



**PLANNING & PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
MAY 19, 2004**

**SUBJECT: NORTH COUNTY COMBINED HIGHWAY CORRIDORS STUDY --
STATUS REPORT**

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file this status report on the draft North County Combined Highway Corridors Study, Parts I & II (Study).

ISSUE

Staff intends to bring the completed Study to the Board in July 2004 for adoption. At this point, the Study's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the North County Transportation Coalition (NCTC) have identified a Locally Preferred Strategy (LPS), which the Study team presented to the Community in a series of Open Houses in March. As this represents a key milestone in the Study's progress, staff wanted to update the Board on it prior to bringing the completed Study to the Board in July.

DISCUSSION

Staff has been periodically updating the Board as the study progressed. As indicated, Staff will bring the full report to the Board in July for action. With the identification of a LPS by the technical team and the local jurisdictions, the study team prepared summary information (Attachment A) that provides highlights of the North County Corridors Plan, maps of the short and long range alternatives, background on the Study, the purpose and need, and funding and implementation strategies. This material was presented to the Community at the Open Houses, and it provides a good summary of the status of the study and the draft plan results. The major corridor improvements recommended in the draft plan include:

- The SR-138 Corridor Plan: Construction of a new limited access freeway/expressway from the I-5 to I-15, varying in width from 4 lanes to 8 lanes;
- The I-5 Corridor Plan: Addition of HOV lanes and truck lanes from the I-5/SR-14 interchange to the Kern County line, varying in width from 5 to 6 lanes in each direction;
- The SR-14 Corridor Plan: Eliminate existing bottlenecks on the freeway by adding an additional lane in various locations to create a consistent cross section of three mixed-flow lanes in each direction. Because the great majority of traffic is southbound in the morning and northbound in the afternoon, convert the existing HOV lane in each direction to a pair of reversible HOV lanes that operate in the peak direction of travel. Over time, add an additional HOV lane to create a 3-lane reversible HOV lane operation.

In addition to the highway improvements, transit services would be increased involving upgrade of Metrolink services, and more express buses on HOV lanes and construction of more Park-and-Ride Lots along all three corridors.

The Study was initiated in August 2001 to: (1) create a long-term comprehensive strategy to address the projected increases in population, commuter traffic, and goods movement in the region; (2) identify a multi-modal strategy of short-, mid-, and long-term improvements to improve travel; and (3) prepare the technical documents required by Caltrans and MTA to apply for funding opportunities. Regarding the process since our last update, the draft Study was completed in March 2004, following the identification of the LPS by the TAC and NCTC in December 2003 and the integration of Phases One and Two of the Study in early 2004. In March 2004, the Study team held four Open Houses in the cities of Lancaster, Palmdale and Santa Clarita to gather additional community input, and since then, the Study team has been working to finalize the Study in order to develop staff recommendations for MTA Board consideration.

NEXT STEPS

A final draft of the North County Corridors Plan will be completed and presented to the MTA Board by July 2004.

ATTACHMENT

- A. Highlights to the North County Corridors Plan and related background materials

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ATTACHMENT A

Highlights to the North County Corridors Plan and Related Background Materials

Background

In August 2001, the North County Combined Highway Corridors Study (NC Study) was initiated to develop a multi-modal transportation plan for the northern portion of Los Angeles County, addressing both short-term and long-term requirements to accommodate a variety of trip purposes, including personal travel (highways and transit) and goods movement (trucks).

The NC Study was conducted by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in cooperation with the cities of Santa Clarita, Lancaster, Palmdale, and Los Angeles and the County of Los Angeles. For approximately two and a half years, a Technical Advisory Committee or TAC, composed of representatives of the sponsoring agencies, Caltrans, the Southern California Association of Governments, and the Federal Highway and Transit Administrations, met monthly to review progress of the Study. The North County Transportation Coalition (NCTC) composed of elected officials and community representatives from the North County cities, provided policy oversight for the study.

