

# Daily News

Voice of the Valley for 100 years



Hans Gutmecht Staff Photographer

The Interstate 5-State Route 14 HOV Direct Connector will provide a direct link for car-poolers between the two freeways, eliminating the need to exit car-pool lanes when switching freeways.

# Summit eyes future of Valley transportation

By Christina Villacorte Staff Writer

Hoping to ensure the San Fernando Valley gets its "fair share" of roadway and transportation projects, elected officials throughout the region are gathering this week for their first-ever Mobility Summit.

"We don't want the Valley neglected," said Los Angeles City Councilman Dennis Zine. "It should get its fair share of resources, services, finances."

The San Fernando Valley Council of Governments will host the Mobility Summit on Thursday at a Van Nuys hotel to discuss, among other issues, hoped-for transportation networks, funding sources for projects, and ways to speed up their construction.

Created only 18 months ago, SFVCOG's board of directors consists of two supervisors and seven council members from the county and city of Los Angeles, as well as mayors and council members from Glendale, Burbank, San Fernando and Santa Clarita. "Because transportation travels across boundaries and through different regions, there's a need to try to coordinate strategy," SFVCOG's executive director, Robert Scott, said.

"Historically, the San Fernando Valley has not really been at the table in



The Valley's Council of Governments is hosting the Mobility Summit to ensure transportation projects continue to benefit the region.

### If you go

**Valley Mobility Summit 2011**  
**When:** Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to noon  
**Where:** Airtel Plaza Hotel, 7277

Valjean Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406

**Cost:** \$25 registration fee for individuals

**More information:** 818-712-9500

# MOBILITY

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strategic discussions about such things as transportation," he added. "This is the first time a government body that actually represents the San Fernando Valley will be meeting for purposes of working together on transportation, far and away one of our biggest issues."

According to the most recent Census, Valley residents spend, on average, 29.4 minutes commuting to work — 8 percent longer than the average Californian and 13 percent longer than the average American.

Lost productivity from workers stuck in traffic jams is a drag on the already struggling economy and diminishes quality of life, said Stuart Waldman, president of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association.

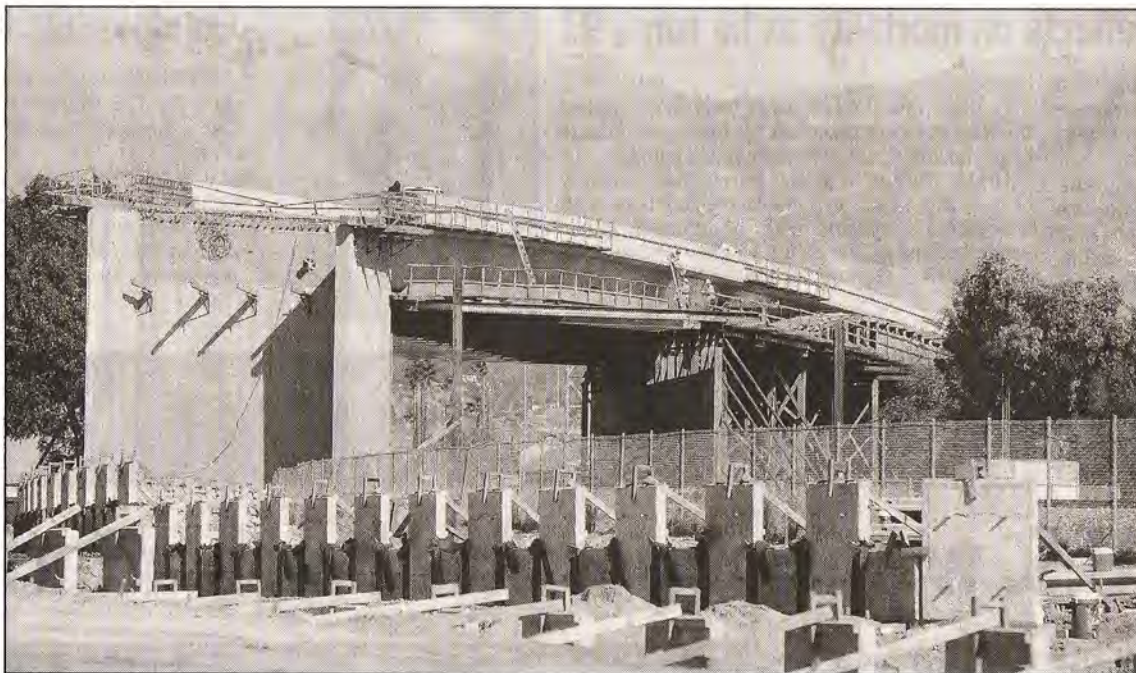
"The more time they spend in traffic, the less time they spend out there shopping, spending money and being with their families," he said. "It's imperative that we fix this."

