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Cure for I-580, I-205 in the works

Oakland Tribune , Nov 26, 2007 by Cheryl Winkelman

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Because San Joaquin County's population is projected to almost double by 2030 -- and hit the 1 million mark -- transportation planners are busy finding ways to ease the nasty gridlock on Interstates 205 and 580.

Two major projects -- one under construction and one in the planning stages -- are in the works for the I-205 corridor, said Wil Ridder, a senior regional planner for the San Joaquin Council of Governments, the agency that oversees transportation for the county.

Seasoned road warriors probably have been delayed by the first project, an expansion of I-205 from four to six lanes from the 11th Street exit to Interstate 5 going east.

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That \$97 million project, near Tracy, should be done in 2009.

Still in the preliminary stages but already fully funded are a series of auxiliary lanes that connect one onramp to the next. The \$50 million project, expected to run between Tracy Boulevard and Grant Line Road and between 11th Street and Mountain House Parkway, will provide longer areas for merging to prevent cars from crashing as motorists get on and off the highway.

Other than road plans, SJCOG has tried to lessen the number of vehicles on the road by purchasing a park 'n' ride lot at the I-205/ Grant Line Road exit. People will be able to leave their cars there and hop into van, car pools or bus.

SJCOG also hopes to expand service provided by the Altamont Commuter Express, a train running from Stockton to San Jose, Ridder said.

Other transportation projects in line for San Joaquin County include new interchanges at I-205 and Lammers Road and I-205 and Paradise Road, both in Tracy, said John Goodwin,

spokesman for the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the transportation agency for the nine-county Bay Area.

In addition, several projects are planned for 580 and the Altamont Pass, including the addition of westbound and eastbound car- pool lanes on 580 from Greenville Road in Livermore to Tassajara Road in Pleasanton.

And a project adding truck climbing lanes, east- and westbound on 580 from Flynn Road to Greenville Road, still needs to be funded.

Either way, Goodwin said, "This is a corridor of vital importance for all of Northern California."

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