The NC Study was conducted in two phases. Part I, completed in January 2003, focused on the I-5 and SR-14 Corridors, targeting north-south circulation from the center of the Los Angeles region through the communities of Santa Clarita, Lancaster, Palmdale and unincorporated portions of Los Angeles County northward up to the Kern County Line. Part II of the study began in June 2002 and was completed in December 2003, and focused on east-west circulation along the SR-138 Corridor. The NC Study Integration Report, integrates the findings from Parts I and II into a single North County Corridors Plan.

Purpose and Need for the Study

The themes shown in the table below emerged from our technical analysis and our ongoing dialog with community stakeholders.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantially increased vehicle capacity is needed in each of the major highway corridors. Sufficient highway right-of-way should be reserved along I-5, SR-14 and SR-138 to develop new HOV lanes and truck lanes in response to emerging demand. Available roadway capacity is quickly being outstripped and programmed capacity improvements will be overwhelmed well before the horizon year 2025. Delay on the I-5 and SR-14 is substantial today and will grow worse in the coming years. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A package of early action transportation improvements (highway and transit) is needed within the context of long-range planning objectives. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety enhancements to existing roadways are needed and new, safer facilities must be built to reduce accident rates and fatalities. Widening, realignment and traffic control along SR-138 appears particularly needed. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgraded regional multimodal access to Palmdale Airport is needed in anticipation of the Palmdale Airport's emergence as a Southern California commercial aviation hub. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A semi-exclusive truck network is needed to avoid the capacity constraints and safety hazards inherent in a combined truck/auto highway system |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A semi-exclusive HOV/bus network is needed to avoid the capacity constraints and safety hazards inherent in combining HOV/bus operations with mixed flow traffic |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New high capacity east-west connector routes linking I-5, SR-14 and I-15 are needed to meet future demand and provide for movement between primary north-south corridors. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternatives are needed to the I-5 and SR-14 facilities in order to cope with emergencies. Among other things, new north-south route options should be studied for possible feasibility. I-5 and SR-14 highways are lifelines of statewide and regional importance. |



Metro

FACT SHEET

April
2004

The Integrated Corridors Plan

During Parts I and II of the NC Study, individual plans (or "Locally Preferred Strategies") for the three North County corridors were developed. The plans were initially developed as stand-alone projects based on their ability to serve their respective travel markets. Each corridor is unique with respect to function, capacity, operational and safety issues. Broadly speaking, the I-5 is a "goods movement" corridor linking the Central Valley with the Ports of Los Angeles/Long Beach. In contrast, the SR-14 may be generally described as a "commute" corridor with an anticipated tripling of the commute population. A key feature of the geography of the SR-138 makes it a "bypass" corridor with potential to avoid congestion in the central region by routing traffic around congested Los Angeles Freeways.

In the end, the three North County Corridors must function together to serve the collective transportation needs in North Los Angeles County. Thus, the next logical step in the study was to perform a systems analysis that examined the combined impacts of the three corridors and modified the three individual plans based on their collective synergies. The result is a fully integrated major highway and transit investment along I-5, SR-14, and SR-138—approximately 280 miles of the most significant transportation facilities in northern Los Angeles County.

This integration of the three transportation corridor plans undertaken at the end of the North County Study — including analyzing future regional travel patterns along the integrated network — identified locations where the three individual Locally Preferred Strategies work together to improve the anticipated level of service or reduce costs. In addition, it included a so-called "sensitivity analysis" — that is, several targeted investigations of the transportation impacts of newly emerging land use developments not included in adopted regional forecasts and opportunities for operational applications such as reversible carpool/High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes in locations where traffic has pronounced directional imbalances.

