

South County Traffic Relief Initial Screening - Summary

Purpose of the Screening:

The South County Traffic Relief Initial Screening (SCTRIS) was prepared to document an initial evaluation of numerous transportation ideas aimed at providing substantial relief to the South County Mobility Problem.

The South County Mobility Problem is Defined by Public and Stakeholder Outreach* as:

- Excessive northbound and southbound congestion on Interstate 5 (I-5) during the morning and evening peak weekday transportation hours, on weekends and whenever there is a collision or other incident that impacts I-5 traffic lanes.
- Difficulty using local arterial streets for accessing and crossing the I-5 (passing over or under) during peak transportation times and periods when there are collisions or other incidents.

(***Public and stakeholder outreach** was a joint effort of the Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA), Caltrans, the County of Orange, and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA). This robust community involvement plan included three public forums and hundreds of one-on-one meetings with local stakeholders.)

The South County Mobility Problem is Defined by the South Orange County Mobility Working Group (SOCMWG) as:**

- Most easily seen in I-5 congestion;
- Intermittent;
- Seen in excessive northbound/southbound I-5 congestion weekday a.m. and p.m. peak hours, weekends, or when there is an incident on I-5;
- Creating difficulty using local arterials;
- Creating safety concerns;
- Lacking meaningful transit options as a potential solution; and
- Getting worse with more development

(****SOCMWG** – a series of seven meetings that included representatives from South Orange County elected officials who hold a seat on a regional transportation board, representatives from Caltrans, OCTA, TCA, the County of Orange, South Orange County Cities' Public Works and Planning Staff, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), other transportation experts.)

Origin of Proposed Ideas:

These mobility relief ideas were proposed by the public and stakeholders via robust community engagement forums and board member and elected official input.

Evaluation of Ideas:

Due to the wide spectrum of improvements, these ideas were initially sorted into the following categories:

Category 1: Ideas that are already being advanced or implemented by other agencies
(Ideas: 6, 8, 10)

Category 2: Ideas that are ineffective or premature
(Ideas: 1, 16)

Category 3: Ideas that are infeasible due to regulatory or financial constraints
(Ideas: 2, 15, 19, 20)

Category 4: Remaining ideas subject to mobility analysis
(Ideas: 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18)

Mobility Analysis:

The objective of the mobility analysis is to evaluate the remaining ideas based on their ability to provide substantial mobility improvements in the South Orange County study area. (South Orange County Study Area = generally south of I-405/I-5 "El Toro Y" interchange)

The Mobility Analysis Consists of:

Vehicle Hours of Delay (VHD) for both I-5 and the arterial highway system, as well as Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in South Orange County. The analysis was conducted using the Orange County Transportation Analysis Model (OCTAM) as well as a qualitative approach. Additional factors include: environmental, regulatory, community impacts and financial considerations.

The Mobility Analysis Does Not Include:

Weekend traffic data because a predictive tool has not been created (by OCTA or Caltrans) to forecast future weekend conditions or test the benefits of ideas against weekend traffic data. In the next phase of project development (PSR/PDS), TCA intends to collect additional weekend data to create an effective

tool to further compare Category 4 ideas and their impact on mobility during weekends.

Outcome of Mobility Analysis:

Based on the mobility analysis, the seven (7) ideas proposed for advancement provide substantial traffic congestion relief. Substantial relief is defined as mobility improvements that are significant relative to all ideas studied.

Advancing Category 4 Ideas are:

- 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, and 18.

Non-advancing Category 4 Ideas are***:

- 3, 4, 5, and 7.

(***These ideas are not in TCA's jurisdiction; however, TCA can provide assistance for funding applications and engineering.)

Primary Benefits:

- Local residents, businesses and community stakeholders in South Orange County.
- Regional travelers – personal and commercial travel through Southern California.
- Additional travel options could improve emergency response times during incidents on I-5, and provide alternative evacuation routes in the cases of public safety emergencies including natural disasters such as fires, floods, earthquakes or national emergencies.

Expected Mobility Problem Relief from the Seven Advancing Ideas:

- Up to 46% reduction in daily vehicle hours of delay on I-5
- Up to 32% reduction in daily vehicle hours of delay on local arterials
- Up to 30% reduction in daily congested vehicles miles traveled

Next Steps:

- Develop Project Study Report to further refine and evaluate these seven ideas
 - Collect then evaluate weekend traffic data in cooperation with local and state agencies
- Begin the formal Environmental Document phase

Category 1 - Already Being Advanced or Implemented

- Idea 6.** Widen Ortega Highway to Four Lanes in San Juan Capistrano
- Idea 8.** Extend La Pata Ave to Cristianitos Road
- Idea 10.** Add I-5 HOV Lanes from Avenida Pico to County Line

Category 2 - Ineffective or Premature



- Idea 1.** Dynamic Pricing of TCA Facilities
- Idea 16.** Assume 20% of Vehicle Fleet is Automated

Category 3 - Infeasible due to Regulatory or Financial Constraints

- Idea 2.** Greater Train Frequency
- Idea 15.** Connect SR-241 to I-5 via Cristianitos Road
- Idea 19.** Connect SR-241 to I-15 in Temecula
- Idea 20.** Double Decking I-5

Category 4 - Mobility Benefits/Further Study Needed

- Idea 3.** Synchronized Lights on Arterials
- Idea 4.** Add Mobility Hubs at Train Stations and other Key Locations
- Idea 5.** Build Out of OCTA District 5 Bike Facilities
- Idea 7.** Complete Arterials to MPAH Maximum
- Idea 9.** Connect Ortega Highway and Antonio Parkway to Avery Parkway and SR 73
- Idea 11.** Add I-5 General Purpose Lanes from I-405 to County Line
- Idea 12.** Add I-5 HOT Lanes from I-405 to County Line
- Idea 13.** Connect SR-241 to I-5 via Western Alignment (La Novia Avenue)
- Idea 14.** Connect SR-241 to I-5 via La Pata Avenue Crossing
- Idea 17.** Connect SR-241 to I-5 via Shore Cliffs (Avenida Vacquero)
- Idea 18.** Connect SR-241 to SR-73 and Extend Crown Valley Parkway to SR-241

-  - TCA offer assistance to local jurisdictions
-  - Ideas advanced to PSR/PDS phase