



NEWS

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RELIEF ON THE WAY TO ANTELOPE VALLEY FREEWAY DRIVERS; MTA BOARD OKAYS PLAN TO MAKE MAJOR ROUTE 14 IMPROVEMENTS

An Antelope Valley proposal to widen Route 14 from Escondido Canyon to Pearblossom Highway and add 11.2 miles of carpool lanes in each direction, was approved Wednesday by the MTA Board and will award the project \$33 million in Call for Projects funding.

"This is definitely great news for the thousands of residents in Lancaster and Palmdale, and the unincorporated areas of the Antelope Valley, who regularly drive to jobs in L.A. basin," said Interim MTA CEO Linda Bohlinger. "Even under normal circumstances the 75-mile trip can be very trying. This project will definitely provide much needed mobility and congestion relief to Antelope Valley commuters."

In addition to carpool lanes, other planned Route 14 improvements include the widening of bridges and the reconstruction and restriping of the median.

"Not only will these improvements reduce overall travel times but it will make driving on Route 14 a much more enjoyable and safer experience," said Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael Antonovich. "Many Antelope Valley residents travel great distances in order to support their families. It's a tremendous sacrifice on their part so the least we can do is provide them with a reliable freeway system."

The MTA's Call for Projects program occurs once every two years and determines which of the hundreds of transportation improvement project

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proposals submitted by 88 cities, Los Angeles County and state agencies are capitalized. This particular Call for Projects saw 414 proposals vie for approximately \$666.3 million. In all, 157 were approved following a four-month evaluation and ranking period involving MTA planning staff and the Board.

Since the program's inception in 1991, the MTA has allocated nearly \$1.4 billion for such projects as freeway carpool lanes, major street widening, freeway ramps, traffic signal synchronization, bus system improvements, including bus lanes, ridesharing incentives, transit centers and park-n-ride lots and regional bikeways. Funds were also available for televillages, a new concept where local residents use mass transit to reach a transit station featuring computers with access to the Internet and other equipment so they can telecommunicate to work.

A little more than 50 percent of the funding comes from monies raised from Proposition C (the Los Angeles County one-half cent sales tax), the balance from the state and federal government.

Criteria used in evaluating applications include determining regional significance and project benefit, cost effectiveness (and local funding match), land use and environmental compatibility, project need, project readiness, and benefits to the overall transit system.

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