



State Route 55/Newport Boulevard Improvements



Background

The City of Costa Mesa (City) has identified congestion on State Route 55 (SR-55)/Newport Boulevard as a significant quality of life issue for adjacent residential and business communities. As a result, the City requested that the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) together with its partner agencies, the cities of Newport Beach and Huntington Beach, study alternative improvements to the extension of the Costa Mesa Freeway. This study will analyze and identify potential transportation improvements for SR-55/Newport Boulevard, between the end of the Costa Mesa Freeway at 19th Street and Industrial Way.

Looking Forward

Traffic congestion at the end of the Costa Mesa Freeway is caused by both local and regional commuters. Most SR-55 drivers live in the area or travel there to visit local businesses on or near Newport Boulevard. At the terminus of the Costa Mesa Freeway, at 19th Street, close to 100,000 vehicles pass through this area on a daily basis, and these volumes are projected to grow in the future.

Study Benefits

This study will evaluate those alternatives that best accommodate movements of cars, buses, and pedestrians. The alternatives will balance the benefits of improved mobility with potential fiscal, and business and community impacts, to arrive at a recommendation that can be understood and accepted by the Newport-Costa Mesa community.

Study Process

This effort is a continuation of the 2008 SR-55 Access Study, which identified four alternatives for further study (No Build, TSM, Elevated Turn Lanes, and Cut and Cover). This effort will analyze these alternatives in greater depth and identify initial scope, schedule, and cost considerations for the next phase of the project development process—completion of an environmental document.

Based upon both technical analysis and public input, the study team will define the project's purpose and need, conduct business surveys, examine traffic data, prepare cost estimates, and consider potential environmental impacts. Once this study is complete, it will serve as a precursor document to a full Project Report and Environmental Document. At that point, the remaining alternatives are looked at in even greater detail along with a full environmental assessment and extensive public involvement program, resulting in selection of a locally preferred alternative.

Currently, no funding has been identified for the next phase of study or for the ultimate project improvements selected. This current phase of study will allow the City of Costa Mesa and OCTA to move potential improvements through the planning process. Throughout this effort, OCTA and its partner agencies will be working with project stakeholders to collect feedback about the alternatives. Stakeholder groups will be formed to facilitate public involvement and encourage dialogue, which will help inform the technical analysis.

In addition, the project team will conduct interviews with major businesses to help understand how they may be affected by project alternatives.

Contact Us

To learn more about the SR-55/Newport Boulevard Improvements, visit www.octa.net/55Study or contact Sarah Swensson, OCTA Community Relations Specialist, at (714) 560-5376, sswensson@octa.net.

