

# The ACE REPORT

ALAMEDA CORRIDOR-EAST PROJECT  
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments



## Capital Projects and Construction Committee Chair's Message

Twenty years ago, the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) initiated the Alameda Corridor-East (ACE) Project to build roadway-rail grade separations and make safety improvements at the most congested and hazardous crossings along the twin freight railroad lines in the San Gabriel Valley. We are pleased to report that earlier this year we started construction on the 17th ACE grade separation project, located at Durfee Avenue in the City of Pico Rivera. With the last two remaining grade separation projects in the ACE program in the final design stage and federal, state and local funds being sought for their construction, we have much work to do but we are close to completing the ACE Project!

Grade separations, where the road goes over or under the railroad, ease crossing delays, eliminate collisions and train horn noise and reduce emissions from idling cars and trucks waiting for trains to pass. The San Gabriel Valley's freight rail lines accommodate 16 percent of the nation's containerized freight and the ACE projects have helped mitigate the impacts on our local communities of nationally significant goods movement.

We are proud that the ACE program has garnered regional and statewide plaudits. In May, the California Transportation Foundation named as its Project of the Year our largest project, the San Gabriel Trench, chosen from more than 60 projects nominated statewide. The 2.2-mile railroad trench project has also received Southern California chapter awards from the Construction Management Association of America and the American Public Works Association.

As we forge ahead in completing the ACE program, other significant capital projects in the San Gabriel Valley, large and small, are being assigned to the Capital Projects and Construction Committee. We are taking on responsibility for the construction and property acquisition phases of the \$420 million State Route 57-60 Confluence Chokepoint Relief Project, which will start construction in several years. We are also working on a regional electrified bike share program and a project to build a pedestrian bridge to provide safe passage to the Pomona Fairplex from the City of La Verne's future Gold Line light rail station.

San Gabriel Valley elected officials had the foresight two decades ago to respond to the community impacts of growing freight rail traffic. This legacy of leadership by the SGVCOG will continue as we refocus our capital projects and construction efforts on new projects and programs to help our region and members meet the challenges of the future.

**El Monte Councilmember Victoria Martinez Muela is Chair of the SGVCOG Capital Projects and Construction Committee.**

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## SGVCOG Capital Projects and Construction Committee

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Hon. Diana Mahmud / City of South Pasadena

Mark Christoffels / Chief Engineer

## Construction Begins on Underpass Project at Hazardous Railroad Crossing in Pico Rivera



*SGVCOG Capital Projects and Construction Committee Chair Victoria Martinez Muela leads the festivities to kick off construction of the Durfee Avenue Grade Separation Project in Pico Rivera.*

Federal, state, local and railroad officials gathered in March to kick off nearly three years of construction of a two-lane roadway underpass and railroad bridge to replace a hazardous railroad crossing on Durfee Avenue in the City of Pico Rivera. The \$105.5 million project, located north of Whitter Boulevard and south of Beverly Boulevard, is part of the Alameda Corridor-East (ACE) Project by the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG), a program of 19 roadway-rail grade separations and safety improvements along the high-volume transcontinental ACE freight rail corridor. Construction is projected to create more than 1,370 direct and indirect jobs, with completion scheduled for spring 2022.

The Durfee Avenue railroad crossing is used daily by 13,600 vehicles and blocked by an average of 49 trains a day, projected to increase to 91 trains by 2025. The project will reduce an estimated 15.3 vehicle-hours of delay each day. The Federal Railroad Administration has recorded

nine collisions at the crossing since 1981, resulting in four fatalities.

"Today's groundbreaking kicks off construction of the 17th grade separation in the \$1.7 billion ACE program. These important projects improve safety for motorists and pedestrians, reduce vehicle emissions and eliminate traffic delays and deadly collisions at railroad crossings in our densely populated urban region," said El Monte Councilmember Victoria Martinez Muela, Chair of the SGVCOG Capital Projects and Construction Committee.

"Thanks to the support of our funding partners, the ACE program has been a resounding success for the San Gabriel Valley," said City of Temple City Councilmember Cynthia Sternquist, President of the SGVCOG. "The Valley will continue to benefit as we broaden our reach beyond the ACE projects and help deliver other capital projects to improve the quality of life for our residents."



