



PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: JUNE 11, 2012

ITEM NUMBER: **X. 1**

SUBJECT: I-405 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

DATE: JUNE 4, 2012

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: RAJA SETHURAMAN, TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
MANAGER, (714) 754-5032

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The I-405 Freeway Improvement Project is proposed by the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) between the SR-73 and the I-605 Freeways. OCTA is considering several project alternatives to increase the capacity of the I-405 Freeway by adding one or two lanes in each direction. An Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) was prepared for the project and was released for public review and comment on May 18, 2012. The comments are due to the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) on July 3, 2012.

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide recommendation to the City Council on the I-405 Freeway Improvement Project EIR/EIS.

RAJA SETHURAMAN
Transportation Services Manager

CLAIRE FLYNN
Assistant Development Services Director

ERNESTO MUNOZ
Public Services Director

Attachments: 1 – I-405 Freeway Improvement Alternatives
2 – OCTA Presentation to City Council Study Session of May 8, 2012
3 – I-405 Improvement Project Public Hearing Notice

Distribution: Chief Executive Officer
Assistant Chief Executive Officer
City Attorney
Economic and Development Services Director
Interim City Engineer
Staff
File

BACKGROUND:

Approximately six years ago, the City, in cooperation with OCTA and Caltrans, completed two major freeway widening projects: the I-405/SR-55 Transitway Project and I-405/SR-73 Confluence Project. These projects resulted in the construction of new freeway onramps and offramps, reconfiguration of ramps, and widening of the freeway within Costa Mesa City limits to the ultimate configuration as called for by the various agencies. The City of Costa Mesa also undertook improvements at the Fairview Road/I-405 and Harbor Boulevard/I-405 Interchanges to meet City and regional transportation needs.

Over the past several years, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), in association with the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the cities adjacent to the I-405 Corridor between the SR-73 and I-605 Freeways, has been working on the I-405 Improvement Project. The goal of the project is to analyze a series of alternatives to improve the capacity in this portion of the freeway.

The City of Costa Mesa participated in the project development with representation in the Policy Advisory Committee by Mayor Monahan and prior Mayor Mansoor, and in the Technical Advisory Committee by the Transportation Services Manager. Mayor Pro Tem Rigeimer was appointed to the Policy Advisory Committee in early 2011. The I-405 Improvement Project has progressed from the Major Investment Study (MIS) phase to Project Report/Environmental Documentation phase. At the conclusion of the MIS phase, the OCTA Board of Directors recommended alternatives for further study, which generally consisted of a **one-lane** or **two-lane** addition to the I-405 Freeway from north of the Santa Ana River to the I-605 Freeway. The alternatives, depicted in Attachment 1, included:

- **Alternative 1** – Add one lane in each direction to the I-405 Freeway between Euclid Street and the I-605 Freeway; and
- **Alternative 2** – Add two lanes in each direction to the I-405 Freeway between Euclid Street and the I-605 Freeway.

Until this point in the study, neither alternative proposed that the freeway be widened within the Costa Mesa City limits given that prior projects implemented by OCTA and the City had already completed the necessary ultimate widening of the freeway at this location. However, in January 2009, the OCTA Board approved an additional alternative for study involving express lanes between the SR-73 and I-605 Freeways:

- **Alternative 3** calls for the addition of one lane in each direction on the I-405 Freeway between Euclid Street and the I-605 Freeway, and the addition of a High Occupancy Toll (HOT)/Express Lane on the I-405 Freeway between the SR-73 and I-605 Freeways. This will result in a conversion of the existing High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane to a toll express lane and the addition of a second express lane. In addition, the alternative includes a direct HOV lane to express lane connectors between the SR-73 and I-405 Freeways.

The project with either Alternative 1 or 2 was originally estimated to cost approximately \$600 million. This estimate was later revised to approximately \$1.4 billion due to the need for reconstruction of several interchanges and bridges along the I-405 Freeway north of the Santa Ana River. In order to finance this higher than estimated cost, the consideration of HOT/express lanes was included as an additional alternative (Alternative 3). The cost estimate for Alternative 3 is approximately \$1.7 billion. This new alternative was primarily added to address potential funding issues for the implementation of the entire project.

On April 25, 2011, OCTA staff presented a financial analysis report to their Board of Directors. Based on that report, Alternatives 1 and 2 have potential funding deficiencies of approximately \$700 million and \$800 million, respectively. Based on updated revenue estimates from the HOT/Express Lanes for Alternative 3, it is forecasted that there is a potential deficit of \$600 million for implementation of this alternative.

The three alternatives were presented to the City Council at the April 12, 2011 and May 8, 2012 Study Sessions, at the May 17, 2011 and November 1, 2011 regular City Council Meetings, and to the Planning Commission at the January 9, 2012 meeting. Staff also presented the input provided by the community on the Project Alternative 3 through letters/e-mails and petitions to the City Council and per their direction forwarded them to OCTA. The final presentation made by OCTA at the May 8, 2012 City Council Study Session is included in Attachment 2.

On May 18, 2012, the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as the lead agency, released the draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for public review and comment. The 45-day review period closes on July 2, 2012. Several public hearings are proposed for the project along various cities in the corridor. The first public hearing was held in Costa Mesa on June 4, 2012.

ANALYSIS:

The proposed improvement alternatives originally approved by the OCTA Board in February 2006, considered the potential right-of-way impact of widening, and limited the alternatives to those that would add one or two lanes in each direction generally within the existing freeway right-of-way north of the Santa Ana River. The initial plans for this project, therefore, did not include any widening or impacts in Costa Mesa. However, the proposed new alternative (Alternative 3) to add express lanes between the SR-73 and I-605 Freeways, and a direct connector between the SR-73 and I-405 Freeways, will require widening within the Costa Mesa City limits.

Alternative 3, which is the HOT/Express Lane Alternative, will result in the widening of the freeway, thereby bringing the new lanes closer to the neighborhoods within the Costa Mesa section and will also create significant potential aesthetic impacts due to new direct connector ramps between the I-405 and SR-73 Freeways. In addition, the Fairview Road Bridge over the I-405 Freeway and the southbound Harbor Boulevard loop onramp to southbound I-405 Freeway will need to be demolished and replaced to accommodate proposed new HOT/Express lanes. Within Costa Mesa City limits, Alternative 3 will result in the conversion of an existing free HOV lane to a HOT/Express lane. However, there will be no addition of a mixed flow lane in either direction. North of the Santa Ana River, the HOT/Express lane alternative adds one mixed flow and one express lane and converts the existing HOV lane to a HOT/Express lane.