Finally, the sensitivity analysis examined the need for continuity in the system south of the I-5/SR-14 Interchange, through the I-5 "throat" where nearly all North County traffic must travel to reach the Los Angeles Basin. This section of the I-5 is particularly challenging because of the weaving movements that different streams of traffic need to make to get from SR-14 and I-5 north to the I-210, I-405 and I-5 south. Lack of system redundancy is also a major issue where significant damage occurred in both the 1971 Sylmar and 1994 Northridge Earthquakes.

As a result of the integrated analysis and detailed sensitivity testing, an integrated multimodal long-range corridors plan has now been developed to serve the long-range demands of the North County. The combined recommendations will allow the three North County Corridors to work together in a seamless system to serve North Los Angeles County's diverse transportation needs.

Finance and Implementation Strategies

The North County Corridors Plan includes \$4.8 billion in major highway and transit investment along I-5, SR-14, and SR-138. Given the magnitude of the Corridors Plan, the financial strategy focuses on phased improvement, whereby essential short term transportation improvements are prioritized for expedited implementation, with longer term improvements implemented over an extended period, based on relative priority and funding availability.

The total cost of the projects in the North County Corridors Plan is approximately \$4.8 billion, of which \$4.1 billion is for highway-related improvements and \$0.5 billion for transit. Of the \$4.1 billion in highway improvements, \$0.8 billion is for improvements in the I-5 Corridor, \$1.0 billion for improvements in the SR-14 Corridor, and \$2.3 billion for improvements in the SR-138 Corridor.

Financial Strategy

The goals and objectives of the North County Corridors Plan played a critical role in the development of the short and long-term transportation improvements. The financial strategy attempts to balance funding each corridor's need for immediate short-term improvements while still planning for future congestion and related capacity and safety issues required as the North County region grows.

Given California's continuing budget shortfalls, the magnitude of capital costs, and the complexity of the projects, it will be challenging to secure funding for the prioritized short-term projects ready for construction and for advancing additional studies still required for the long-term improvements. The ability to secure funding will be dependent on strong local support and the creative combining of traditional and innovative funding sources and financing approaches.

What's Next?

The March 29 and 30, 2004 open houses provided the community with a final opportunity to comment on the North County Corridors Plan. These open houses are the culmination in a series of open houses held throughout the course of the study so that the local stakeholders could provide the project team with their input every step of the way. Once we have received and incorporated public comment into the final North County Corridors Plan, the following steps are anticipated:

Date	Activity
March 29 & 30, 2004	Final Open Houses to present integrated North County Corridors Plan and Implementation plan to the public
April 19, 2004	North County Transportation Coalition (NCTC) approval
April 22, 2004	Letter of Completion from SCAG
April/May 2004	Finalize North County Corridors Plan and Implementation Plan
July 2004	MTA Board Approval

For More Study Information

To stay up-to-date with progress with this study, please visit MTA's website at www.mta.net or feel free to contact Brian Lin, MTA's study Project Manager via email or phone at linb@mta.net or 213.922.3036.



Metro

HIGHLIGHTS

April
2004

The North County Corridors Study, initiated by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), is a multimodal transportation plan for the northern portion of Los Angeles County. A final integration plan for the SR 138, I-5 and SR 14 has now been developed and is available to the public for review.

The SR 138 Plan, as modified for corridor integration includes:

- Widening existing SR 138 to four lanes from Pearblossom east to the San Bernardino County line, and adding a climbing lane on the grade between Phelan and I-15.
- Construction of a limited access High Desert Corridor (HDC), a brand new freeway/expressway between I-5 and I-15. The east-west segment between Route 14 and I-15 is: an 8-lane freeway from SR 14 past Palmdale Airport to 50th Street East along an alignment paralleling P-8 in Palmdale; a 6-lane freeway/expressway from 50th Street east to 240th Street; and a 4/6-lane expressway from 240th Street east to I-15. Between I-5 and SR 14, the HDC would be a 6-lane freeway or expressway along the current SR 138 alignment. A north-south HDC expressway would begin at SR 14 and Avenue D, jog south to Avenue E at the Old Sierra Highway, head south along 90th Street East, jog over to intersect with the east-west HDC at 126th Street, and continue south to the existing SR 138 near 150th Street.
- Transit service in the SR 138 Corridor would be expanded by 75% over currently programmed levels. Three new express bus routes would be added between Palmdale/Lancaster and Victorville, and 7 park and ride lots would be constructed.

