



# Update

## North County Combined Highway Corridor Study

Fall 2002

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### Information

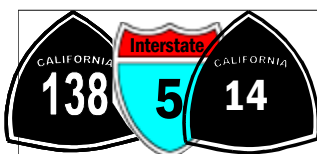
This Update is the third in a series of newsletters designed to inform and educate the public about the North County Combined Highway Corridor Study.

MTA encourages public participation and comment as this project moves forward.

If you would like further information about the Study, please visit MTA's website at [www.mta.net](http://www.mta.net), click on "Transportation Programs" and then "Programs & Projects".

You may also call MTA's Project Manager Brian Lin at (213) 922-3036 or contact him by email at [linb@mta.net](mailto:linb@mta.net).

To be added to the project mailing list, please call The Robert Group at (213) 381-5700.



### Study Background & Purpose

The North County Combined Highway Corridor Study (NCCHCS) is an ambitious two-part project that is looking at ways to develop realistic, affordable transportation solutions to alleviate traffic congestion and create efficient travel throughout North Los Angeles County. This Study is key to the ongoing economic vitality of the region which continues to experience tremendous growth in both population and traffic.

This Study, a multi-agency and -jurisdiction project led by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), began in August last year and initially focused on I-5 and SR-14, two corridors running north-south across North Los Angeles County to the Kern County line. After extensive technical analysis and community input, MTA will present an evaluation of a final set of alternatives to the public this coming November for their comment and review, prior to recommending a Preferred Alternative. At this juncture, this Preferred Alternative (the best and most cost effective transportation solution for this corridor) will be integrated with the second part of the study, thereby ensuring that the recommended project will seamlessly combine with SR-138 Study Objectives (see below).

Work on the second part of the Study, which commenced in May 2002, will look at alternatives for the SR-138 corridor running east-west across the region to the San Bernardino County line. MTA received initial input from the public at an Open House held in Palmdale in early summer, and is continuing to receive stakeholder feedback. During this time, the project team has conducted in-depth technical analysis on the Study and is gearing up to present an initial list of alternatives for the public at a follow-up Open House in November. Part II of the Study is scheduled for completion in late 2003.

The NCCHCS is one of several studies that have recently addressed transportation challenges in the North County area. Other unrelated projects that have been completed or are underway include California High Speed Rail, as well as the LAX-PMD High Speed Ground Access (maglev), High Desert, SR-395, and the I-15 Corridor studies.

## Part I Status: Scoping Process & Screening of Alternatives



MTA has identified five concepts/alternatives for further, more detailed evaluation and study for the I-5/ SR-14 corridor.

This initial screening process of alternatives began first by determining the Study's

Purpose and Need, developing a list of highway/transit alternatives, and identifying evaluation criteria. Using existing data, such as demographics, traffic volumes, highway and transit capacity, and the results of an extensive community outreach effort (including stakeholder interviews, focus group sessions with transportation users, public meetings and community Open Houses), different packages of multimodal improvements were compared one against the other to determine which combination of improvements would have the best overall benefit to North County's transportation system.

The project team then conducted an evaluation of 11 alternatives based upon the best available technical information. The alternatives evaluation and recommendations were presented to the Study's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the general public, and the North County Transportation Coalition (NCTC). On June 17, 2002, the NCTC endorsed a shortlist of three (3) "Build" Alternatives, as well as No Build and Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternatives, for further evaluation. The No Build Alternative reflects existing plus funded infrastructure for highways and mass transit while the TSM Alternative reflects the No Build plus 20-year trend line transit improvements; both serve as a baseline comparison for the Build Alternatives.

These alternatives are summarized as follows:

- **Alternative 3 – Short-Range Concept.** This Short-Range Alternative has minimum funding requirements and strikes an appropriate balance between highway and transit elements. Along I-5, one new HOV lane would be added between SR-14 and SR-126, and a new truck lane would be added from SR-14 to Calgrove Avenue. Along SR-14, a continuous section of three general-purpose lanes plus an existing HOV lane would be completed in each direction from Sand Canyon to Avenue P. Ultimately, this alternative would add four express bus runs and two trains to the southbound morning commute.

- **Alternative 5 – Short Range Concept plus Transit.** This alternative builds on the Short-Range Concept of Alternative 3 but with a substantial increase in transit improvements. It would provide the same highway enhancements as Alternative 3, but add four southbound bus runs and four trains during the morning commute, in addition to those improvements proposed in Alternative 3.
- **Alternative 6 – Short Range Concept plus Transit and Highway.** This alternative builds on Alternative 5, but with a substantial increase in highway improvements. Along I-5, one new general purpose lane would be added from SR-14 to the Kern County line, one new HOV lane would be added from SR-14 to north of SR-126 West, and the truck lane would be extended north to SR-126 East. Along SR-14, one general purpose lane would be added from Sand Canyon to Avenue D, one HOV lane would be added from I-5 to Avenue L, and a truck lane would be added from I-5 to Sand Canyon.

