


[Home](#)
[CEO Hotline](#)
[Viewpoint](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
[Archives](#)
[Metro.net](#) (web)

## Resources

- ▶ [Safety](#)
- ▶ [Pressroom](#) (web)
- ▶ [Ask the CEO](#)
- ▶ [CEO Forum](#)
- ▶ [Employee Recognition](#)
- ▶ [Employee Activities](#)
- ▶ [Metro Projects](#)
- ▶ [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)
- ▶ [Archives](#)
- ▶ [Events Calendar](#)
- ▶ [Research Center/Library](#)
- ▶ [Metro Classifieds](#)

▶ [Bazaar](#)

## Metro Info

- ▶ [30/10 Initiative](#)
- ▶ [Policies](#)
- ▶ [Training](#)
- ▶ [Help Desk](#)
- ▶ [Intranet Policy](#)

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Transportation officials, including Metro Board Members Pam O'Connor, Mike Antonovich and Ara Najarian, cut ribbon officially opening I-5 HOV lanes to the public. *Photos by Dave Sotero.*



## Transportation Officials Unveil L.A. County's First HOV Lane on Golden State Freeway

By DAVE SOTERO

(April 10, 2008) Metro joined Caltrans and other officials to celebrate the completion of the county's first High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV), or carpool lane, on the Golden State Freeway (I-5) April 4.

The project has added 6.2 miles of HOV lanes to the northbound and southbound I-5 from the Simi Valley Freeway (SR-118) to the Antelope Valley Freeway (SR-14).

Nearly 357,000 commuters use the I-5/14 interchange on a daily basis. The new lanes will save carpoolers about one minute per mile or up to one hour a week for daily commuters and help to relieve congestion, improve mobility and enhance safety. The lanes will also improve the movement of goods and services throughout this major I-5 corridor, which many consider the "backbone" of the California Highway System.

The new HOV lane just before pylons were removed for the official opening. The project has added 6.2 miles of HOV lanes to the northbound and southbound I-5 from the Simi Valley Freeway (SR-118) to the Antelope Valley Freeway (SR-14).



Metro programmed \$88 million in local, federal and bond revenues for the two phases of the project, which will later include bridge work and soundwall construction. The agency plans to invest \$4.6 billion by 2030 to close gaps in the carpool system, improve congested freeway interchanges, build carpool lane connectors and manage freeway incidents.

This milestone represents the first leg of a broader HOV lane network intended for Interstate 5. By 2012, Metro's goal is to expand I-5 HOV lanes from the 118 Freeway to the 170 and from the 170 to the 134 Freeway. This will create a complete carpool lane system connecting the Antelope and San Fernando valleys.

"Metro is committed to expanding L.A. County's carpool lane network because it encourages ridesharing, reduces congestion and greenhouse gas emissions," said Metro Board Chair Pam O'Connor at the press conference. "It's one of the agency's most effective tools for improving freeway system mobility. We must all imagine a traffic-free future that includes more ridesharing options because our future mobility depends on it."

Caltrans District 7, covering Los Angeles and Ventura counties, has 482 carpool lane miles – the most in the state. California has about 40 percent of the nation's total HOV lane miles. Some 750,000 people use carpool lanes every day in Los Angeles County alone.