



SR-73 to El Toro Road Frequently Asked Questions

As of Fall 2013

What is the SR-73 to El Toro Improvement Project?

The project will:

- Enhance traffic flow and reduce congestion throughout the project area
- Widen the freeway to accommodate additional general purpose lanes from SR-73 to Alicia Parkway
- Extend the second carpool lane from El Toro Road to Alicia Parkway in each direction
- Reconstruct both the Avery Parkway and the La Paz Road interchanges
- Construct soundwalls as needed

What are the benefits of the project?

The project purpose is to:

- Increase capacity and operations within the project limits
- Provide extension of the HOV network within a portion of the project limits to increase capacity
- Improve merging/diverging from freeway ramps and improve ramp intersections, where needed
- Improve existing auxiliary lanes and add auxiliary lanes where needed to improve weaving operations

Why is OCTA improving the freeway?

The I-5 freeway is a vital north-south route for all of Southern California. Currently, 342,000 motorists travel the I-5 between the SR-73 and El Toro Road daily. Experts predict traffic volumes will increase 35 percent by 2030, totaling 460,000 motorists per day.

When do you expect construction on the project begin?

We are currently in the environmental phase, which is expected to be completed in 2014. Following the completion of this phase, the final design process will begin in 2014 and is expected to be completed in 2017. Construction is slated to begin in 2018 and is expected to be completed in 2022.

How is the project being funded?

The SR-73 to El Toro Improvement Project budget is \$560 million. The funding is coming from the second Measure M, the half-cent sales tax approved by nearly 70 percent of Orange County voters in 2006, as well as state and federal funds.

What are you doing to let the public know about the project?

The environmental phase includes extensive public outreach. In an effort to keep residents, businesses, and community leaders informed, we are actively meeting with key groups, homeowner associations, and businesses in the area. Contact Ryan Romeos at (714) 560-5787 or via e-mail at rromeos@octa.net to schedule a presentation. We have also set up a Facebook page and website, <https://www.facebook.com/OCI5SouthCounty> and www.octa.net/I5eltoro. Information regarding the project and public meetings is kept up to date on these websites.

When are you planning the public hearings or community meetings?

The public hearing will be hosted on Wednesday, September 25 in the City of Mission Viejo at the Normal P. Murray Community and Senior Center. Additional information regarding the hearing will be posted online once it is available.

Prior to the public hearing, community meetings were held in Laguna Hills and Mission Viejo in February 2013 to inform the public about the project and answer questions.

How do you coordinate with cities affected by this project?

We keep in close contact and communication with all the surrounding cities. We meet with their elected officials, city managers, public works directors, and many others at the staff level. We host monthly technical meetings with OCTA, Caltrans, and City staff to keep them up to date about this project.

Why are you adding carpool lanes? There is a carpool lane there already.

The project will extend the second carpool lane in both directions between El Toro Road and Alicia Parkway. Additionally, the project proposes to remove the existing buffer between the carpool lane and general purpose lanes, which will accommodate continuous access throughout the project limits.

What are continuous access carpool lanes?

Designed and operated much like general purpose lanes, continuous access carpool lanes allow carpoolers to enter or exit at any point along the route. As a result, there is no reason to rush across several lanes of traffic to enter the carpool lanes. It also reduces the chance of missing your exit since you can cross over from the carpool lane at anytime.

Where will the soundwalls be constructed?

State and federal standards determine where soundwalls are built. Each location with homes, businesses, or other noise-sensitive receivers has been evaluated for worst-case projected traffic noise impacts. Those with projected future worst-case traffic noise levels near or above the Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) were then evaluated with a soundwall as a noise abatement measure. For a soundwall to be determined feasible, it needs to reduce traffic noise by at least five decibels (dBA). For a soundwall to then be considered reasonable, construction costs for the soundwall must be below an amount determined by a formula that takes into account the number of homes that benefit from the soundwall and the percentage the wall would cost in relation to the overall project. Soundwalls have been

analyzed as part of the project and the results of the analysis are included in the Draft Environmental Document. For more information see <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/env/noise/index.htm>

When would you begin construction on the walls?