*Pico Rivera, continued from page 2*



*Congresswoman Grace Napolitano applauds the groundbreaking of the Durfee Avenue project. Construction of the two-lane roadway underpass and railroad bridge is expected to create over 1,370 direct and indirect jobs and save drivers 15.3 vehicle-hours of delay each day.*

"The Durfee Avenue project is a long-held top priority for the City," said City of Pico Rivera Mayor Brent A. Tercero. "It will result in a safer route to school for many students who live in the area and eliminate all-too-frequent detours for firefighters responding to emergencies from a fire station near the crossing. The project will also eliminate locomotive horn noise at the last remaining at-grade crossing in our City."

"The vital Durfee Avenue Grade Separation project will improve traffic flow, making it safer, cleaner, and more

efficient for freight rail, vehicles, and pedestrians at this crossing," said Congresswoman Linda Sánchez. "Federal funding, provided in partnership with local, state and railroad revenues, was critical to moving this project forward and highlights why federal support is critical for the Montebello Boulevard grade separation project at one of the most hazardous rail crossings in Los Angeles County."

"I supported new programs authorized by Congress to provide \$2 billion in federal funding annually for freight and roadway projects to improve the efficiency and safety of our nation's trade corridors," said Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, California's most senior member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. "I am proud to support this high priority project and will continue to serve as a champion in Congress for the ACE program and our region's freight infrastructure needs."

"Grade separations are critically important to enhancing public safety in our communities," said Los Angeles County



*Pico Rivera Mayor Pro Tem Gustavo Camacho and Congresswoman Linda Sanchez pose in front of a rendering of the completed Durfee Avenue Grade Separation Project at the groundbreaking ceremony.*

*Pico Rivera, continued from page 3*



*Officials break ground on the Durfee Avenue Grade Separation Project, the 17th grade separation in the \$1.7 billion Alameda Corridor-East program. From left: California Transportation Commission Chair Fran Inman, Diamond Bar Councilmember Nancy Lyons, Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, Caltrans Chief Deputy District Director Shirley Choate, Montebello Mayor Jack Hadjinian, Pico Rivera Mayor Brent Tercero, Temple City Councilmember & SGVCOG President Cynthia Sternquist, Pico Rivera Mayor Pro Tem Gustavo Camacho, Congresswoman Linda Sanchez, Rosemead Mayor & SGVCOG First Vice President Margaret Clark and El Monte Councilmember & SGVCOG Capital Projects and Construction Committee Chair Victoria Martinez Muela.*

Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, a member of the SGVCOG Capital Projects and Construction Committee and whose district includes the Durfee Avenue project and seven other active ACE projects. "Every minute counts in an emergency and with a Los Angeles County fire station located only a block south of the railroad crossing, this important project will allow firefighters to be deployed more quickly to save lives."

"California is a world leader in commerce and is the nation's leading trade gateway and corridor," said California Transportation Commission Chair Fran Inman. "Much like the Proposition 1B programs that helped fund the Durfee Avenue Grade Separation, the new Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP) created by SB 1

also places a high priority on leveraging funds. In fact, for the first cycle of TCEP programming, federal freight funds leveraged the SB 1 investments, allowing us to dedicate over \$1 billion for nationally and regionally significant trade corridor improvements."

"Voter-approved Los Angeles County sale tax measure funds are providing nearly three-quarters of the Durfee Avenue project budget," said Duarte Councilmember John Fasana, the San Gabriel Valley's representative on the Los Angeles County Metro Board of Directors. "The ACE program of grade separations continues to serve as a model to address the adverse impacts of freight rail traffic on our local communities."



*Pico Rivera, continued from page 4*



Work started in April on the Durfee Avenue Grade Separation Project in Pico Rivera. Crews have been busy with the demolition of vacant industrial buildings along Durfee Avenue acquired for the project. The grade separation will include construction of a new 1,200-foot-long roadway underpass at the Union Pacific railroad tracks with retaining walls and a 95-foot-long railroad bridge.





*Pico Rivera, continued from page 5*



*Workers grade the railroad right-of-way to prepare for the installation of a temporary “shoofly” detour track to maintain rail operations during construction of the railroad bridge as part of the Durfee Avenue Grade Separation Project.*



*Excavation is underway in advance of construction on the pump station for the Durfee Avenue Grade Separation Project that will remove storm water from the future roadway underpass.*



*Pico Rivera, continued from page 6*



Construction is ramping up with third party utility relocations underway on the Durfee Avenue project site. Crews from various utility companies are relocating gas, electric and fiber optic lines that conflict or run along city streets and the railroad right-of-way prior to construction of the underpass.



