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News conference held at the East Portal of Union Station, Friday, sparked this exchange between Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Photo: Luis Inzunza



## Governor, Mayor Call for Billions in Transportation Funding

- Investment would be supported by bond program

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Jan. 24, 2006) Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa held a news conference, Friday, in the East Portal to call for spending billions on transportation projects in Los Angeles and Orange counties.

The governor's Strategic Growth Plan, which envisions a \$107 billion investment in transportation infrastructure over the next decade, would be supported in part by an initial \$6 billion bond program he hopes will go before the voters either in June or in November.

The plan calls for a constitutional amendment "firewall" to protect Proposition 42 funding for city and county transportation projects. In the past, Prop 42 funds have been siphoned off for other state funding priorities.

The plan would include funding for 1,200 miles of new highways and HOV lanes and 600 miles of mass transit.

"This will reduce traffic congestion by 20 percent over the next 10 years, even though we will see a population increase," Schwarzenegger said, adding that his plan can be accomplished "in a responsible way without raising taxes."

**I -405 carpool lane**

Photo: Luis Inzunza

Villaraigosa noted that \$350 million – the largest single “earmark” in the plan – would be allocated for construction of a carpool lane on the I-405 where it meets the 101 Freeway.

“This is a huge recognition of its importance now and in the future,” the mayor said.

Another \$40 million would be used for park/ride lots, pedestrian and bicycle projects in the LA metropolitan area.

The governor’s plan also includes \$290 million for new rail projects and rail crossing improvements, of which \$40 million would be used to extend two tracks south from Union Station to provide a new connection to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway mainline along the LA River.

It also would provide \$2 billion in bonding and matching funds to reduce pollution caused by congestion generated by goods movement on roads and from the state’s seaports.

“Today was a great day,” said CEO Roger Snoble, a guest at the news conference. “The governor and mayor are truly dedicated to getting something done. A lot of hard work remains, a lot of details, but I think this is a great start.”



Mayor Villaraigosa tells local media that the governor’s funding plan is a good starting point for LA-area transportation projects.