While Alternative 3 may improve the flow of traffic in express lanes, projected traffic conditions for a **majority** of the motorists traveling on the mixed flow lanes are expected to improve with the implementation of Alternative 2. This is because Alternative 2 adds two mixed flow lanes in each direction that will benefit a majority of motorists traveling on those lanes. Within Costa Mesa City limits, there is no change to the number of mixed flow lanes under any of the Alternatives.

The Alternative 3 will result in conversion of the current free carpool lanes to express lanes. Further, access to these express lanes will be limited, with the only Costa Mesa access being at SR-73 Freeway. There will not be access to the express lanes for motorists entering and

exiting the I-405 Freeway at Fairview Road and Harbor Boulevard. The entry point for these motorists is proposed at the Magnolia Street/Warner Avenue interchange in Fountain Valley. Therefore, for the major gateways to the City at Harbor Boulevard and Fairview Road, there is limited to no benefit with the improvements proposed by Alternative 3.

Construction of Alternative 3 of the I-405 Improvement Project is anticipated to take approximately 48 to 54 months. The City of Costa Mesa residents have endured approximately 10 years of construction due to various projects on the I-405 including the SR-55/I-405 Transitway project, I-405/SR-73 Confluence Project, Susan Street Offramp, I-405/Fairview Road Interchange, and the Harbor Boulevard/I-405 Improvement Project. The proposed Alternative 3 will result in significant impacts that would exceed those experienced by all of the previous projects. This is due to the need for the demolition and reconstruction of the Fairview Road Bridge and the Harbor Boulevard southbound loop onramp. The duration of construction and the anticipated impacts are not identified in the draft EIR/EIS as it is deferred to the final design phase. However, based on input provided by OCTA staff at the May City Council Study Session, the impacts to the residents will last over several years. This is of significant concern to the residents and visitors to Costa Mesa.

Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement:

The draft EIR/EIS for the I-405 Improvement Project was released for public review and comment on May 18, 2012. The 45-day review period closes on July 2, 2012. Staff is currently reviewing the document and will have final comments to Caltrans prior to the close of the comment period. The City's response will include any input received from the Planning Commission and the City Council. The notification of the EIR/EIS availability and the public hearings is included in Attachment 3.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

As the project is proposed within Caltrans' jurisdiction, there is no environmental action by the City.

ALTERNATIVES:

No alternatives other than those proposed as part of this project are presented.

CONCLUSION:

OCTA has initiated the Project Report/Environmental Documentation phase of the I-405 Improvement Project. The OCTA Board initially approved consideration of a one-lane or two-lane addition to the Freeway north of the Santa Ana River in February 2006. However, subsequently an additional alternative (Alternative 3) was added to the study. This alternative includes addition of HOT/Express Lanes on the I-405 Freeway between the SR-73 and I-605 Freeways.

The addition of HOT/Express Lanes will result in the widening of the I-405 Freeway within Costa Mesa City limits and the construction of a new freeway to freeway connector between the SR-73 and I-405 Freeways. While the widening will be within Caltrans' right-of-way, the resultant freeway widening will result in mainline lanes pushed outward closer to residential development on both sides of the Freeway.

The project requires total reconstruction of the Fairview Road Bridge over the I-405 Freeway and the southbound Harbor Boulevard loop onramp to the I-405 Freeway, as well as the need for a temporary closure of several on- and off-ramps to the I-405 Freeway from Harbor Boulevard and Fairview Road. The construction of Alternative 3, therefore, will create significant traffic impacts due to traffic detours and construction activity over the proposed construction period of 48 to 54 months.

Based on traffic analyses submitted to date, the proposed improvements with Alternative 3 do not significantly benefit the City, and the potential widening of the freeway creates major impacts to the community. The area residents have submitted many letters and petitions opposing further consideration of Alternative 3 within the City limits.

The draft EIR/EIS for the project is released by Caltrans for public review and comment, with the comment period ending on July 2, 2012. Staff will provide technical comments prior to the deadline along with any input from the Planning Commission and the City Council.

