

ANOTHER VIEW

Enough red tape to stripe California's highways

No one understands the needs of Placer County residents better than the people who live here.

We love our community and are always looking for things we can do to make it even better. As both a county supervisor and a longtime member of the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA) board of directors, I enjoy working with other local elected officials to identify and solve those problems most impactful to our constituents.

Together, we have been forward-thinking, proactive and worked to ensure our region's transportation infrastructure meets the needs of our community.

Together, we've "broken the bottleneck" on Interstate 80 through Roseville and soon will be opening the Lincoln Bypass.

Indeed, we've made great progress, but there's always more to be done. Instead of waiting for problems to surface, we're looking to find solutions. Sometimes, unfortunately, a simple solution gets cluttered by regulations and red tape.

By breaking the Roseville bottleneck, we have illuminated the next big problem that needs to be fixed — congestion at the I-80/Highway 65 interchange. While we are exploring the long-term, permanent solution, it occurred to me that there might be a simple, short-term fix that would show immediate results.



Kirk Uhler
Guest
Columnist

Local governments shouldn't have to spend taxpayer dollars to fund unnecessary studies that are required to satisfy the bureaucracy and meet regulations that are out of touch with reality.

The existing bridge on northbound 65 from westbound I-80 to Galleria Boulevard/Stanford Ranch Road exit is both wide enough and structurally engineered to accommodate another lane of traffic.

Transforming the shoulder alongside SR-65 into an auxiliary lane would widen the roadway from two to three lanes.

PCTPA's analysis of the roadway shows the affected area is less than a mile and could produce immediate benefits. We believe that re-striping would ease congestion, increase safety and help alleviate a major headache for commuters.

Construction for a project of this size is estimated at four to six months, including reinforcements to the shoulder between the end of the bridge and Galleria Boulevard/Stanford Ranch Road exit to accommodate a lane of traffic.

Sounds easy enough, right? Sadly, it's not, because of regulatory red tape.

You see, the state sees no difference between a small re-striping like this and a major new road or bridge.

While some steps in the state process, like a traffic study to make sure the layout will be most effective, make sense, other steps, like including an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), make no sense at all. An EIR? To re-stripe an existing roadway? This regulatory process will add approximately two years of planning and \$350,000 in expenses.

All this for a stripe? That's what happens when state lawmakers try to create roadways as opposed to local planners and engineers.

Local governments shouldn't have to spend taxpayer dollars to fund unnecessary studies that are required to satisfy the bureaucracy and meet regulations that are out of touch with reality. Sure, the state needs to maintain the integrity of the highway system, but with more and more of the funding burden for improvements falling on local agencies, shouldn't they give us the power to plan and implement these improvements?

We need to trust our local planners, not tie them up in a ball of red tape and waste precious resources. Turning a six-month lane re-striping/shoulder improvement into a three-year ordeal is ridiculous. Your locally elected representatives are working overtime to cut the red tape so we can paint a white stripe.

Kirk Uhler is a member of the Placer County Board of Supervisors representing District 4, which includes portions of Roseville and Granite Bay.

Residents talk trucks, congestion regarding bypass

By Stephanie Dumm, News Messenger Reporter



Michael Kirby/The News Messenger

John Flynn was waiting Tuesday for his granddaughters on 5th Street. Flynn, from Fair Oaks, said he thought the bypass would be good for Lincoln "as soon as residents and locals get used to it."

Less truck traffic and congestion in downtown Lincoln are what some residents look forward to about the Highway 65 Bypass opening this fall.

The News Messenger spoke with several residents from Sun City Lincoln Hills, Lincoln Crossing and downtown Lincoln to find out their thoughts on the bypass.

The bypass is slated to open in the late summer or early fall, according to previous News Messenger reports, and will take traffic around Lincoln. The bypass starts at the south end of the city and ends in Sheridan.

Most residents brought up semi-trucks when talking about the bypass.

"It's going to help downtown get rid of the big trucks," said Lincoln Hills resident Bob Chaney. "We'll be able to go into Lincoln easier. Now we go to Roseville because we have a direct line and don't have to fight the trucks."

Steven Pizzo, another Lincoln Hills resident, said big rigs would "have the freedom of the freeways."

"I think it's better for all trucks because they won't have to stop and go," Pizzo said.

Jenny Blanco, a Lincoln Crossing resident, said the lack of trucks in downtown Lincoln will mean more time spent in downtown Lincoln for her family.

"We'll have lunch and enjoy the day in downtown Lincoln, and not have to watch out for Mac trucks," Blanco said. "I take the kids there now but it's quick, park, get in and go."

A reduction in traffic congestion was another benefit of the bypass mentioned by residents.

"I think it's great. It's long overdue because of the congestion it created for downtown Lincoln," said Barry Cunningham, a Lincoln Hills resident. "I go downtown periodically, and when I do, it takes me a long time to get there and back."

Ann Stults said she takes an alternate route from Lincoln Hills to get to downtown Lincoln.

"I like to go to downtown Lincoln but I don't like having to fight the traffic," Stults said. "We have a neighborhood watch group that goes to lunch and we always try to go down there."

Stults patronizes downtown businesses to "help our tax situation and support" the businesses.

Jennifer Arnold, a Lincoln Crossing resident, said she is "all gung-ho for the bypass."

"We're a military family and my husband will use it for his commute," Arnold said. "Right now, his longest part of the commute (to Beale Air Force Base) is the eight lights of downtown Lincoln."

Arnold would "like for it to be open already."

Alysa Wagner, also a Lincoln Crossing resident, would like the bypass "to be done" and has concerns about the possible creation of congestion in other Lincoln areas.

