

# News from SANBAG and Caltrans



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November 12, 2009 – For Immediate Release

## Meeting to Offer Chance for Public Comments on New Design Alternative for Devore Interchange Project

Engineering and environmental studies for the Interstate 15/Interstate 215 interchange in Devore are underway, and a meeting will be held this month to offer a chance for residents, business owners, commuters and other interested parties to comment on design alternatives, including a new design that has been developed.

The California Department of Transportation and San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) will host a public meeting November 19 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at Kimbark Elementary School, 18021 Kenwood Avenue, in Devore.

SANBAG and Caltrans are studying the proposed addition of one northbound lane and one southbound lane on Interstate 15 between Kenwood Avenue and Interstate 215. The project also proposes to improve vehicle merging operations, add truck bypass lanes and connect local roadways, including reconnecting historic Route 66 to Cajon Boulevard.

Reconstruction of the interchange is intended to relieve traffic congestion, enhance safety and improve the flow of goods along this national freight corridor. Improvements will be compatible with future plans to widen Interstate 15 through the Cajon Pass.

Three design alternatives were presented to the public during a meeting on May 14. Based on the public comments received, another design alternative has been developed for consideration. Maps of all four design options will be available for public review at the November 19 meeting. The meeting will allow visitors to view maps and exhibits, talk to project planners and provide written comments about the project using provided comment cards. Visitors also will receive fact sheets and can register to receive future project information.

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**News from SANBAG and Caltrans**  
**Page 2 of 2**

“The Devore interchange is the worst traffic bottleneck on Interstate 15 in San Bernardino County,” said SANBAG Executive Director Deborah Barmack. “SANBAG and Caltrans are studying a range of design alternatives with the goal of improving traffic circulation and relieving the all-too-common traffic tie-ups in this area.”

Traffic volumes are projected to increase dramatically in the coming years, according to recent traffic studies. Approximately 140,000 to 160,000 vehicles travel through this interchange daily. This number is expected to grow to 379,000 per day by 2040. While current delays cost motorists about \$3.75 million per year, delay costs are forecast to jump to more than \$80 million per year in 2040.

During this planning phase of the project, a number of technical studies will be completed for several project alternatives. Studies include traffic management and simulations, storm water data, hazardous material, geotechnical issues, fault lines and drainage. This phase also includes studies to assess how the project will affect the local environment, including the impact on residents, cultural and historic properties, air quality, water quality, noise levels, sensitive plants and wildlife and visual aesthetics.

The project has significant engineering and environmental challenges, including current tight interchange spacing, the need to keep existing freeway lanes open during construction, a high level of local seismic activity and the presence of a number of endangered species, such as the San Bernardino Kangaroo Rat, Arroyo Toad and California Gnatcatcher, near the Cajon Creek Wash.

The engineering and environmental studies are scheduled to be complete by late 2011. Final design and right of way requirements may be complete by late 2013. Construction could start by late 2013 and take about three to four years to complete.

Future work, including construction, is largely subject to the availability of funds for the project, which is estimated to cost between \$350 million and \$400 million in 2009 dollars. This cost estimate does not account for future cost escalations and is subject to change. A total of \$118 million has been programmed for the project through the Proposition 1B Trade Corridors Improvement Fund. Project funding likely will be a combination of federal, state and local sources, including Measure I, the half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements in San Bernardino County.

For additional information or to view the alternative maps, please go to SANBAG’s website at [www.sanbag.ca.gov/projects/interchange\\_devore.html](http://www.sanbag.ca.gov/projects/interchange_devore.html), or call SANBAG Public Information Officer Jane Dreher at 909-884-8276.

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