



CASA CONEJO MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (MAC)
c/o County of Ventura
625 West Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

Members of the Council:
Chair R. Scott Horn
Wendy Zimmerman
Edward J. Villa, Sr.
Richard Gaz

January 20, 2021

Darren Kettle, Executive Director
Ventura County Transit Commission
950 County Square Drive, Suite 207
Ventura, California 93003

RE: 101 Freeway Improvement Project

Dear Mr. Kettle,

This letter is a response to the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) report on the 101 Freeway Improvement Project that was presented to the Casa Conejo Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) on January 15, 2020.

The MAC requested the report due to the increasing number of traffic jams and frequent slowdowns on the Newbury Park stretch of the 101 Ventura Freeway. The VCTC report concluded that an additional freeway lane is needed to allow for four lanes of through traffic from the 23 Freeway to the Conejo Grade in each direction. It was also noted that the 101 Freeway Improvement Project would be a very long time before completion, at least 10 years, probably more, and that a likelier future improvement would be the addition of an HOV lane. Not only would this solution provide the needed fourth lane, but it would also qualify for State funding sources that encourage transportation measures beyond single occupancy vehicles to help reduce greenhouse gases.

The Casa Conejo MAC agrees there is a great need for a fourth lane on the 101 Freeway from the 23 and 101 interchange, west to the Conejo Grade, in both directions. The Casa Conejo MAC would like to offer a creative solution that would speed up the timeline dramatically for moving forward on a fourth lane.

The fourth lane of the Freeway is hiding in plain sight.

We understand there is “virgin” freeway concrete that already exists in the form of a fourth lane right next to the other three. The concrete was poured while the freeway was constructed, it’s called the “service lane,” and travels from the 23 Freeway to the Conejo Grade in each direction. About one half of the fourth lane has never been used, it runs under existing bridges and sits idle on the sidelines. The other half consists of “exit” lanes.

There is an example of the service lane being used for a fourth lane already, in Newbury Park. When you travel west on the 101 at Ventu Park Road, the far right lane becomes a fourth freeway lane as it passes Rancho Conejo Blvd. No changes would be needed for the Rancho Conejo Blvd. exit.

The plan to improve the Ventura 101 Freeway to four through lanes in the west side of the Conejo Valley would, in some cases, consist of simply restriping the freeway lane exits at the offramps. In many cases the offramps themselves would have to be rebuilt to accommodate the upgrade to four lanes. Because the freeway improvements would be happening primarily at the off ramps, traffic on the existing three Freeway lanes could move on, relatively unabated during construction. All the bridges from the 23 and 101 interchange that the 101 Freeway travels under already were designed and built with the fourth lane incorporated. The biggest hurdle is heading East, where the 101 crosses over Moorpark Road, which would require constructing a fourth lane.

As for funding, we suggest a creative partnership like the one between the City of Thousand Oaks and the State that was used to fast track the 101/23 Freeway interchange improvement.

With this “outside the box” idea for the 101 Freeway traffic problem through the Conejo Valley, we hope VCTC will be able to investigate all possibilities for a solution and create a plan to move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Scott Horn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

R. Scott Horn
Chair, Casa Conejo MAC