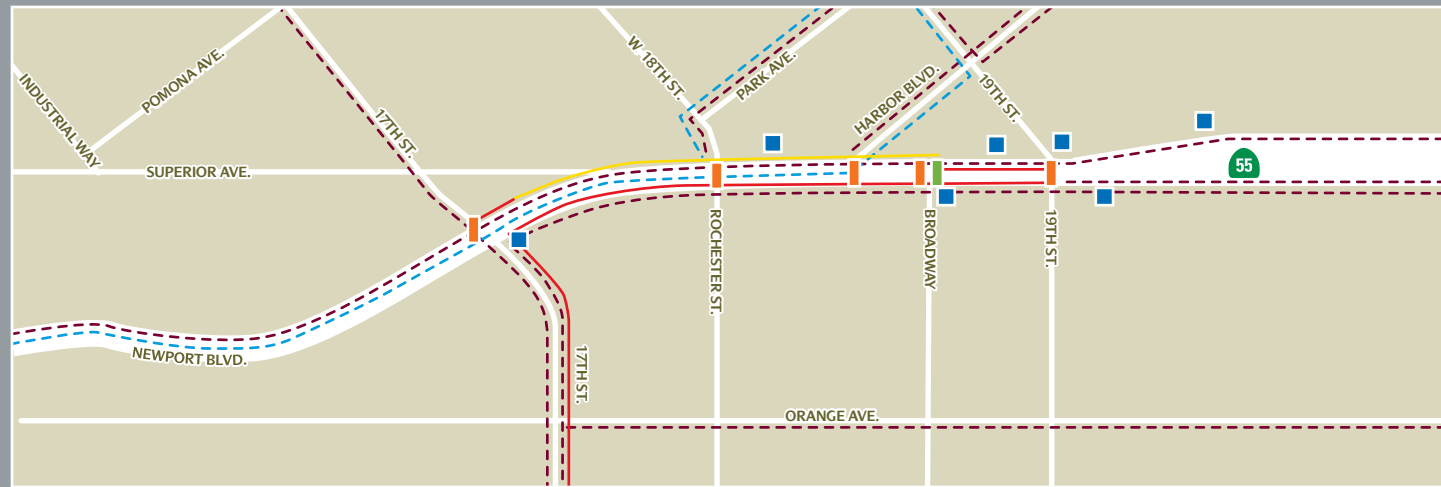
Project Study Area Map



In 2008, OCTA, at the request of the City, completed the SR-55 Access Study. That study analyzed seven conceptual alternatives and recommended four scenarios for further analysis. This new phase of the study will do just that: further analyze and refine the four alternative scenarios. At this time, there is no funding identified for future improvements in this area. However, by moving this study forward and identifying viable alternatives, if funding does become available in the future, viable alternatives will be ready for development.

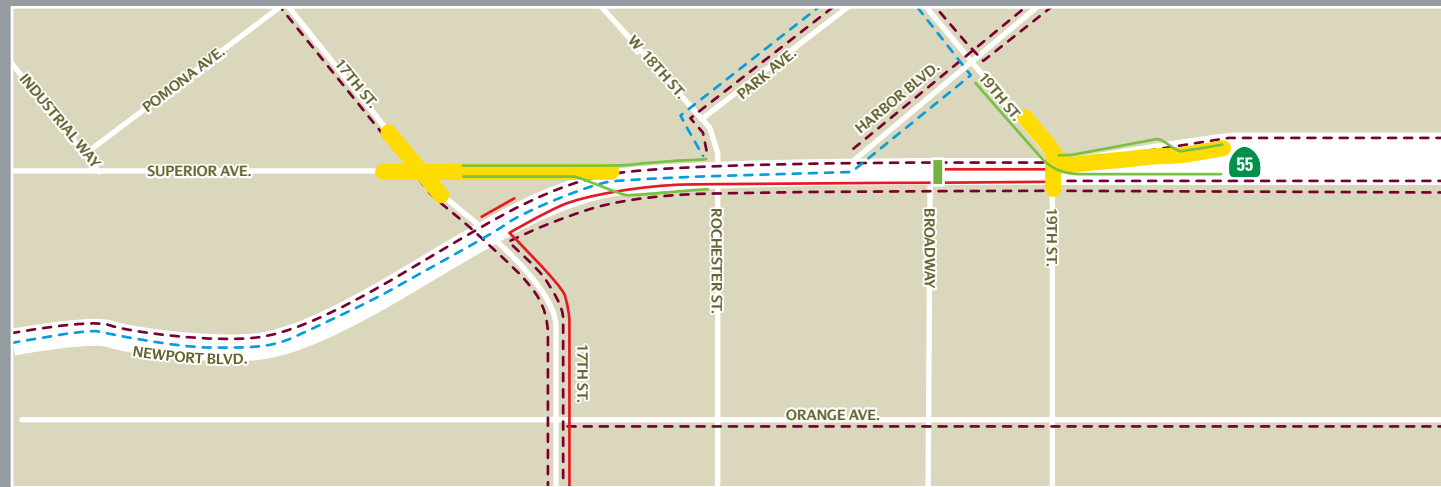
Project Alternatives: The following four alternatives will be analyzed further during this phase of the project.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