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## Fullerton Road Closed at the Railroad Tracks Between Gale Avenue and Rowland Street/San Jose Avenue



In June, contractors closed Fullerton Road north of Gale Avenue to facilitate major construction activities for the roadway underpass. In addition, eastbound and westbound lanes on Railroad Street were closed to through traffic at the Fullerton Road intersection. Local access between Fullerton Road and Railroad Street are now permanently restricted. Motorists can still access Railroad Street from Rowland Street to Lawson Street

via Azusa Avenue or from San Jose Avenue to Charlie Road via Nogales Street. Motorists are encouraged to use Azusa Avenue and Nogales Street as major north-south detours. Access to local businesses will be maintained at all times.

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*Crews work on excavation and construction of the retaining walls for the roadway underpass north of the railroad tracks. Construction of the Fullerton Road Grade Separation Project includes a four-track railroad bridge, roadway bridge and pedestrian bridge over a six-lane depressed roadway on Fullerton Road, which carries over 23,000 vehicles daily and traversed by 49 trains per day.*



## Fullerton Road Project Starts Next Phase of Underpass Construction



*As progress is made on the construction of the Fullerton Road Grade Separation immediately north of the State Route 60 freeway in the City of Industry and unincorporated community of Rowland Heights, crews will soon begin work on the next phase of construction in preparation for the lowering of the roadway for the Fullerton Road underpass.*

On the evening of September 19th, crews shifted and reduced eastbound and westbound traffic lanes to one lane in each direction on Gale Avenue at the Fullerton Road intersection between Jellick Avenue and Plaza Drive to allow for construction on the north half of the Gale Avenue roadway. Access to the local businesses will be maintained and Gale Avenue will remain open at all times. This traffic modification will be in place for approximately seven months, after which traffic will be swapped to the north in a similar manner to allow for construction on the south half of the Gale Avenue roadway.

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*Fullerton Road from Gale Avenue to the State Route 60 ramps have been widened to three lanes in each direction to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion in the area.*



## Pump Station Construction Underway at Fairway Project



As Fairway Drive remains closed at the railroad tracks between Walnut Drive North and Business Parkway for underpass construction, work is underway to construct the pump station that will remove storm water from the roadway underpass depression. The Fairway Drive Grade Separation Project in the City of Industry and unincorporated community of Rowland Heights consists of eliminating the at-grade railroad crossing on Fairway Drive with the construction of a

four-lane roadway underpass for Fairway Drive and a double-track bridge to carry Union Pacific Railroad freight trains and Metrolink commuter trains. Seventeen collisions have been recorded at the crossing resulting in three fatalities and eleven injuries. Completion of the grade separation is anticipated in summer 2021.

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*Work is complete on the temporary "shoofly" track constructed to maintain rail operations during construction of the Fairway Drive Grade Separation Project. Upon the successful inspection by Union Pacific Railroad officials, trains will be routed to the shoofly track while crews construct the railroad bridge.*



## Community Open House Held for Turnbull Canyon Road Project



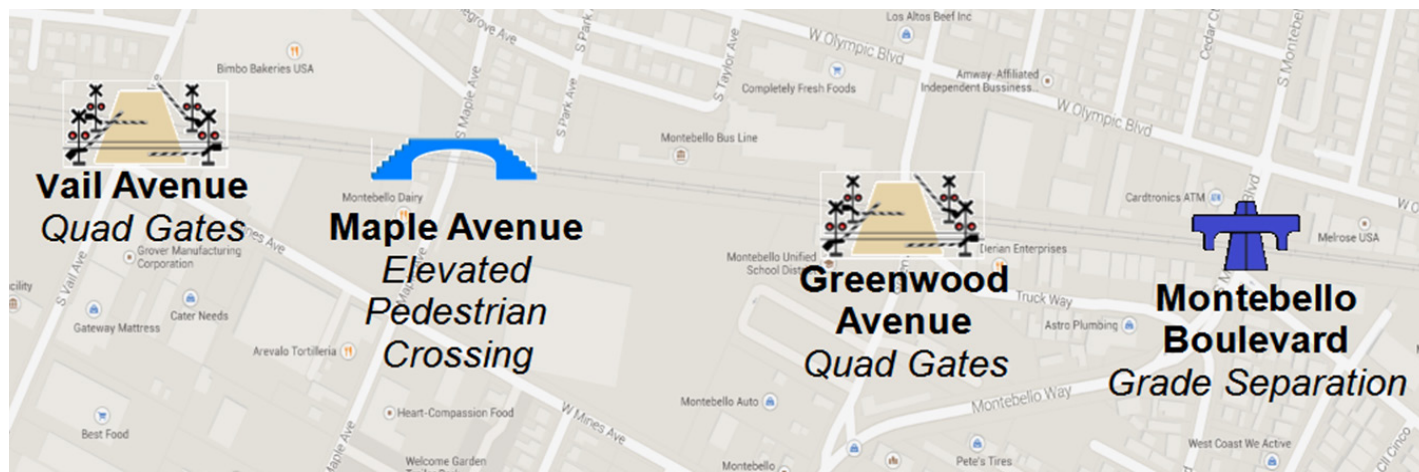
Sixty-five individuals attended a community open house meeting to provide information and solicit public comments about the Turnbull Canyon Road Grade Separation Project. The meeting was held on July 17th at the Hacienda Heights Community Center. Attendees visited with staff and consultants to learn about the project design, construction schedule, property impacts and traffic impacts and detours during the closure of Turnbull Canyon Road. Staff has responded in writing to the comments submitted by the attendees and provided a written meeting summary to the host jurisdictions, the City of Industry and the County of Los Angeles. The proposed roadway overpass on Turnbull Canyon Road at the railroad tracks, north of Gale Avenue and south of Don Julian Avenue, will eliminate an estimated 89 minutes of traffic delay each day at the crossing resulting from about 25 trains per day. Turnbull Canyon Road carries 13,654 vehicles per day which is projected to increase to 15,110 vehicles by 2025. The project will also eliminate crossing collisions as well as delays for emergency responders. The



