

# I-5/SR 78 Interchange Project



## Project Overview

SANDAG, Caltrans, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are teaming up to improve traffic flow where Interstate 5 (I-5) and State Route 78 (SR 78) meet. Presently, the I-5/SR 78 area experiences substantial congestion due to lack of direct freeway-to-freeway connections. These movements are currently handled via a traffic signal at the I-5 southbound ramps/Vista Way intersection, which causes significant traffic delay and air quality impacts not only on the freeway, but within the adjacent community. In addition to delays caused by the traffic signal, the absence of necessary highway facilities and additional lanes contributes to congestion in the area. Travel demand is projected to increase, which will place further stress on the interchange.

To help meet anticipated travel demand and improve connectivity throughout the corridor, Caltrans is currently identifying project alternatives that could include improvements such as connecting and extending existing auxiliary lanes and reconfiguring the interchange as needed to construct direct freeway-to-freeway connectors and/or Direct Access Ramps (DARs). Once alternatives have been identified, Caltrans will develop technical studies to evaluate costs, impacts, and benefits of each alternative.

The I-5/SR 78 Interchange Project is part of the larger North Coast Corridor (NCC) Program and a key component in the North County Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan (CMCP), which holistically examines the integration of different transportation improvements and community enhancements across north county.

## Project Schedule



## About I-5/SR 78 Corridor

State Route 78 (SR 78) serves as the primary east-west travel corridor between Escondido and Oceanside, traversing through Carlsbad, Vista, and San Marcos, as well as unincorporated areas of San Diego County. It is the main route for local and regional travel in North County and provides north-south connections to Interstate 5 (I-5) and Interstate 15 (I-15).

Increased travel demand along this corridor is impeding mobility, resulting in significant congestion and travel delays. Caltrans and SANDAG are currently working on a series of highway, rail, and bike/pedestrian improvements to solve for this.



## Project Status

The I-5/SR 78 Interchange Project is currently in the environmental phase. The formal public input period is expected to begin spring of 2025. The Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Studies (EIR/EIS) is expected to be completed by 2029.

**Sign up** for project updates to learn more about upcoming project milestones and opportunities to provide feedback.



# I-5/SR 78 Interchange Project

The I-5/SR 78 Interchange Project is being planned and designed in coordination with a series of highway, rail, bike/pedestrian, and environmental improvements, including the extension of HOV lanes on I-5 from SR 78 to SR 76, the Carlsbad Village Double Track Project, and restoration of the Buena Vista Lagoon. These improvement projects will work together to create a complete corridor system that will enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors throughout the North Coast and SR 78 corridors.

## HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Potential improvements currently being studied include the addition of Managed Lanes with direct connectors between I-5 and SR 78, the extension of Managed Lanes between SR 78 to El Camino Real, and the addition of Managed Lanes between SR 78 and SR 76.

**A**

## LAGOON RESTORATION

The 220-acre Buena Vista Lagoon is in a state of decline due to a variety of environmental concerns. This restoration will enhance biological and hydraulic functions through a modified saltwater alternative.

**B**

## RAIL IMPROVEMENTS

The Carlsbad Village Double Track project will add 1.1 miles of second track from southern Oceanside to Carlsbad Village and replace the Buena Vista Lagoon rail bridge.

**C**