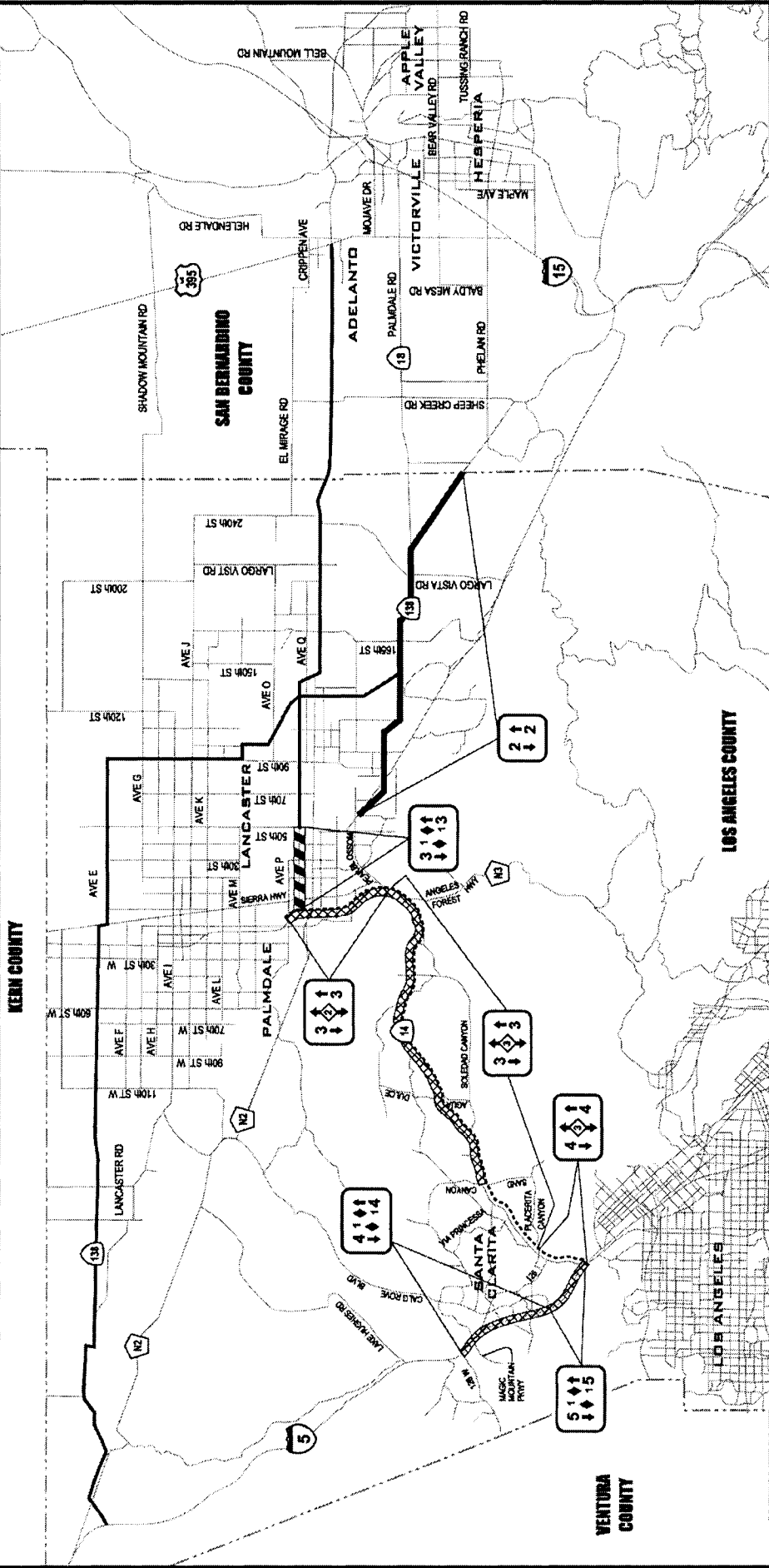
The I-5 Plan, as modified for corridor integration includes:

- Doubling the current 4 lanes to a total of 8 lanes in each direction between Highway 14 and SR 126 West. Two of the lanes would be for carpools/high occupancy vehicles (HOVs), 2 lanes for trucks, and 4 lanes for general use. The increase in the number of lanes would accommodate a forecast doubling of I-5 travel demand by 2025.
- North of SR 126 West, one new HOV lane would be extended to Lake Hughes and a new truck lane would be added to the existing 4 lanes in each direction.
- Transit service in the I-5 Corridor would be tripled with twice the number of trains, longer trains and four-times the number of buses.
- Extension of I-5 Corridor improvements to the south through the I-5/SR 14 Interchange continuing down to the 5/405 split is an important to insuring the effectiveness of I-5 Corridor investment. Therefore, we recommend the addition of:
 - One new truck lane to the 2 current lanes;
 - 3 HOV lanes to the 1 planned HOV lane; and,
 - 3 mixed flow lanes to the 6 current lanes.

The SR 14 Plan, as modified for corridor integration includes:

- Adding 3 reversible lanes to the existing 4-6 lanes in each direction between I-5 and Sand Canyon. The three reversible lanes, designated for peak direction carpool and transit use, would effectively increase the capacity of the roadway by 50-75% while holding construction costs to minimum.
- Adding 2-3 reversible lanes to the existing/committed 3-4 lanes between Sand Canyon and Avenue P. The reversible lanes would almost double roadway capacity. North of Avenue P, one new lane would be added to the 2-3 current lanes. The new lane would be designated for HOV use north to Avenue L and for general purpose use from Avenue L to the Kern County line.
- Transit service would be increased 4-fold with double the number of Metrolink trains, longer trains and almost 5 times the number of buses.

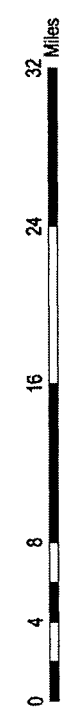
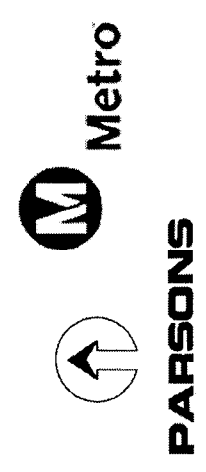
SHORT RANGE IMPROVEMENTS NORTH COUNTY CORRIDORS PLAN