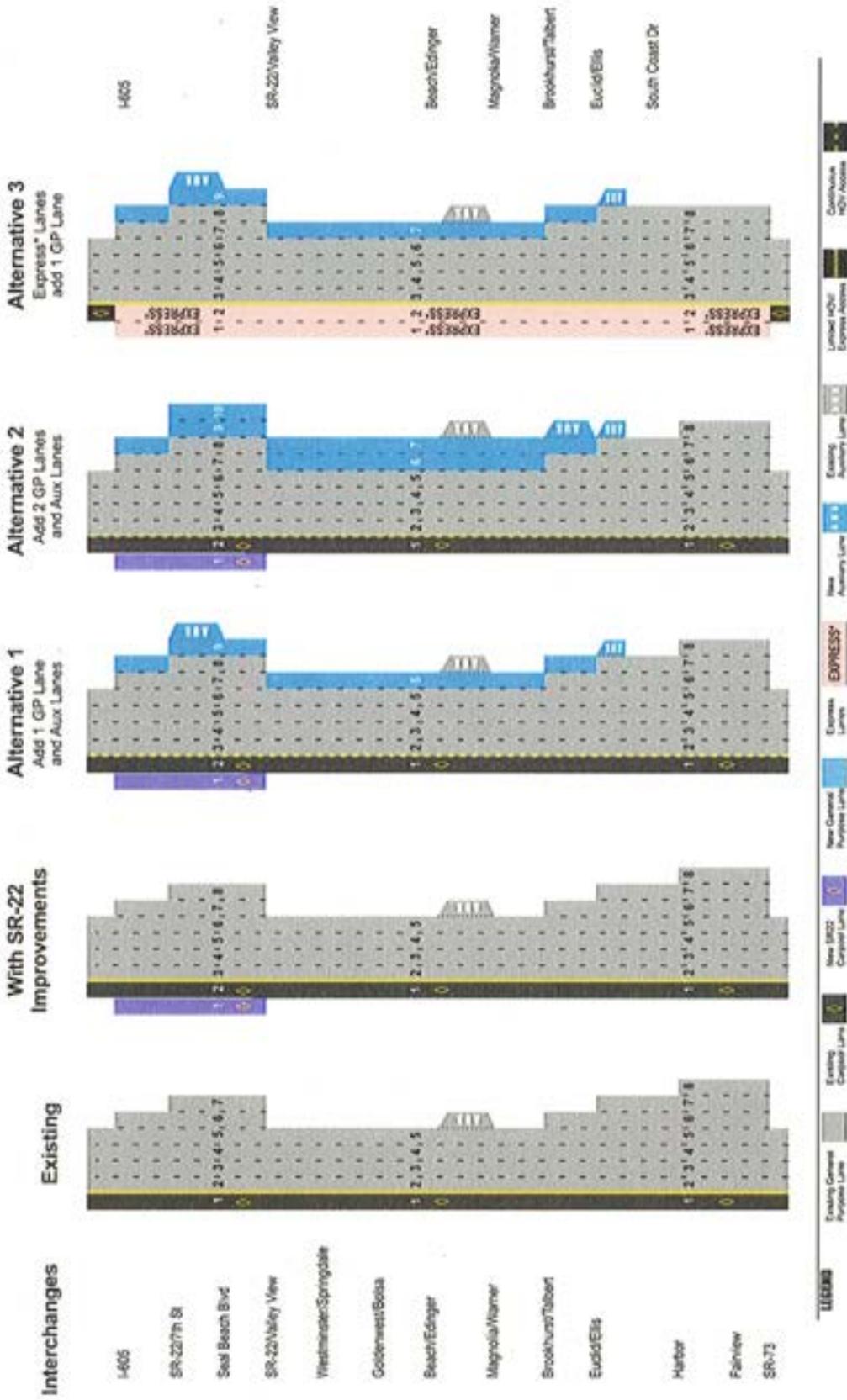


Figure 3.1.6-3: I-405 Northbound Lane Schematic

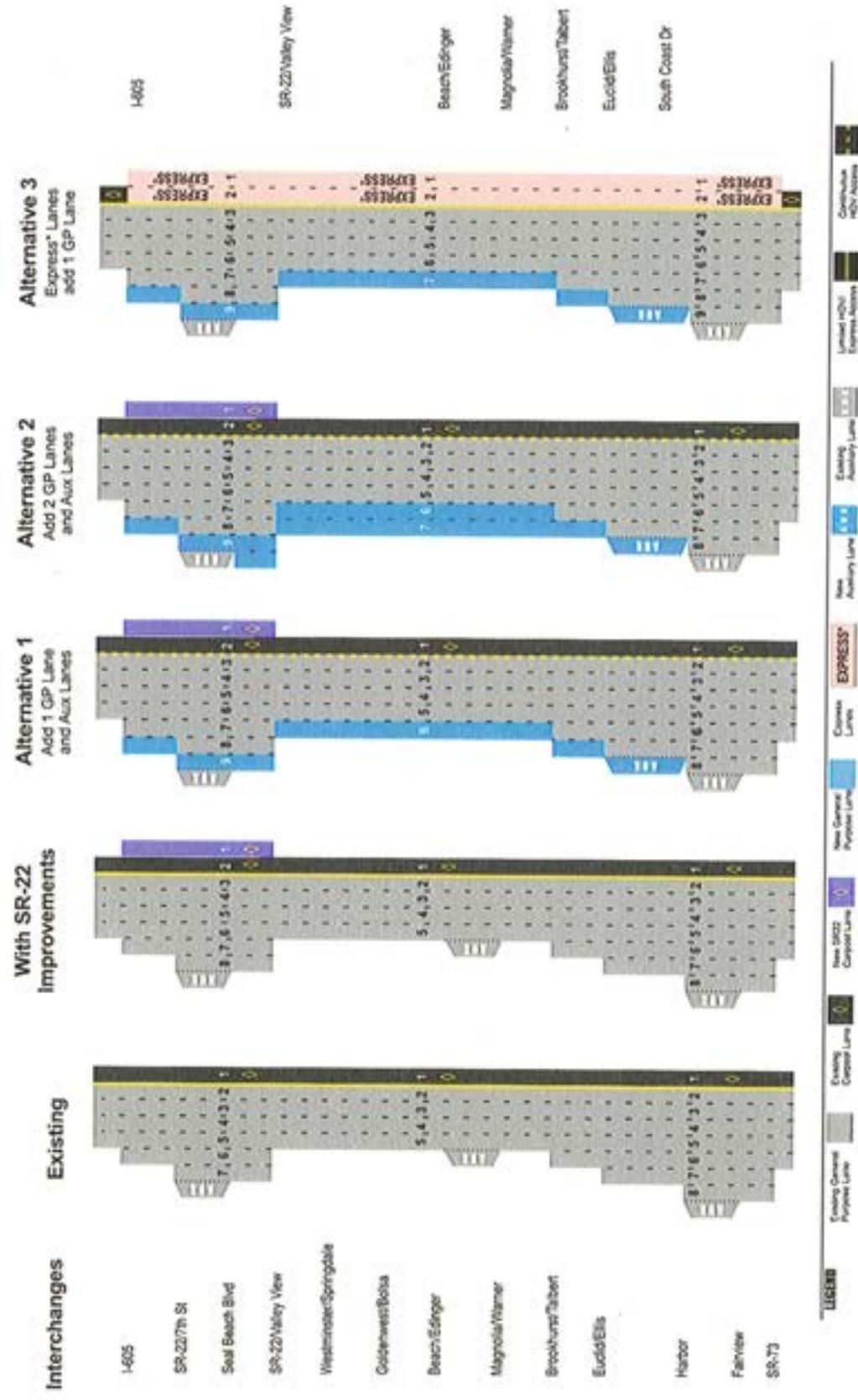


Figure 3.1.6-4: I-405 Southbound Lane Schematic

San Diego Freeway / Interstate 405 Improvement Project



Costa Mesa City Council Study Session

May 8, 2012



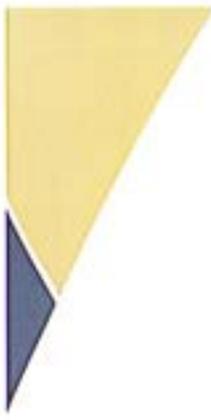
Improving I-405

- Public priority
- Limited mainline improvements since 1989
- Carries nearly 300,000 ADT
- Severe congestion in peak
- Measure M2 adds one GP each direction*
- Environmental review under way