These three "Build" Alternatives – 3, 5 and 6 – recommended to be carried forward for further study provide a good balance of corridor-carrying capacity, financial affordability, and environmental and institutional achievability. They all feature combinations of minimum and moderate improvements to existing highway and transit facilities, and incorporate gradual widening of freeways and upgrade of transit within the alignments of existing transportation facilities. Alternatives 4 and 7–11 were eliminated from further consideration earlier in the Study after public input and technical evaluation.



Above: Community members view and provide feedback on project alternatives at the Palmdale Cultural Center community Open House.

## More About Part II (SR-138 Corridor)

May 2002 marked the kick-off of Part II of the NCCHCS and was followed shortly thereafter in June by a community Open House that introduced stakeholders to the project. This second part of the Study is focusing on improvements to the roughly 70-mile stretch of SR-138, a largely two-lane rural highway traversing North Los Angeles County between the Ventura and San Bernardino County lines.

MTA is currently near completion of the baseline transportation system analysis (entailing a thorough review of current transportation conditions in the Study area) and the scoping effort which, in addition to the Open House, has included one-on-one interviews with over 30 key regional stakeholders and meetings with federal, state and local agencies with regulatory authority over the project. The following themes, not listed in order of priority, have emerged from the scoping process to guide the development and evaluation of alternatives that will be presented at a November 19, 2002 Open House:

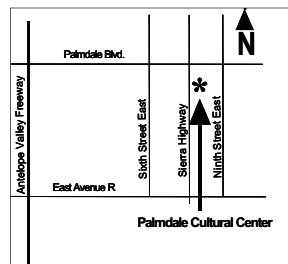
- ➔ **Traffic safety is a priority** — lack of passing lanes, motorists traveling at higher than designated speeds, the mix of slower moving traffic such as trucks and recreational vehicles with automobiles, as well as roadway geometry are key concerns on the SR-138.
- ➔ **Increase system capacity to accommodate anticipated growth** — additional east-west capacity in the corridor will be needed to address future growth along the SR-138. This may be along the SR-138 itself or may require a new east-west route.
- ➔ **Smooth out pockets of congestion** — these occur especially during peak morning and afternoon commute times as well as on Fridays and weekends when this route is heavily used for recreational and Las Vegas trips.
- ➔ **Integrate the SR-138 Study with other regional planning efforts** — ensure that this Study takes place in coordination with the I-5/SR-14 part of this Study, MTA's Long Range Transportation Plan, as well as the County of San Bernardino's transportation planning efforts.
- ➔ **Accommodate access to Palmdale airport** — potential growth of PMD as a working airport must be considered in all transportation planning taking place in the region.

- ➔ **Emphasize Goods Movement** — truck movement has imposed tremendous pressure on the regional traffic carriers such as SR-58 and SR-395 in Kern County, and I-5, I-210, I-10, SR-60 and SR-91 in the Los Angeles Basin; improvements to the SR-138 might be the "solution" to the ever-increasing truck volumes in Los Angeles County as a whole.
- ➔ **Consider enhanced transit service** — inasmuch as this region is experiencing ongoing economic and population growth, enhanced public transit options should be explored in this Study.
- ➔ **Look at environmental impacts** — North County is home to several endangered species.
- ➔ **Emphasize public outreach and consensus-building effort** — portions of the project area are quite rural and sparsely populated so a special effort must be made to reach and receive input from these areas.

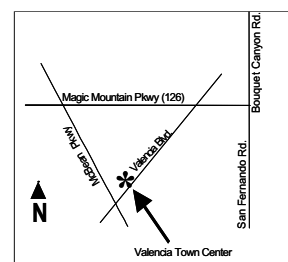
## How Can I Participate?

Throughout the Study process, Community Open House meetings have been held to solicit public input, as well as update the public on the progress made during the Study.

MTA will be presenting the screened alternatives for the I-5/SR-14 corridors at two Open Houses to be held in Valencia and Palmdale in November; a number of initial transportation alternatives for SR-138 will be presented in Palmdale only. Join us at one of these Open Houses to hear about MTA's progress with the Study:



**Palmdale**  
 Tuesday, November 19, 2002  
 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
 Palmdale Cultural Center  
 Lilac Room  
 38350 North Sierra Highway



**Valencia**  
 Wednesday, November 20, 2002  
 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
 Valencia Town Center  
 Community Room  
 24201 West Valencia Road

