

# San Gabriel Valley Will Extend Legacy of Successful ACE Project

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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. The last two remaining grade separation projects in the ACE program are entering the final design stage and federal, state and local funds are being sought for their construction. We have much work to do but we are close to completing the ACE Program!



Victoria Martinez Muela

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. With fewer than two-dozen employees, our SGVCOG Capital Projects and Construction team may be small in number but they have delivered mighty projects!

As we forge ahead in completing the model 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 \$420 million State Route 57-60 Confluence Chokepoint Relief Project, as well as a project to build a pedestrian bridge to connect the Pomona Fairplex to 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 by refocusing our capital projects and construction efforts on San Gabriel Valley infrastructure and transportation initiatives to help our member cities and unincorporated communities meet the challenges of the future. ○

Victoria Martinez Muela is a Councilmember in the City of El Monte and Chair of the Capital Projects and Construction Committee of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, which is responsible for the Alameda Corridor-East program. For more information about the ACE projects, please visit [www.theaceproject.org](http://www.theaceproject.org) or call the ACE Helpline at (888) ACE-1426.



Crews construct the pump station for the Fairway Drive grade separation project that will improve drainage and remove stormwater from the future roadway underpass.

## \$15 Million in State Grant Funds Awarded for ACE Grade Separation Projects

*Latest Funding Approval Will Support Roadway Underpass Projects in Construction at Fairway Drive, Fullerton Road and Durfee Avenue*

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.

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.

The projects are 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. Fourteen grade separations have been completed, three are under construction, and two are in the design phase and expected to start construction in early 2021. ○



At left, a freight train blocks the Durfee Avenue crossing. Above, dignitaries participate in the groundbreaking ceremony for the Durfee Avenue grade separation project. Below, a photosimulation depicts the completed project. Trains will cross over the lowered roadway.

## Officials Kick Off Construction of Underpass Project at Hazardous Railroad Crossing in Pico Rivera

*Durfee Avenue Project Will Improve Safety at Crossing with Four Recorded Fatalities, Eliminate Crossing Delays and Locomotive Horn Noise*

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 is located north of Whittier Boulevard and south of Beverly Boulevard. 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.

"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 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."

"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." ○