* GP = General Purpose Lane

Project History

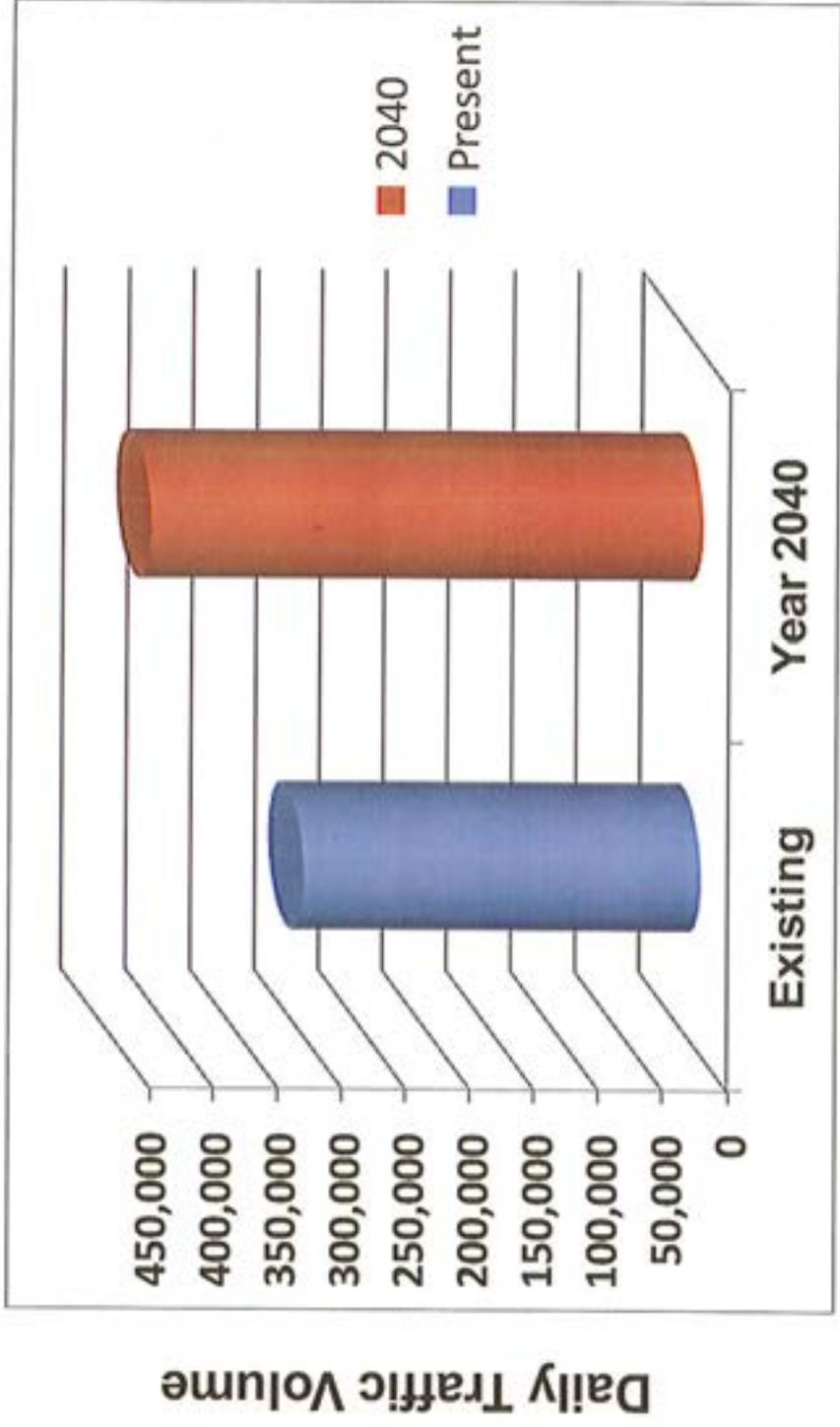
- Major Investment Study 2003-2006 (14 alternatives)
 - Includes widening and rail/bus transit options
 - Impacts on right of way (ROW) flagged as a key issue
- Project Study Report 2007-2008 (2 alternatives)
 - Add 1 lane each direction
 - Add 2 lanes each direction
- Environmental review started in 2009



Project Need

- Both GP and HOV traffic exceeds available capacity
- GP lanes have operational and geometric deficiencies
- Interchanges have geometric, storage, operational deficiencies
- Limitations in detecting, rapidly responding to, and quickly clearing traffic accidents from traffic lanes

Current and Projected Traffic



If built for demand ~ 20 lanes needed



I-405 Project Purpose

- Increase mobility:
 - Reduce congestion
 - Maximize corridor throughput
 - Improve trip reliability
 - Optimize operations
- Avoid, minimize and mitigate environmental and ROW impacts