There are about 30 projects slated for the Valley, with several already under construction.

Currently, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority is extending the Orange Line busway from Canoga Park to Chatsworth, with an opening date expected in summer.

It is also working with Caltrans to build car-pool lanes on the I-5 Freeway from the 134 to the 170 Freeways.

Metro is still completing the final design of a project to extend the I-5 car-pool lanes to the Orange County line. It is in the early planning stages for north-south transit corridors along Van Nuys, Sepulveda, Reseda and Lankershim boulevards, and the Sepulveda Pass Transit Corridor, which would connect the Valley with West Los Angeles potentially via rail or bus along the 405 Freeway.



Hans Gutknecht Staff Photographer

Work continues on the Orange Line over Lassen Street in Chatsworth, one of 30 Measure R projects.

According to Metro, the bigger projects in the Valley are mostly funded through Measure R, a half-percent sales tax over 30 years that Los Angeles County voters approved in 2008 to finance roadway and transportation upgrades.

"This is a very exciting time," said Renee Berlin, Metro's executive officer of countywide planning and development.

"Usually, we would have one project funded and another in the pipeline but Measure R changed that," she added. "Now, we're making sure the projects have synergy because what we're trying to do is build a system — not individual projects — to improve regional mobility, improve air quality and quality of life."

Some Measure R projects, however,

will not be completed for decades. For example, the Sepulveda Pass Corridor is not due until 2039.

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa said that time frame could be accelerated by 20 years if the federal government agrees to his 30-10 proposal to front-load the funding of projects, to be repaid over the long term with revenue from Measure R.

In September, President Obama presented Congress with his America Fast Forward plan, which calls for \$50 billion in immediate investments for highways, transit, rails and aviation.

Bart Reed, executive director of the Transit Coalition, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit advocacy group, is hopeful.

"The mere fact that the Sepulveda Pass Corridor could actually be

looked at in 2020 would be like a gift from heaven," he said.

Reed added Metro should not only concentrate on building new projects but on improving existing services.

He complained about bus service that begins too late for workers to reach their workplaces on time, ends too early for patrons of nightlife or is too infrequent or tardy to be reliable.

He also noted gaps in bus and rail routes that require passengers to make multiple transfers to reach their destination, and the lack of synchronization between bus and rail schedules.

If public transportation were optimized now, Reed said, more people would ditch their cars and ease congestion on the freeways.

Bumper-to-bumper traffic makes Zine's 32-mile commute from his

## Upcoming projects

About 30 Measure R projects are lined up for the San Fernando Valley, including:

- Metro Orange Line extension from Canoga Park to Chatsworth (under construction)
- I-5 car-pool lane from SR-134 to SR-170 (under construction)
- Bus service improvements on East San Fernando Valley North-South Transit Corridors, potentially including Van Nuys, Sepulveda, Reseda and Lankershim (planning stage).
- Sepulveda Pass Transit Corridor, possible rail or bus service along the 405 freeway to connect the Westside to San Fernando Valley and provide commuters an alternative to driving on the freeway (planning stage)
- Widen the intersection between San Fernando and Burbank boulevards (planning stage)

home in West Hills to his office in Los Angeles City Hall last one-and-a-half to two hours.

"And that's without an incident, without a crash, without any mishap taking place," he said.

Zine noted roadways are clogged even at a time of high unemployment, when many Valley residents are not commuting to work.

"We have massive congestion now but it'll be that much worse if we don't come up with some transportation relief soon," he said.

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