

SR 76 East Segment Project Newsletter #1

More Improvements are Coming to the SR 76 Corridor

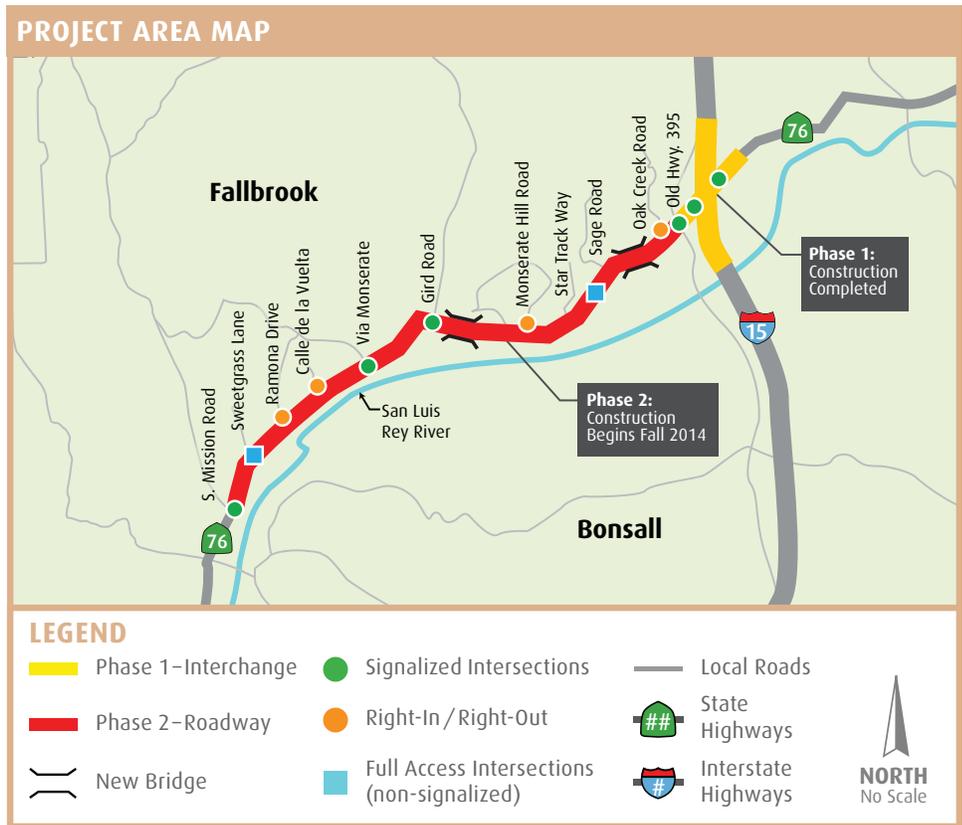
The State Route 76 (SR 76)/Interstate 15 (I-15) interchange was upgraded last year to improve traffic flow to and from SR 76. In October, construction will start on the final phase of the SR 76 East Segment. This is the last segment in a series of improvement projects between Interstate 5 and I-15. Here's what to expect during the first year of construction:

From fall 2014 to summer 2015, crews will start the process of moving the 1 million cubic yards of soil needed to build the roadway fill for this phase of construction. Crews will move approximately:

- ▶ 600,000 cubic yards of excavated soil from the south side of the river to its north side using a temporary bridge;
- ▶ 135,000 cubic yards of soil located near Old Highway 395/SR 76 that is left over from the recent SR 76/I-15 interchange construction;
- ▶ 60,000 cubic yards of soil from the former Tabata property between South Mission Road and Olive Hill Road;
- ▶ 55,000 cubic yards of soil excavated from the adjacent hillsides parallel to the existing highway; and
- ▶ Approximately 150,000 cubic yards of soil imported from outside the area.

Additionally, crews will take two to three weeks to clear the future work area for the roadway by removing its remaining vegetation. These initial construction activities are expected to cause minimal disruption for the traveling public.

During these first six to nine months, our project partners will make other significant upgrades to the water and utility infrastructure in the area. The San Diego County Water Authority will add protective



steel linings to their 6-8' diameter pipelines which carry 80% of the region's water supply. Additionally, SDG&E will perform utility work between Sweetgrass Lane and Ramona Drive.