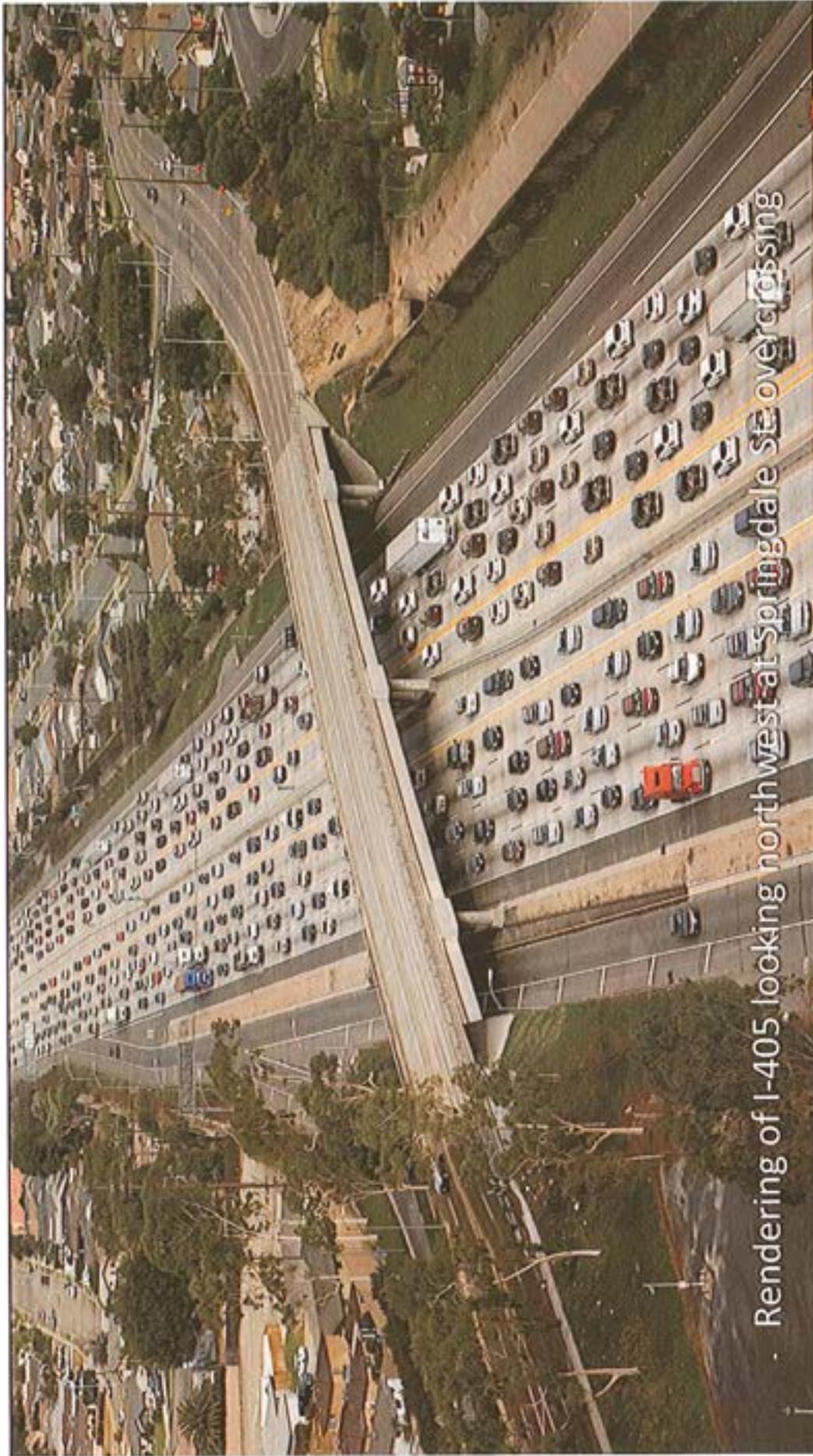


General Project Improvements



- Builds bridges, overcrossings to Master Plan of Arterial Highways standards
- Improves local streets & on/off ramps
- Adds bike lanes, sidewalks
- Maintains or improves existing sound walls
- Constructs additional sound walls

