

Uploaded: Friday, October 2, 2009, 5:18 PM
Updated: Monday, October 5, 2009, 6:18 AM

Select FILE --> PRINT to print this story.



First segment of Interstate 580 carpool lane complete

Work starts on second phase of project, and Isabel/84 interchange in Livermore

by **Janet Pelletier**
Pleasanton Weekly Staff

City leaders and elected officials lauded transportation improvements Friday that are expected to bring some relief to the 150,000 people who commute daily on Interstate 580.

The California Department of Transportation held a ceremony in Livermore for the completion of five miles of what is planned to be an 11-mile high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane on eastbound 580.

The \$123-million project, which broke ground in August 2008, is being funded by state Proposition 1B, a transportation bond passed by voters in 2006.

This is the first in a three-phase project. The first segment runs from the Portola Road overcrossing to Greenville Road. The second phase will be from Hacienda Drive in Pleasanton east to Portola and the final phase will include the construction of auxiliary lanes from Isabel Avenue to North Livermore Avenue and from North Livermore Avenue to First Street. Those portions are expected to be completed by fall 2011.

The HOV lane is anticipated to shave time off of motorists' commutes as well as encourage carpooling. Interstate 580 is one of the most congested freeways in the Bay Area. The eastbound commute in the evening is the third worst, and the worst on a per-mile basis, according to a study by Caltrans and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty praised all who worked on the project, saying it came in on time and within budget.

"I drive out on this road every day and I'm looking forward to using it," he said.

Haggerty said the carpool lane will not only improve congestion, but also air quality. The HOV lane is just one of a few improvements made in the past year to help ease traffic backup in the mornings and early evening weekdays. Metering lights that were installed at on-ramps along 580 "are saving 10, 15, 20 minutes on (motorists') commute times," he said.

While the HOV lane is for carpoolers, solo drivers can use the express lane by paying a toll.

Congressman Jerry McNerney, D-Pleasanton, whose district includes the 580 corridor, helped secure federal funding for the project and said the freeway is very important to national trade.

"This is a true corridor," he said. It opens the Bay Area to the rest of the country, Stockton. The more we keep this flowing, the more it benefits the country.

State Assemblywoman Joan Buchanan, D-Alamo, echoed McNerney's comments, adding that the population in the Tri-Valley region has grown from west to east and as a result, 580 has become a parking lot during the commute periods.

"One of the greatest challenges we have ... is getting people from point A to point B," she said, adding that this will benefit the movement of goods with the Port of Oakland the third largest port in the state and the Port of Stockton the fourth largest.

In addition to those projects, work got under way on a new \$10.9-million interchange linking State Route 84 to 580 via Isabel Road in Livermore, which will be constructed in three segments. The first phase includes widening and realigning 84/Isabel Avenue, south of 580 and relocating utilities. Right now, 84's connection to 580 is doglegged and wraps around the Livermore Municipal Airport. A total of \$3.9 million of the funding came from Prop. 1B. Construction is scheduled to be completed by winter 2012.

Find this article at:

http://www.PleasantonWeekly.com/news/story.php?story_id=2696