, two years in the making, will be the first completed of the five under construction in the \$910 million ACE program and the first completed since Herrera, a Diamond Bar councilwoman since November 1995, joined the Construction Authority board in December.

"I'm excited about the dedication ceremony that will be held to celebrate the completion of the Nogales Street Project," Herrera said. "This will be a big step in ACE's commitment to build vital congestion-relief and safety improvements in the San Gabriel Valley."

Within the next two years, four other ACE grade separation projects that have been under construction will be completed — at East End Avenue and Reservoir Street in Pomona, the Temple Avenue Train Diversion project, also in Pomona, and the Ramona Avenue project in El Monte.

The Nogales Street grade separation under the railroad tracks and Valley Boulevard required Nogales Street to be lowered about 20 feet.

Two bridges have been built to carry both railroad traffic and Valley Boulevard motor traffic over the lowered Nogales Street. The bridge for motor vehicles was finished first, followed shortly thereafter by the opening of the bridge for railroad traffic.

Still to be completed on newly reconfigured Nogales is a loop connector road that replaces the old intersection at Nogales and Valley and is located in the northeast quadrant of the intersection.

With the completion of the Alameda Corridor rail expressway from the ports to downtown Los Angeles, train traffic through the San Gabriel Valley is expected to increase by as much as 160 percent by the year 2020.

The goal of the Alameda Corridor-East project since its inception in 1998 is to mitigate the effects of increased traffic along two 35-mile freight rail corridors through the San Gabriel Valley from East Los Angeles to Pomona.

"With the completion of the Nogales Street underpass, motorists no longer will have to stop at the railroad tracks to wait for long, slow and frequent trains that can cause delays of up to 20 minutes," Councilwoman Herrera pointed out.

"She also mentioned other positive aspects of the new underpass.

"With the elimination of the grade crossing, the neighborhood will be quieter since locomotives will no longer be required to sound their horns at the crossing," she said.

"The grade separation will make the area more attractive to investors and help stimulate economic revitalization projects.

"Most importantly, the possibility of collisions between trains and cars or trucks will be eliminated," Herrera added.

Herrera has made transportation issues one of her areas of expertise. "One of the reasons is that I live near two major freeways, the 57 and the 60, that are involved in major projects," she explained. "The San Gabriel Valley bears a lot of the congestion and air quality burdens created by international trade. Projects like ACE will help our communities get the relief we deserve."

"Another is that the Brea Canyon Road grade separation project that will soon come up for bids with the ACE Construction Authority Board is located in Diamond Bar."

Along with being a board member of the ACE Construction Authority, Herrera is an alternate member of the Foothill Transit Board and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Transportation and Communications Committee.

She also serves as president of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) and is a member of the board of directors for the League of California Cities.

A resident of Diamond Bar since 1966, she has been married for nearly 40 years to her husband Art, a retired commander in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, with whom she raised three children.

In her role with ACE, she proudly notes that as the grade separation projects continue to move forward, the Construction Authority, through its Community Outreach Program, is devoting considerable attention to the safety of the children attending schools near the construction, detours and haul routes.

"The Authority has distributed more than 18,600 age-appropriate construction safety kits to schools in San Gabriel, Industry, West Covina, Pomona and El Monte," said Councilwoman Herrera, a grandmother of six, "and more schools will be added as the project goes on. Sometimes kids get excited by



Janice Chang, ACE Project Community Outreach Team, looks over a rail and safety kit for distribution to schools in San Gabriel, Industry, West Covina, Pomona and El Monte.

noises and lights; we have to protect them."

Here are the schools involved to date in ACE's School Safety Outreach program:

In San Gabriel: San Gabriel High, San Gabriel Mission High, San Gabriel Mission Elementary.

In Industry/West Covina: Nogales High (La Puente); Santana High (Rowland Heights); Rincon Intermediate; Hollingworth Elementary; Romer Elementary (La Puente);

Ybarra Elementary (Walnut).

In Pomona: Village Academy High, Pueblo Elementary.

In El Monte: Arroyo High; El Monte High; Mountain View High; Valley Lindo Continuation; Columbia Elementary; Frank Wright Elementary; Norwood Elementary.

New kits are being prepared for distribution when the 2005-2006 school year gets under way.



Traffic going north and south on Nogales Street during construction.



Signs placed for motorists at a shopping center at Valley Boulevard and Nogales Street.