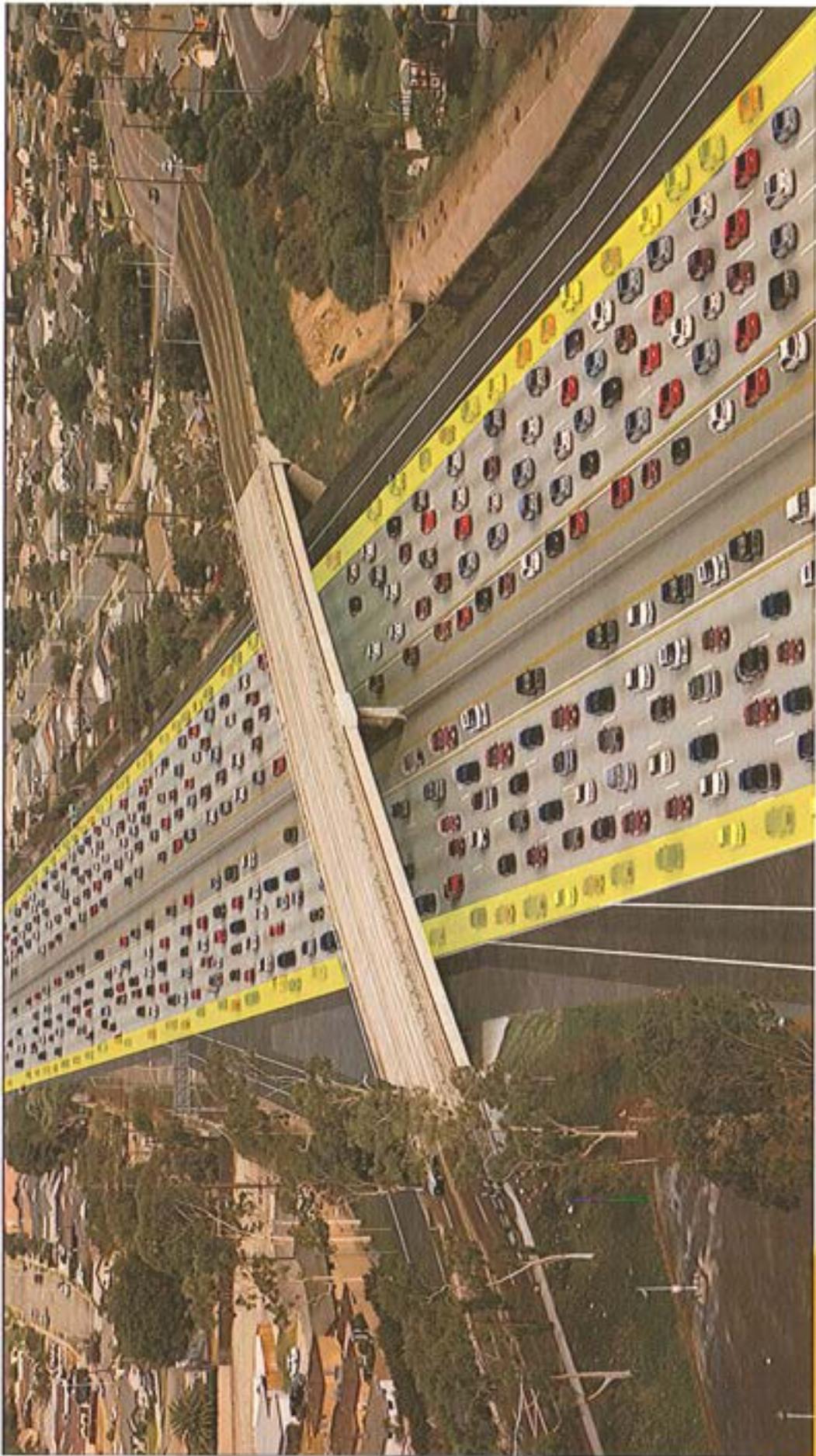
Existing Conditions



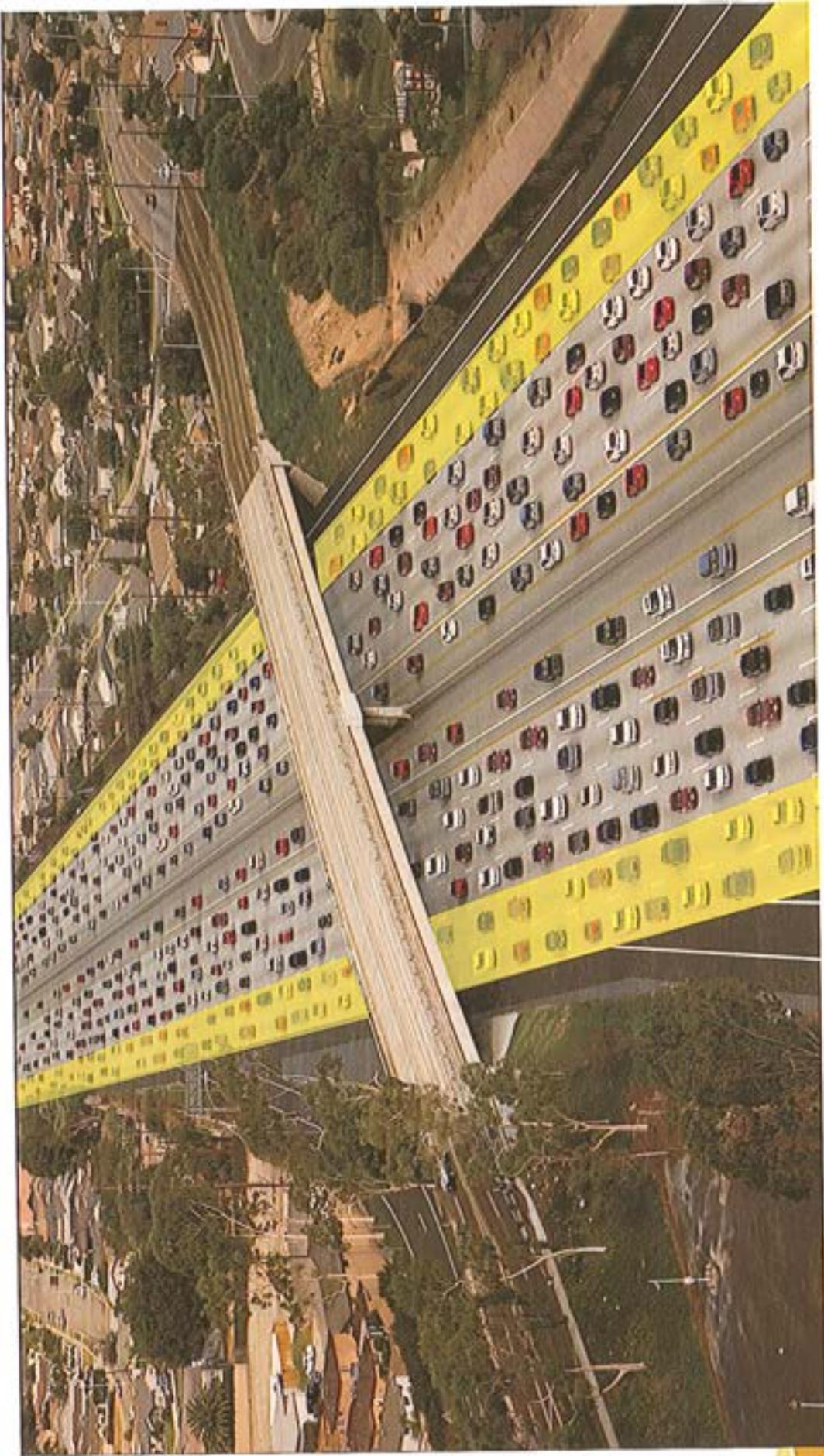
Rendering of I-405 looking north west at Springdale SE overcrossing



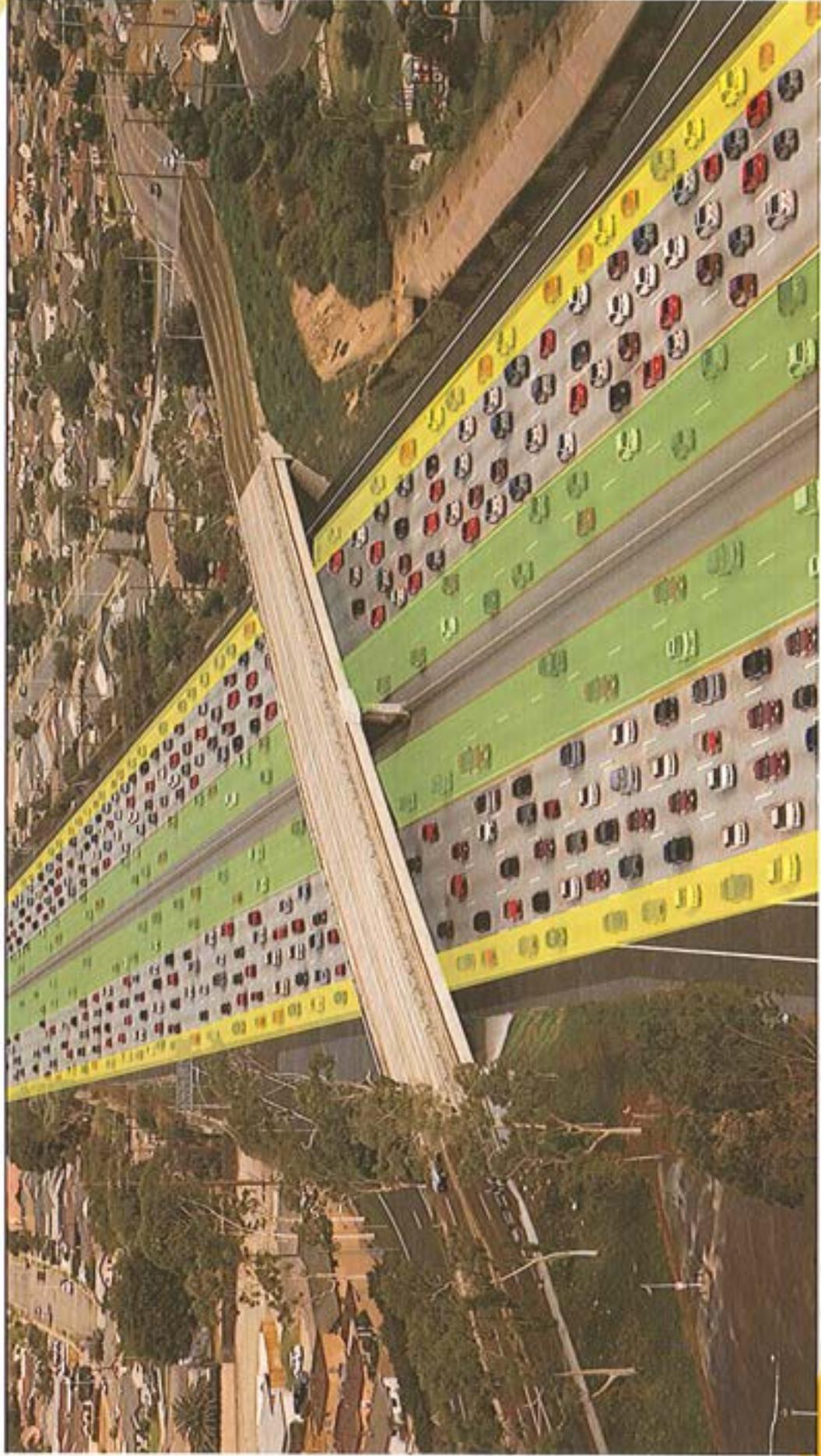
Alternative 1 – Adds one GP lane in each direction



Alternative 2 – Adds two GP lanes in each direction



Alternative 3 – Adds one GP and one Express Lane



Existing carpool lane combines with new Express Lane to provide a two-lane each direction facility like the 91 Express Lanes

Alternative 3

- Includes Measure M2 GP lane
- Provides additional capacity and financing method
- Excess revenue could be reinvested in corridor
- Provides commuters with choice for a fast, safe and reliable commute

Ingress/Egress



Build Alternatives Cost

- Alternative 1 \$1.3 billion
- Alternative 2 \$1.4 billion
- Alternative 3 \$1.7 billion

