



Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority

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ALAMEDA CORRIDOR AGENCY, CALTRANS MARK START OF CONSTRUCTION ON CONGESTION-RELIEF PROJECT

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY – Transportation officials today formally kicked off construction of the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) Grade Separation, a half-mile-long bridge that will significantly reduce traffic congestion in the port-area community of Wilmington.

During a brief ceremony at the project site, officials from the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority (ACTA) and the California Department of Transportation simultaneously turned shovels to symbolically break ground on the project. Also attending were representatives of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and elected officials and community leaders from Wilmington and surrounding areas.

When completed in Summer 2004, the PCH Grade Separation will carry PCH traffic over the Alameda Corridor freight rail expressway, a branch rail line and Alameda Street. The bridge will widen PCH from two lanes to three lanes in each direction and eliminate conflicts between street traffic and train traffic, thereby significantly reducing congestion in the area. Additional benefits include reducing emissions from idling and slow-moving trucks and enhancing public safety by improving access for emergency vehicles such as ambulances, fire trucks and police vehicles.

"Wilmington residents have been waiting for this day for a long time," said Los Angeles City Councilwoman Janice Hahn, chairwoman of the ACTA Governing Board, whose district includes the project area. "Today, having worked closely with the community to minimize the impact of construction, we are taking the first step toward easing the congestion that has plagued the Wilmington community for far too long."

Lucia Moreno, a Wilmington resident since 1971 who drives Pacific Coast Highway almost daily, said she is looking forward to completion of the project. "I'm eager for it to be built because I'm looking forward to a decrease in congestion and a smoother flow of traffic, with people getting to where they need to go without having to wait at the railroad tracks," said Moreno, a member of the Wilmington Neighborhood Council.

"This project is a prime example of what can be accomplished when government agencies cooperate to build transportation infrastructure that serves the public good," said Maria Contreras-Sweet, Secretary of the state Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.

(MORE)

Pacific Coast Highway Grade Separation

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ACTA is managing design and construction of the project under a unique agreement with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The \$107 million project is funded by Caltrans (\$79 million), ACTA (\$14 million) and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (\$14 million).

ACTA, which opened the \$2.4 billion Alameda Corridor freight rail expressway on time and on budget in April 2002, became involved with the PCH Grade Separation project at the urging of elected officials when it became clear that the project would not be under construction before the Alameda Corridor opened. It is the only location along the 20-mile route of the Alameda Corridor where street traffic and rail traffic still conflict.

To accommodate construction, PCH between the Terminal Island Freeway and Coil Avenue has been closed to traffic since June 1. Traffic is being routed around the construction zone utilizing Terminal Island Freeway, Sepulveda Boulevard, Alameda Street, Colon Street and Coil Avenue. Access to all businesses in the construction zone is expected to be maintained at all times. The construction contractor, Yeager Skanska, Inc., of Riverside, Calif., is required to open the bridge to at least two lanes of traffic in each direction by April 2004. Full project completion is expected by Summer 2004.

The Alameda Corridor is a 20-mile freight rail expressway linking the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach to the transcontinental rail yards near downtown Los Angeles. The ports are the two busiest in the nation, handling more than \$200 billion in cargo annually and generating billions of dollars in related economic benefits and jobs. The volume of cargo containers moving through the ports is expected to double in the next 10 years, making it critical to improve the ground transportation system. ACTA is a joint powers authority governed by the cities and ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

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