Federal Railroad Administration has recorded 13 collisions at the crossing, including two fatalities. The project is in the final design phase and is scheduled to start construction in early 2021.

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## Montebello Corridor Project Enters Property Acquisition Phase



The San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments is currently in the process of acquiring properties and property rights necessary for the construction of the Montebello Boulevard roadway underpass and pedestrian overhead structure on Maple Avenue. The Montebello Corridor Grade Separation Project calls for constructing a roadway underpass with sidewalk and bike lanes and railroad bridge at the railroad crossing on Montebello Boulevard and installing at-grade safety improvements at the crossings on Maple, Greenwood and Vail Avenues. A pedestrian overcrossing is planned for the Maple Avenue crossing due to significant numbers of pedestrians and cyclists. The project would eliminate crossing collisions, queuing and congestion and reduce vehicle emissions at the underpass while improving safety at all four crossings. Twelve collisions have been recorded at the four crossings resulting in three fatalities and two injuries. By

2025, rail traffic through Montebello is projected to nearly double from 49 trains to 91 trains per day. Without the project, growing train and vehicle traffic will result in an approximate doubling of vehicle-hours of delay at the busiest crossing, Montebello Boulevard, which carries an average of 21,000 vehicles a day. Project completion could result in eligibility for a "Quiet Zone" restriction on locomotive horn-blowing in Montebello. The three elements that make up the Corridor Project--the grade separation, at-grade improvements, and the pedestrian overcrossing--will be constructed under three separate construction contracts. Construction could begin in 2020 and be complete by 2024. The overall estimated project cost is \$164.8 million.

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*Vehicles stop at the railroad crossing on Vail Avenue as a freight train passes by. The proposed safety improvements on Vail Avenue include pedestrian crossing enhancements such as sidewalk and extended concrete track panels, re-profiling of pavement in the vehicular approaches to the tracks and through the crossing, roadway median installation, updated signage and striping, and railroad signal modifications required for the new equipment and improvements.*



## San Gabriel Trench Project Wins Statewide Top Honors



The California Transportation Foundation (CTF) named the San Gabriel Trench Project as the overall Project of the Year at its 30th Annual Transportation Awards held in Sacramento on May 28th. The award recognizes the premier transportation project in California from all regions of the state. This year's statewide winner was selected from among more than 60 nominations.

The 2.2-mile project was the largest public works project in the history of the City of San Gabriel and the largest project in the \$1.7 billion Alameda Corridor-East (ACE) grade separation program overseen by the Capital Projects and Construction Committee of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG).

"This is a tremendous honor and a momentous achievement for the San Gabriel Trench Project to be selected as the most outstanding transportation project in the State of California," said El Monte Councilwoman Victoria Martinez Muela, Chair of the SGVCOG Capital Projects and Construction Committee. "With significant federal, state, regional and local support, the project serves as a prime example of how all levels of government can come together to improve California's transportation system and solve its critical infrastructure challenges."