(assumes Design-Build delivery method)



Respectful of Adjacent Properties

- ROW impacts minimized
- Draft PR shows no full residential acquisitions*
- Up to four businesses needed to be acquired
- Some temporary construction easements needed

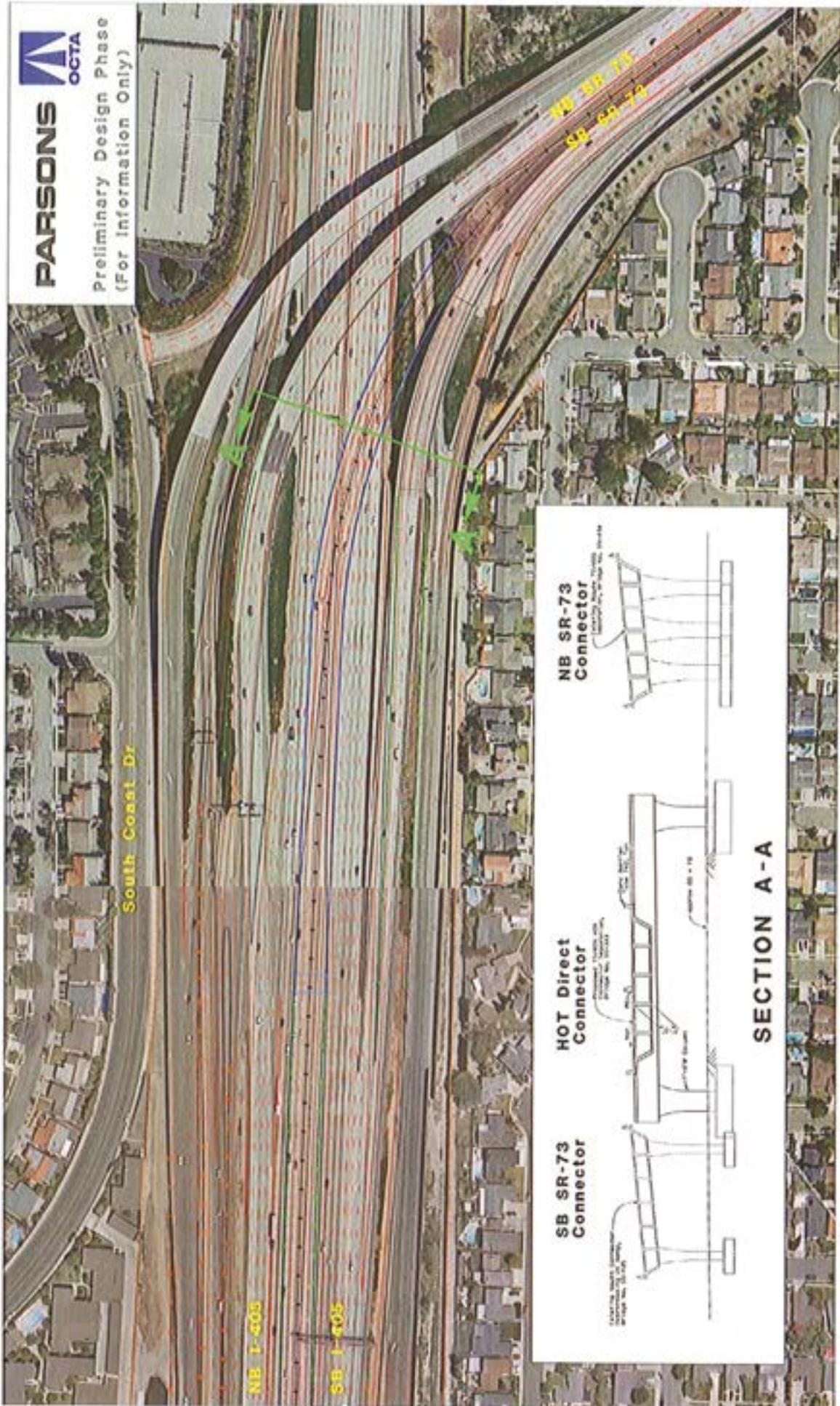


* PR = Project Report

Costa Mesa Improvements



Proposed Express Lanes and Bridge



Costa Mesa Specifics

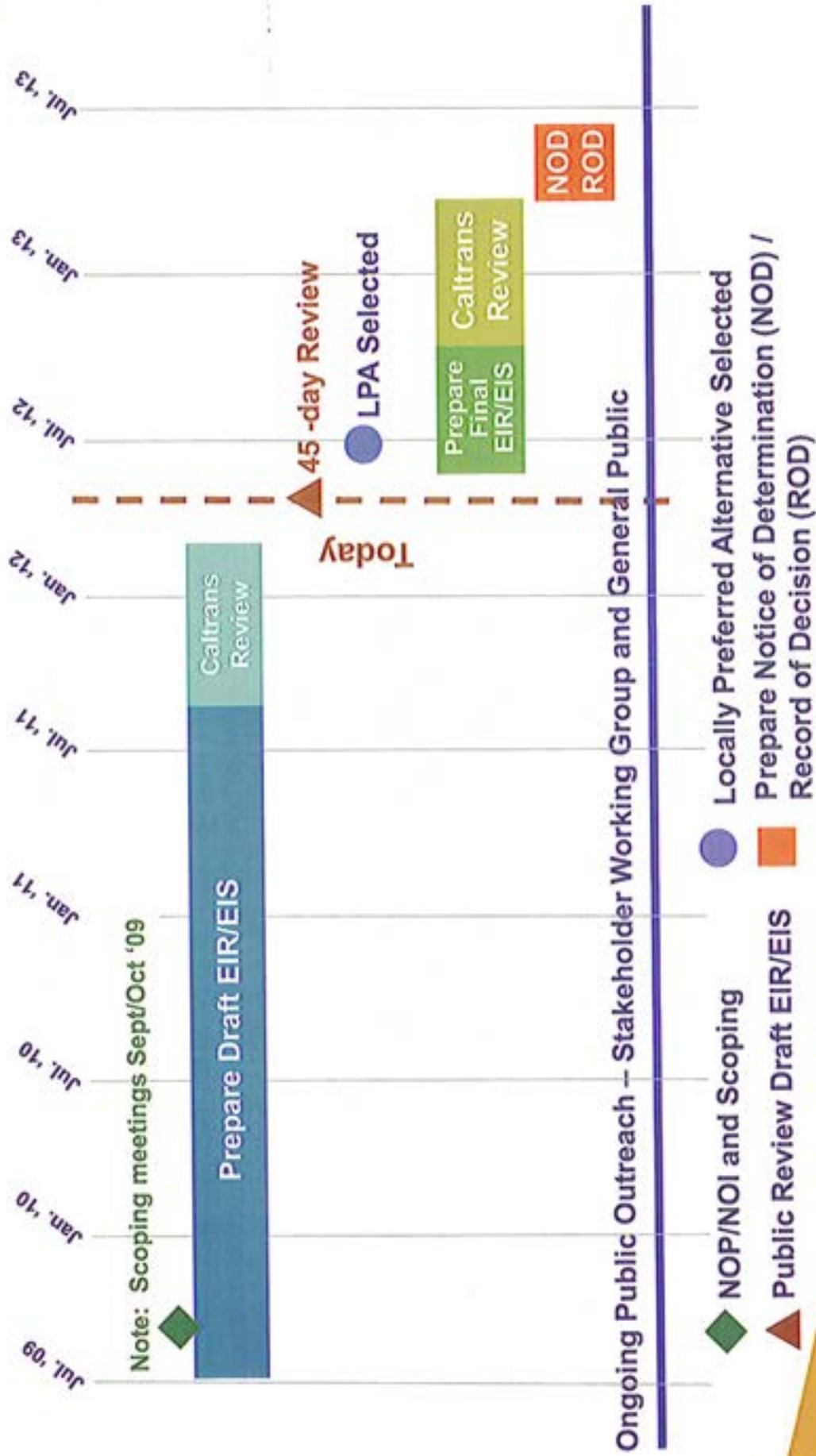
- Structures
 - Fairview bridge replaced
 - Accommodates direct connection to SR-73 in Alt. 3
 - SB Harbor bridge replaced*
 - Harbor on-ramp to SB I-405 replaced
- Ramps
 - Susan Street off-ramp minimally impacted
 - Harbor / Fairview collector-distributor realigned