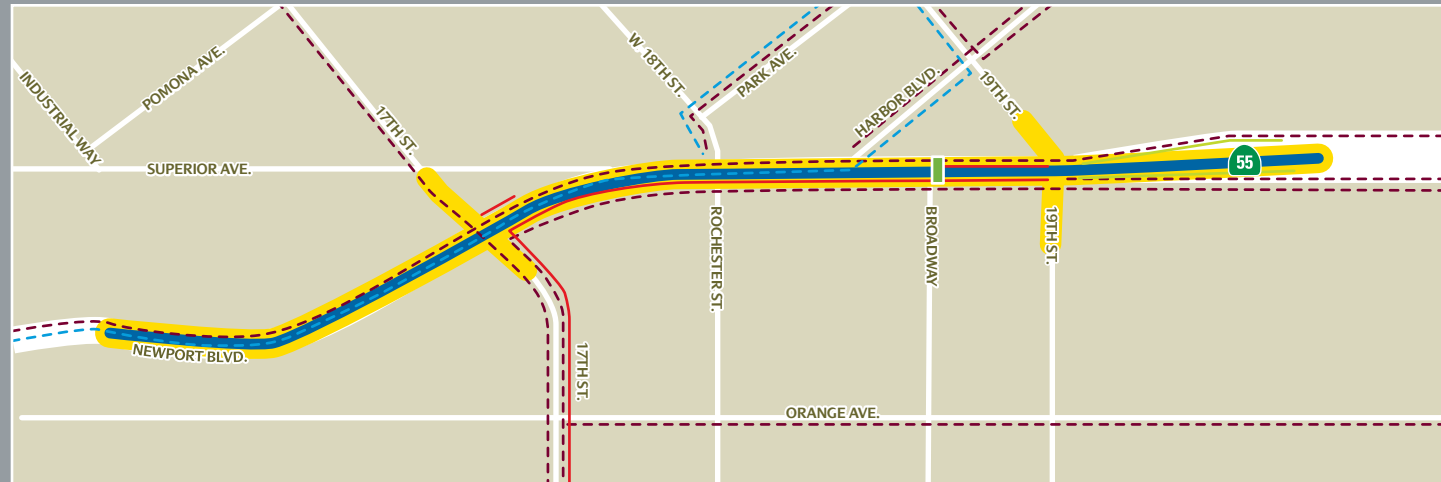


- Existing Bus Stops
- Proposed Signal Timing Modifications
- Proposed Pedestrian Bridge
- Proposed Street Improvements
- Baseline Improvements
- Existing OCTA Bus Routes
- - - Proposed BRT Routes
- Proposed Ramps
- Proposed Freeway Extension

ELEVATED TURN LANES



CUT AND COVER



No Build

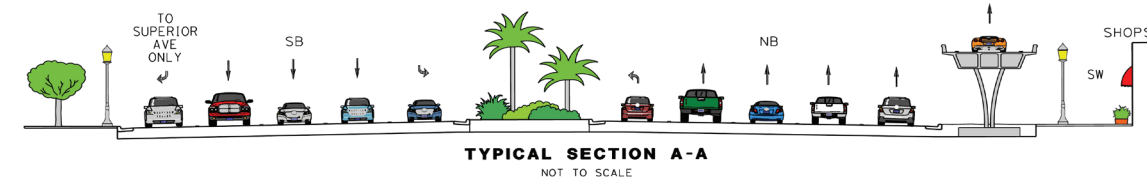
The No Build alternative reflects future conditions along SR-55/Newport Boulevard with no major improvements. This alternative also provides a “baseline condition” to which the other alternatives can be compared.

Transportation System Management (TSM)

The TSM alternative includes improvements, such as signal timing and bus turnouts, that can be made without significant impacts to properties and at a lower cost than the build alternatives.

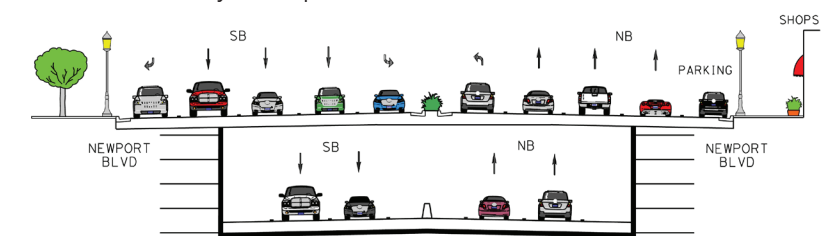
Elevated Turn Lanes

The Elevated Turn Lanes alternative features improvements to both ends of the study area. Some of the concepts under consideration will include vertically separating turn movements from 17th and 19th Streets to SR-55/Newport Boulevard, thereby increasing capacity along the corridor.



Cut and Cover

The Cut and Cover alternative evaluates building a new structure below Newport Boulevard. This alternative proposes a four-lane extension of the Costa Mesa Freeway under SR-55/Newport Boulevard from 19th Street to Industrial Way. Newport Boulevard could be reduced to a six-lane arterial with enhanced medians, parkways, and wider sidewalks. This alternative is designed to separate local traffic from regional through-traffic.



Study Schedule

Data Collection	> Mid 2011
Business Interviews	> Mid 2011
Convene Stakeholder Committees	> Mid/Late 2011
Initial Public Meeting	> Late 2011
Alternatives Development/Analysis	> Early 2012
Preliminary Environmental Study	> Late 2012
Follow-Up Public Meetings	> Mid 2013
Preparation of Final Report	> Mid 2013