In summer 2015, paving work for the new roadway is anticipated to begin. The first portion will occur between South Mission Road and Gird Road. Rainbow Municipal Water District also will replace their older sewer pipes and reconnect private lateral connections in this area. These improvements will increase capacity of its sewer facility. The second half of the roadway work will proceed from Gird Road to Old Highway 395. Construction is anticipated through 2017.

Roadway work will require multiple traffic shifts during construction. Your patience and caution driving through the area is appreciated. Advisories will be emailed to notify the public of these traffic shifts. Sign up for updates at KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/contact.

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Environmentally Speaking: Meet Stephen Alvarez

The SR 76 East Segment runs through an environmentally-sensitive river valley. Stephen Alvarez, Caltrans' Landscape Architect, shares how the project team is working to build a new highway in a sustainable way while facing the challenges of our current drought.

How long have you worked at Caltrans and what is your main responsibility?

I've worked at Caltrans for over 22 years. Currently, I am the District Landscape Architect. In that role, I provide direction for Roadside Landscape Design and the Roadside Programs.



Stephen Alvarez (left) with Caltrans Project Landscape Architect Steve Warren.

Drought is a current issue and projected to be an ongoing concern. What is Caltrans doing to reduce water usage?

First and foremost, we are focusing on establishing native plants that can survive in dry environments. This is a sustainable approach as these plants require less water than non-native plants.

You mention native plants, what is the native palette for the SR 76 Corridor?

The palette specifies about 50 different types of native plants. Some examples of these include: California Coast Live Oaks, four different types of willow trees, and California Sycamores. For the land adjacent to the river, the palette includes plants such as California sagebrush.

What is the process to establish these plants and what is the required water use?

Initial planting requires regular watering until plants are established. During that phase, we're using new irrigation

controller technology and coordinating with contractors regarding water schedules, watering times, and water use. After three years, plants should be self-sustaining and watering can be terminated. Occasional tree watering with individual bubblers may be required during periods of severe drought if warranted.

What about the plants that are already in place?

Maintaining the corridor's rural character is a key issue. So, there are some mature, non-native plants that we are retaining as part of the existing character of the area.

What is one of the more unique environmental challenges for the SR 76 East Segment project?

This segment is in the San Luis Rey watershed, which requires a storm water protection strategy. The planting plan is an integral part of that strategy to prevent/reduce roadway runoff into the waters of the San Luis Rey River.

Meet the Contractor

Caltrans selected Ames Construction, Inc. (Ames) from Corona, California as the general contractor for this project. Ames started working on highway construction in the early 1970s and since that time they have built a variety of transportation projects including highways, bridges, railroads, and airports across the country.

As the general contractor, Ames will oversee a team of specialists including asphalt paving, electrical, signage, striping, and fencing sub-contractors. During active construction, Ames estimates that it will have approximately 80 of its construction crew members on site to work on this final phase of the SR 76 East Segment.

Crews will begin setting up the construction staging area at Faubus Farms in late September. Work to clear the future roadway area of vegetation and to move 1 million cubic yards of fill dirt will begin in mid-October.



Bobcats and other local wildlife are successfully using the wild animal crossings installed along the SR 76 Middle Segment.

Caltrans and SANDAG's Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP) is committed to enhancing the environmental quality within the region. To meet this commitment, the SR 76 East Segment Project purchased nearly 194 acres of land within the river valley from the Vessels Ranch and Tabata family. The project scope includes removing the man-made embankments placed there years ago and excavating the material to incorporate into the roadway construction. This will return these sections of the river to their natural state and enhance the environment for animal and plant life. Part of this work will establish plants native to wetlands and land adjacent to the river. For the first few years, irrigation to establish these plants will be provided. The project also includes five wild animal crossings and control fencing so animals are encouraged to keep off the highway. This will allow more natural animal movement within the river bottom and tributaries and reduce the risk of animal and driver encounters on the highway. The EMP program is funded by *TransNet*, the voter approved half-cent regional sales tax.

Did You Know