



Riverside-Orange MIS

Approved Strategy



Riverside County to Orange County Major Investment Study

Improving Travel in a Vital Corridor

Travel between Orange County and Riverside County has steadily increased because of affordable housing in the Inland Empire and the abundance of jobs in Orange County. The Riverside Freeway (SR-91), the key link between the counties, reached its capacity many years ago. Congestion levels are expected to get worse given the continued demand for employment in Orange County and housing in the Inland Empire.

Looking at Alternatives

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) and the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) began a study in partnership with the Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCAs) to evaluate proposed, long-term projects for improving traffic congestion in the 91 Corridor. The 18-month study, known as a Major Investment Study (MIS), examined a Transportation Systems Management (TSM) alternative, new SR-91 lanes, new toll or non-toll corridors, light and heavy rail transit, express bus service and high-speed rail. The study area extended from SR-91 on the north to SR-74 on the south, and from I-5 and the Costa Mesa Freeway (SR-55) on the west to I-15 on the east.

Why a Study?

A study is required and fiscally prudent when looking at projects that cost taxpayers billions of dollars. The purpose of the study is to identify projects which are technically feasible, have public support and can be eligible for state and/or federal funding.

The Riverside County to Orange County Corridor Study, which includes a comprehensive public participation process, was divided into three major steps:

Step 1: Needs/Alternatives Identified Fall 2004. The study began in June 2004 to inform and involve local residents, communities and concerned groups and include their needs, ideas for improvements and concerns in a comprehensive technical analysis.

Step 2: Alternatives Reduced Spring/Summer 2005. Once the study team developed a broad range of scenarios, the new information was presented to the public for additional feedback to help pare down the list to the most viable alternatives.

Step 3: Solutions Presented Fall 2005. After each alternative has been analyzed, a strategy with “a program of projects” was preselected for public review.

The end result is a “locally preferred strategy” of improvements designed to improve travel in this key corridor. The Board-approved program of projects and “locally preferred strategy” from the MIS then move to project-level environmental processes.

What's Next?

On December 12, 2005, the Orange County Transportation Authority Board of Directors voted unanimously to approve a comprehensive strategy for improving traffic flow between Orange and Riverside counties. The improvement plan approved by the Board of Directors marks the culmination of the 18-month Major Investment Study (MIS). The “locally preferred strategy” approved by OCTA, and ratified by RCTC, will act as a roadmap for future transportation improvements. Please see reverse for a list of projects recommended for further study and consideration.

For more information contact Fernando Chavaria of OCTA at (714) 560-5306 or Eliza Echavarria of RCTC at (951) 787-7141.

OCTA Approves Strategy for Tackling Orange-Riverside Traffic Tie-ups

The projects recommended for further study and consideration include:

- Make improvements to the Riverside Freeway (SR-91) the first priority by adding up to two new lanes in each direction, starting with improvements between the Corona Freeway (I-15) and the Foothill Toll Road (SR-241), followed by improvements between SR-241 and the Costa Mesa Freeway (SR-55)
- Work with TCA to encourage usage of the toll roads by improving the connection between SR-241 and SR-91, and by widening the Foothill/Eastern toll roads
- Continue evaluating the costs and potential impacts of adding a new four- or six-lane elevated highway parallel to SR-91 between I-15 and SR-241
- Continue studying the technical feasibility of building a new four- or six-lane highway, which could include a tunnel, between I-15 at Cajalco Road in Riverside County and the intersection of SR-241 and SR-133 in Orange County, including joint-use opportunities and potential funding options
- Balance highway improvements with new transit service, including increased Metrolink service, express bus service and continued study of Maglev high-speed rail service between Anaheim and Ontario
- Eliminate a proposal to connect a new elevated highway to SR-91 and SR-55 due to high residential right-of-way impacts that would be necessary to widen SR-55
- Eliminate further study of widening Ortega Highway (SR-74) due to high costs and environmental impacts; continue studying operational and safety upgrades
- Negotiate cooperative agreements or joint powers agreements with other agencies for future technical studies of proposed projects