The project resulted in the lowering of a 1.4-mile section of railroad track in a 30-foot-deep,





*San Gabriel Trench, continued from page 13*

65-foot-wide trench through the City of San Gabriel with roadway bridges constructed at four hazardous at-grade crossings and railroad bridges built over two storm channels. The trench improves safety by eliminating the potential for crossing collisions, delays for nearly 90,000 motorists each day, reduces emissions from idling vehicles and allows emergency responders to respond more quickly on both sides of the tracks. Construction required the excavation of more than 500,000 cubic yards of soil removed via 33,000 dump truck trips and the pouring of 6,500 truckloads of concrete to build the trench walls and floor and roadway bridge structures.

"This recognition can only be made possible by the hard work and dedication of our staff, project partners and the teams who designed, managed and constructed the San Gabriel Trench under Senior Project Manager Phillip Balmeo," said Mark Christoffels, Chief Engineer of the SGVCOG. "It was a challenging project and we are proud of the efforts made to overcome the hurdles and deliver the project under budget and within four years of construction."

Jacobs Engineering served as construction manager on the project, Walsh Construction was the general contractor, Moffatt & Nichol was the lead designer, SWCA was the archaeological and cultural resources consultant, Paragon Partners provided right-of-way services, Lee Andrews Group provided community outreach services and the City of San Gabriel and Union Pacific Railroad were project partners.

The San Gabriel Trench is part of a program of 19 grade separations at railroad crossings in eastern Los Angeles County to mitigate the impacts of growth in trade transported by train along the ACE Trade Corridor, which carries 16% of all waterborne containerized trade in the nation. The San Pedro Bay ports, the busiest in the nation, handle 25% of exports and more than 40% of our nation's containerized imports.

The \$293.7 million project was funded with state transportation bonds, Los Angeles County half-cent transportation sales tax funds, federal transportation funds and contributions from Union Pacific Railroad and the City of San Gabriel.

Established more than thirty years ago, the CTF is the leading charitable transportation organization in the state. This Project of the Year award is the latest in a series of awards honoring the SGVCOG's grade separation program. The San Gabriel Trench project was also the recipient of the Project of the Year Award from the Southern California Chapter of the American Public Works Association, and along with the Puente Avenue Grade Separation Project, received Project Achievement Awards from the Southern California Chapter of the Construction Management Association of America.

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## \$15 Million in State Grant Funds Awarded to ACE Project Grade Separations

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in May awarded \$15 million in state grant funds for three projects in the Alameda Corridor-East (ACE) grade separation program of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG). The funds are part of the Section 190 Grade Separation Program, a competitive grant program jointly administered with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), which provides up to \$15 million each year in state funding to local agencies for the construction of grade separation projects to improve safety and expedite the movement of vehicles by eliminating existing at-grade highway-rail crossings.

"We appreciate the support of Caltrans and the CPUC for our grade separation projects and welcome this funding that will be instrumental to completing these critically important infrastructure projects in the San Gabriel Valley," said El Monte Councilwoman Victoria Martinez, Chair of the SGVCOG Capital Projects and Construction Committee, which oversees the grade separation program.

The grant program will contribute \$5 million each toward the completion of roadway underpasses currently in construction on Fairway Drive and Fullerton Road in the City of Industry and unincorporated community Rowland Heights, and on Durfee Avenue in the City of Pico Rivera. The funds are allocated based on a prioritized list established by the CPUC of projects most urgently in need. Out of 36 grade separation projects statewide included in the California Grade Separation Fund Priority List for Fiscal Year 2018-2019, the Fairway Drive project ranked number 5, the Durfee Avenue project ranked number 9 and the Fullerton Road project ranked number 16. Aside from the project ranked number 1 on the priority list being eligible for an allocation of up to \$15 million, any one project may not receive an allocation that exceeds \$5 million per year.

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## Officials Tour ACE Grade Separation Projects



*SGVCOG Capital Projects and Construction Committee Members, SGVCOG staff and construction personnel at the Fullerton Road railroad crossing currently under construction to build the roadway underpass.*

Members of the SGVCOG Capital Projects and Construction Committee including Diamond Bar Councilmember Nancy Lyons and Industry Mayor Cory Moss joined staff in participating in a tour of active and completed Alameda Corridor-East grade separation projects on August 26th. The tour included visits to the Durfee Avenue, Fullerton Road and Fairway Drive projects, and offered a first-hand look at the work involved in building a grade separation.

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*Diamond Bar Councilmember Nancy Lyons and Industry Mayor Cory Moss visit the Fullerton Road Grade Separation Project located in the City of Industry and unincorporated community of Rowland Heights.*

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