* SB = southbound

Proposed Lane Layout North of Mesa North



Schedule Update





Public Hearings

■ Tentative Locations

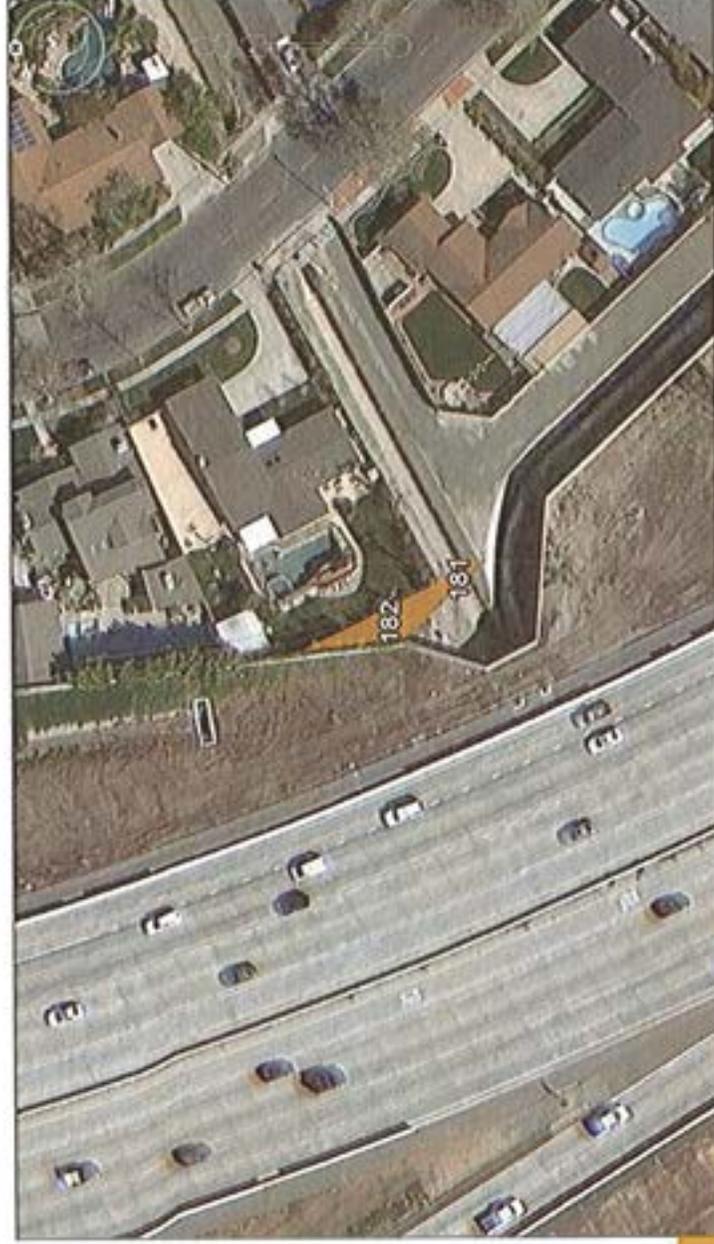
- Westminster Community Center June 6
- Rush Park Auditorium, Rossmore June 7
- Fountain Valley Senior Center June 14

■ Meeting Format

- Open House 6:00 to 6:30 p.m.
- Presentation 6:30 p.m.
- Open House After Presentation

Right-Of-Way Stations

- One-on-one responses to questions
- Identify initial sound wall locations
- Share ROW impacts via computers



Submitting Comments

- Written comments accepted by letter, email, or on website
- On web:
 - www.octa.net/405ImprovementProject
 - www.dot.ca.gov
- At public hearing, via court reporter





THANK YOU



www.facebook.com/405improvement



www.octa.net/405improvement





Save The Date

I-405 Improvement Project Public Hearings

Please join us at any of the four public hearings to provide your comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement (EIR/EIS).

Public hearings will be held from **6 to 8 p.m.** with a formal presentation beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Additionally, informational boards will be available for public viewing and project representatives will be available to answer your questions.

You may stop by at any time to provide comments.

We want to hear from you!

The I-405 Improvement Project project Draft EIR/EIS is anticipated to be released on May 18 and available for public review and comment through July 2. The document is available at local libraries and on Caltrans' website at the following address: www.dot.ca.gov/dist12/405index.htm

Once the environmental document is released, comments may be submitted by mail to **Smita Deshpande**, Caltrans District 12 at **2201 Dupont Drive, Suite 200, Irvine CA, 92612** or by e-mail at: 405.dedcomments.parsons@parsons.com

Monday, June 4, 2012
**Orange Coast College
Student Center**
2701 Fairview Rd., Costa Mesa

Wednesday, June 6, 2012
Westminster Community Center
8200 Westminster Blvd., Westminster

Thursday, June 7, 2012
Rush Park Auditorium
3021 Blume Dr., Rossmore

Thursday, June 14, 2012
Fountain Valley Senior Center
17967 Bushard St., Fountain Valley

**For more information
please contact:**

Christina Byrne
(714) 560-5717
cbyrne@octa.net

www.octa.net/405Improvement



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