"I'm bittersweet. I hope it doesn't create more traffic on Ferrari Ranch Road," Wagner said. "I don't want it to impact my walking path to the park and I don't want Ferrari Ranch Road to be like Roseville Parkway."

Wagner likes to walk to Peter Singer Park from her home and has concerns about walking past the on-and-off-ramp at Ferrari Ranch Road.

"I will take the off ramp to come home from work and won't have to loop around Lincoln using Sterling Parkway so I'm excited about that," Wagner said. "Traffic used to be bad coming into Lincoln at 65 and Sunset but then they put in the light. This will be the icing on the cake."

Shirley Russell, a longtime Lincoln resident and Lincoln Area Archives Museum volunteer executive director, said "there won't be the noise level" due to traffic in downtown Lincoln, which could encourage diners to enjoy meals outside at local restaurants.

"It will lessen traffic for those of us who live here and make it a more pleasant trip," Russell said. "It could draw more residents who don't come down here."

"Many people who are traveling through Lincoln," according to Russell, are not doing so with "Lincoln as a destination."

Diana Burke, another long-time Lincoln resident and downtown restaurant owner (Simple Pleasures) had a similar comment.

"Most of the people who travel on Highway 65 are not even intending to stop in Lincoln," Burke said. "People who want to come into Lincoln get discouraged by the amount of traffic."

The bypass "will be a very positive thing," according to Burke.

"I know people are concerned that people will bypass Lincoln but I don't think that will happen," Burke said. "The ones who wanted to bypass it for years will bypass it."

Burke also said the city owning the portion of Highway 65 that runs through Lincoln, which will be called Lincoln Boulevard, could provide more opportunities to draw downtown visitors.

"We used to have banners across the street when I was a kid about the Portuguese Festa and Fourth of July (activities)," Burke said. "When they put in traffic lights and Caltrans took over, we lost the ability to do that."

She said having banners to advertise events in downtown "gets more people down here."

Lincoln Crossing's Wagner said "there is always an issue with parking" when she visits downtown, something she hopes the bypass will help.

"Going to downtown Lincoln more, that's my next goal," Wagner said. "We would like to take advantage of downtown on a more regular basis. I'm excited about Beermann's (opening)."

Sacramento's annual Cap-to-Cap lobbying trip is busy in D.C.

mdoyle@mcclatchydc.com

Published Tuesday, Apr. 24, 2012

About 300 Sacramento-area officials and community leaders are swarming over Capitol Hill this week in search of a sympathetic Uncle Sam.

Instead of overkill, call it strength in numbers.

"When we work as a team, we do better," Roseville Mayor Pauline Rocucci said outside a House committee room Monday afternoon.

Rocucci and her teammates are taking part in Cap-to-Cap, an ambitious annual lobbying trip organized by the Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce. Starting with a reception at the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel on Sunday, and running through Wednesday, Cap-to-Cap combines formal briefings with informal buttonholing of staffers, lawmakers and civil servants.

All day Monday, for instance, Rep. Dan Lungren, R-Gold River, sat at a conference table in a third-floor room while Cap-to-Cap committees of a dozen or so members shuttled in and out to articulate their respective priorities at 20-minute intervals. They spoke of flood control, air quality, agriculture and more.

The Cap-to-Cap veterans knew enough to be specific in their requests, respectful of the ever-youthful staffers and strictly nonpartisan in their approach. While Lungren huddled with the visitors in the large House Administration Committee hearing room that he controls as the panel chairman, Rep. Doris Matsui, D-Sacramento, and other Sacramento Valley lawmakers met them in their own offices.

Some wish list items are very tangible, like a request to maintain federal air quality grants or more money to improve the Sacramento River Deep Water Channel. Others are crucial but harder to put a finger on, like protecting Sacramento Valley water rights.

Congress has at least temporarily banished earmarks from appropriations bills. This complicates the work of local lobbyists, though in some cases their emphasis is blocking one idea rather than promoting another. This year, for instance, Sacramento area officials are trying to lock in congressional opposition to an Obama administration proposal for a new \$100-per-flight airport user fee.

"We think it's a bad idea that needs to be put away," said G. Hardy Acree, director of airports for the Sacramento County Airport System.

Away from the Capitol, grass-roots lobbyists met officials at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and federal Bureau of Reclamation for the kind of face-to-face sessions that melt away misunderstandings.

"We can ask them questions, and they can ask us questions, and that is what I find is so good," Roccucci said.

Financially sponsored by such local heavyweights as the UC Davis Health System, Kaiser Permanente and Granite Construction, Cap-to-Cap bills itself as the largest chamber of commerce-sponsored lobbying venture of its kind. It is orders of magnitude larger than most. This week, for instance, the Merced County Association of Governments is likewise sponsoring its own annual lobbying trip with only 18 participants.

Unlike many similar regional lobbying ventures, though, Cap-to-Cap covers a multi-county area.

The Cap-to-Cap trip augments work by a number of paid lobbyists serving Sacramento-area entities. The Sacramento County Airport System, for one, paid its Washington, D.C., lobbying firm \$120,000 last year, public records show, while the city of Sacramento paid two lobbying firms \$246,000 and the Sacramento Regional Transit District paid lobbyists \$200,000.

This year's lobbying trip includes many Cap-to-Cap veterans, as well as some relative newcomers. The advocates for the homeless, for instance, are along for only the second year.

"The association with the Metro Chamber brings a lot of credibility," said Bob Erlenbusch, executive director of the Sacramento Housing Alliance.

© Copyright The Sacramento Bee. All rights reserved.

Call Michael Doyle, Bee Washington Bureau, (202) 383-0006.

- [Read more articles by Michael Doyle](#)