

Press Release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 19, 2018

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Groundbreaking Marks Start of Construction on I-680 Sunol Northbound Express Lane Traffic relief on congested freeway is on the fast track

ALAMEDA COUNTY - Calif. The Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC), in partnership with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), joined by regional and local officials, celebrated the start of construction on the I-680 Sunol Express Lanes with a groundbreaking ceremony today.

The I-680 corridor is one of the most congested corridors in the entire Bay Area. Following today's groundbreaking celebration, construction will begin on nine miles of a new high-occupancy vehicle (HOV)/continuous access express lane in the northbound direction on I-680 between State Route 262 and State Route 84. The adjacent I-680 Southbound Express Lane, which Alameda CTC and Caltrans opened to traffic in 2010, will also be upgraded for easier access.

The [I-680 Sunol Northbound Express Lane Project](#) will widen the existing freeway and construct a new, approximately nine-mile HOV/express lane and associated improvements on northbound I-680 between Auto Mall Parkway and SR-84 in Alameda County. The project also includes upgrades to the adjacent southbound I-680 Sunol Express Lane, modifying the access configuration from controlled access to a near continuous access configuration, similar to that on the I-580 Express Lane corridor through the Tri-Valley. The construction contract was awarded to Concord, CA-based Bay Cities Paving & Grading, Inc. in November 2017.

"I cannot say enough how important this corridor is to the vitality of the region," said Alameda County Supervisor Richard Valle, Alameda CTC Chair. "It is a vital link between the South Bay and the Tri-Valley and Central Valley — connecting to a major goods movement corridor. The cost of people stuck on a freeway translates into lost productivity, increases in the price of goods and services and contributes to poor air-quality."

The new northbound lane is projected to open to traffic in late 2020. This new express lane will promote carpooling and ridesharing, help alleviate traffic congestion and improve operations along one of the most congested corridors in the region.

“Today, we celebrate the start of construction to provide real relief for northbound commuters over the Sunol Grade – this high-occupancy vehicle (HOV)/express lane represents the first incentive and benefit to carpoolers heading northbound,” said Scott Haggerty, Alameda County District 1 Supervisor and Alameda County Transportation Commission Member. “None of these projects would be possible without our voter-approved local sales tax dollars from Measure B, passed by voters in 2000, and Measure BB, which passed in 2014. Our local sales tax dollars are delivering as promised.”

The [I-680 Sunol Southbound Express Lane](#) was opened in 2010 as the first express lane in the Bay Area. Since then, Alameda CTC opened the east- and westbound [I-580 Express Lanes](#) in 2016, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission opened the [I-680 Contra Costa Express Lanes](#) in 2017.

“Collectively, these improvements will provide more reliable travel times, encourage carpooling, reduce congestion and improve the quality of life for Bay Area residents,” said Jim Davis, Caltrans District 4 Acting Director.

“The City of Fremont looks forward to this critical project to improve traffic flow and alleviate congestion from cut-through traffic on Fremont’s local surface streets,” said Fremont Mayor Lily Mei. “I’m happy to support this effort that responds to our local community needs by working to address future travel demands.”

Express lanes provide more reliable travel times, improve traffic conditions and provide incentives to carpool and use transit. I-680 at the Sunol Grade is consistently ranked one of the top 10 most congested freeway corridors in the Bay Area. Queues near Andrade Road begin to form at 2 p.m. or earlier most weekdays and extend beyond Scott Creek Road (nearly 10 miles) by the peak afternoon commute. Travel time delay contributes to diverted traffic on Calaveras Boulevard, Mission Road and Mission Boulevard.

About the Alameda County Transportation Commission

Alameda CTC coordinates countywide transportation planning and delivers essential, voter-supported transportation improvements in every city throughout Alameda County. Funding sources for Alameda CTC’s expenditure plans include Measure B, approved by 81.5 percent of county voters in 2000, and Measure BB, approved by more than 70 percent of voters in 2014. For more information, please visit the Alameda CTC website at <http://www.alamedactc.org>

About Caltrans

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) manages 6500 lane-miles of highway in the Bay Area, including seven toll bridges. To learn more, visit the District’s web page at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/d4/>

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