Construction of the soundwalls is usually concurrent with the freeway construction. It is unusual for a soundwall to be constructed prior to the commencement of freeway improvement construction work.

What happens to the existing sound and retaining walls when the freeway gets widened?

In order to accommodate the freeway widening, some of the existing sound and retaining walls will need to be removed and replaced in-kind at the new edge of pavement. The replaced walls will generally be the same height and length as the existing walls.

Do you expect to need more property for the project?

Caltrans and OCTA's goal in any project is to minimize the disturbance to the surrounding community and residents. As a result, most of the proposed project improvements are within the State R/W throughout the project limits. However, both of the build alternatives propose full and partial acquisitions, as well as Temporary Construction Easements (TCEs) to allow for the construction of the widening.

Why will you have to improve the La Paz Road interchange when it was just under construction? And didn't the work at Avery Parkway end not too long ago?

Some current projects that have recently completed construction, such as the La Paz Road interchange, were approved before the second phase of Measure M was passed. Projects like these take several years of planning and preparation. Both the La Paz Road and Avery Parkway interchange will be reconstructed to provide additional capacity once this project begins construction in 2018.

Are there any other projects that are going on in this same area?

Since construction is still five years away, other projects are still being planned and we will keep the community informed as we are made aware of other projects. As with any project, we will work with other agencies to coordinate construction schedules to minimize impacts to local residents, businesses, and motorists.

Who can I speak to regarding my concerns and how can I get my comments documented?

There are multiple ways to provide comments on the project:

1. **Email:** Send your comments to Caltrans at D12.5Widening@dot.ca.gov.
2. **Mail:** Send your comments to Caltrans at the following address:
Caltrans District 12
3347 Michelson Drive, Suite 100
Irvine, CA 92612-8894
Attn: Gabriela Jauregui
3. **Public Hearing:** Provide your comments at the public hearing that will be held on September 25th.

You can also contact Gabriela Jauregui, Caltrans Environmental; and/or Ryan Romeos, OCTA Community Outreach; and/or visit the project website at www.octa.net/I5eltoro.

How can I get a copy of the Draft Environmental Document?

Maps for the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Finding of No Significant Impact and Initial Study/Environmental Assessment and other project information are available for review and copying (for a fee) at the Caltrans District 12 Office, 3347 Michelson Drive, Suite 100, Irvine, CA 92612 on weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Finding of No Significant Impact and Initial Study/Environmental Assessment is also available for review during regular business hours at:

Orange County Public Library – Laguna Niguel, 30341 Crown Valley Parkway, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677
Monday to Thursday, 10AM to 9PM, Friday and Saturday 10AM to 5PM, Sunday 12PM to 5PM

Orange County Public Library – Mission Viejo, 100 Civic Center, Mission Viejo, CA 92691
Monday to Thursday, 10AM to 9PM, Friday and Saturday 10AM to 5PM, Sunday 12PM to 5PM

Orange County Public Library – Technology Branch, 25555 Alicia Parkway, Laguna Hills, CA 92653
Monday to Thursday, 10AM to 9PM, Friday and Saturday 10AM to 5PM

Orange County Public Library – Lake Forest, 24672 Raymond Way, Lake Forest, CA 92630
Monday to Thursday, 9AM to 9PM, Friday and Saturday 9AM to 5PM

Orange County Public Library – San Juan Capistrano, 31495 El Camino Real, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
Monday to Wednesday, 10AM to 8PM, Thursday, 10AM to 6PM, Saturday 10AM to 5PM, Sunday 12PM to 5PM

Laguna Woods Mini-Branch Library, 24264 El Toro Road, Laguna Woods, CA 92637
Monday to Friday, 10AM to 4:30PM

And online at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist12/files/5Widening>

What if I have more questions?

For more information regarding this project, contact Ryan Romeos at (714) 560-5787 or via e-mail at rromeos@octa.net.