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Alameda Corridor-East Construction Authority



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ACE MAKES PROGRESS THROUGH BUSIEST PHASE EVER



Officials giving a thumbs up at the dedication ceremony for the Nogales Street grade separation which opened to traffic on June 17.

ALAMEDA CORRIDOR-EAST CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

By the Hon. Jack Hadjinian
Rail is generally a safe and efficient way to move people and goods through Southern California, helping to preserve both a quality of life we cherish and an industry we depend on. Directly or indirectly, goods movement accounts for one-third of all jobs and economic activity in Southern California.

But while trains reduce the number



Foothill Transit bus carrying dignitaries, the first vehicle to drive through the newly opened Nogales Street underpass on Friday, June 17.

of large trucks on our congested highways, they also can block traffic at crossings and result in collisions.

To resolve the community impacts

arising from more frequent and longer freight trains on the transcontinental railroad routes in the San Gabriel Valley, local governments established the



ACE Board Chair and Montebello Councilman Jack Hadjinian at the Nogales Street grade separation dedication ceremony on Friday, June 17.

Alameda Corridor-East Construction Authority (ACE) in 1998. ACE has been charged with constructing 20 grade separations, where the road goes under or over the railroad, at the most congested and hazardous crossings in the San Gabriel Valley, as well as safety improvements at the remaining crossings.

I am proud to report ACE has made significant progress. By the middle of this year, we will have opened a ninth grade separation to traffic. Seven grade separations will be in active construction, as will a rail line relocation project to eliminate trains from two crossings. Another four grade separations are in various stages of design, along with enhanced safety gate systems at five crossings. To date, safety improvements have been completed at 40 at-grade crossings.

We could not have made this progress without the support of our local, state and Federal funding partners and representatives. More than \$1.65 billion in

transportation grant funding has been secured for the ACE program. To complete all projects, an estimated \$36 million to \$75 million in additional funds are needed – the final number to be determined during the design process.

Federal, state and local funding programs for freight projects are sorely needed, especially for Southern California – the nation’s leading trade gateway and inland corridor. We are pleased that Congress authorized and the Obama Administration is implementing new federal surface transportation programs that will provide up to \$2 billion a year, mainly for highway freight and grade separation projects. In Sacramento, legislators and Governor Brown have proposed new revenues to replenish the Trade Corridors Improvement Fund, the most significant source of funds for the ACE projects. In this region, our strong funding partner, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, is considering a proposed

ballot measure this November which could provide new revenues for many transportation projects and programs, including the ACE projects.

The prospects appear good for additional funding for the ACE projects. Without the ACE projects, vehicle-hours of delay at San Gabriel Valley rail crossings are projected to double or triple over the next decade as traffic increases and the number of freight trains nearly doubles to more than 125 per day. With community and stakeholder support, we can deliver the ACE grade separation projects to improve mobility and safety while eliminating locomotive horn noise and reducing vehicle emissions in our region. □

Jack Hadjinian is a member of the Montebello City Council and Chair of the ACE Construction Authority Board of Directors. For more information about the ACE projects, please visit www.theaceproject.org or call the ACE Helpline at (888) ACE-1426.