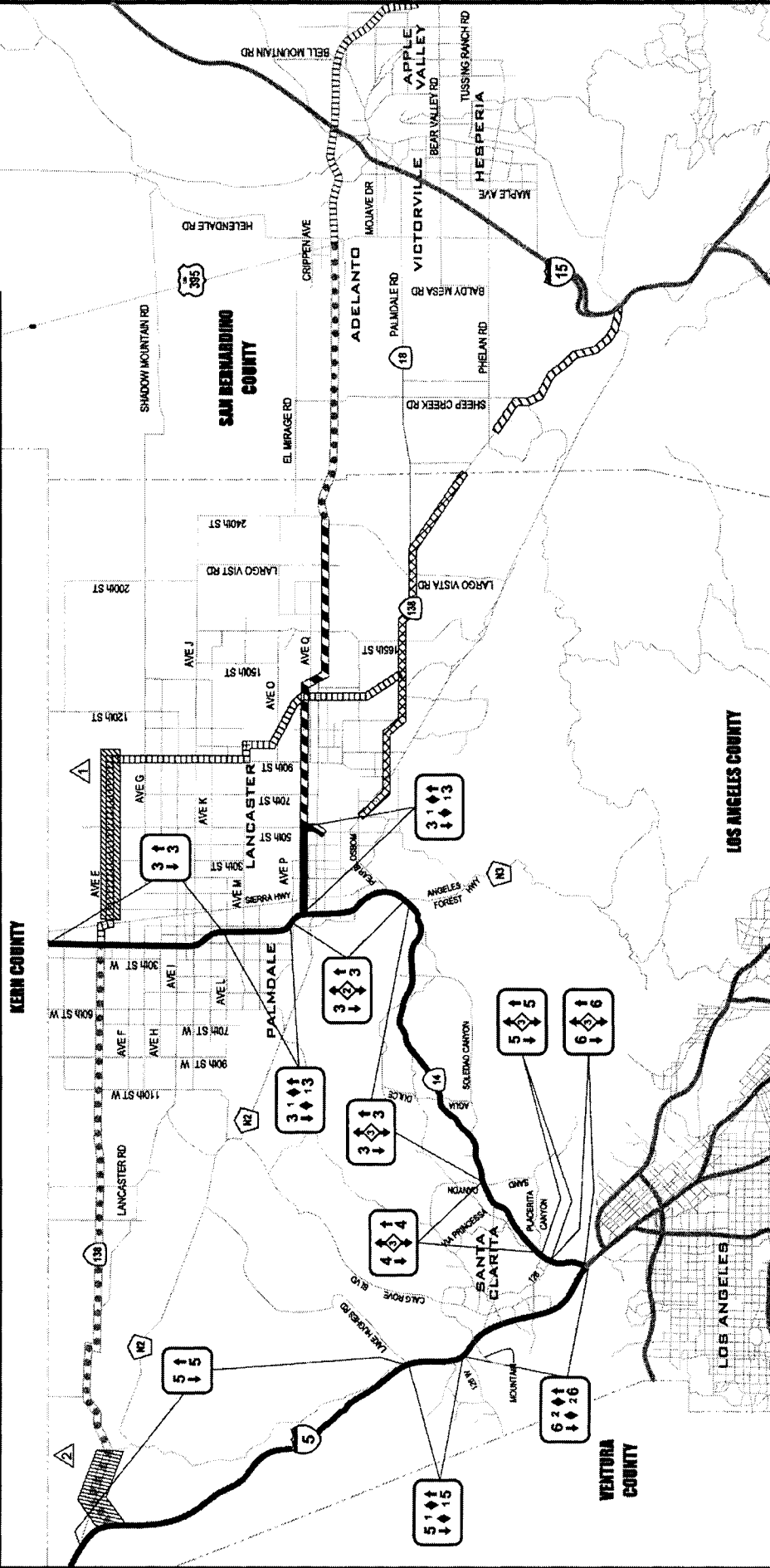
LEGEND

- ↑ 4 Lane Designation
- ◆ 1 HOV Lane Designation
- ▨ Right of Way Acquisition
- ▬ Right of Way and Construction
- ⋯ Awaiting Future "Call for Project" Funding for Improvements Described in Completed PSRPDS
- ⋯ 2-3 Reversible HOV Lanes in Median
- ▬ Right of Way Protection

NORTH COUNTY COMBINED HIGHWAY CORRIDOR STUDY



NORTH COUNTY CORRIDORS PLAN



LEGEND

	Freeway Lane Designation
	HOV Lane Designation
	Freeway
	6-Lane Freeway/Expressway
	4-Lane Expressway
	4-Lane Highway
	Truck Climbing Lanes

NORTH COUNTY COMBINED HIGHWAY CORRIDOR STUDY

- Alignment selection to be coordinated with the City of Lancaster and the Los Angeles Consolidated Sanitary District #14.
- Construction of Centennial Ranch will require upgrading of planned 6-lane expressway to 6-lane freeway between I-5 and N2.

