

User:AkosSzoboszlay/Expressways in Santa Clara County

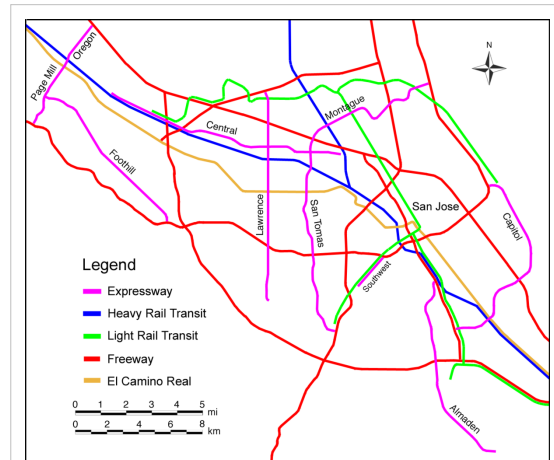
These **Expressways** are arterial roads^{[1] [2]} in Santa Clara County, California (in the United States) that have many fewer intersections and driveways than typical arterial roads. All but one of these roads, and a portion of two others, are administered and maintained by the County and are collectively named *Santa Clara County Expressway System*.^[3] These also have a related history, and were formed in the 1960s and early 1970s when the County added lanes and wide, paved shoulders onto existing roads. However, jurisdiction, such as setting speed limits, remains with the cities.

Attributes

Comparison with freeways

While the word *expressway* is a synonym for *freeway* in many other states or countries, these expressways are not *freeways* for these reasons:

- These expressways have predominately **at-grade intersections**. There are also a few grade-separated intersections. However, the only expressway with *consecutive* grade-separated crossings is a portion of Central Expressway where the City of Sunnyvale paid for the extra cost.^[4]
- Most **speed limits** are 45 mph (72 kph), and range from 35 to 50 mph (56 to 80 kph), a common range for arterial roads.
- All these expressways have some industrial, commercial and/or residential use along them with **driveway access** (but reduced in number).
- All these expressways are required to meet **bike lane** standards.^{[1] [5]}
- All these expressways have some **sidewalks** and **bus stops**. Where there is no sidewalk, path or nearby alternative route, the pedestrians safely use **shoulders**^{[1] [6]}. Shoulders exist everywhere except for a few blocks where traffic lanes were added and bicyclist/pedestrian facilities have not yet been restored.



Map of expressways (violet) and other major transportation



Foothill Expressway (G5) from drivers' view



Foothill Expressway; typical bicycling position (near line)

- Most (5 out of 9) expressways have a **train station** (light rail or heavy rail) either adjacent, above or below the expressway. In addition, Montague Expressway station is one block from Montague Expressway.



Foothill Expressway; walking position (at edge)

Attributes that reduce travel time and increase safety

These expressways are *express* not because of higher speed limits, but because of fewer stops and less travel time compared with most other arterial roads. (Similarly, *express* buses observe the same speed limits as *local* buses, but are "faster" due to fewer stops.) Attributes that make expressways *express* also make expressways the safest roads to drive, bicycle or walk along. These attributes are:

- One-fifth the number of **intersections**, on average, per mile: Most crashes occur at intersections, and this attribute eliminates most crashes.
- Very few **driveways**: This is another crash source.
- **Bike lane** standards are required^{[1] [5]}: This creates greater separation of bicycles from vehicles. This is preferred over some parallel routes that require bicyclists to ride in the 45 mph traffic lane.
- **No parked cars**: This eliminates the weaving into traffic of bicyclists avoiding parked cars, increases visibility of bicyclists, and eliminates crashes caused by car doors that suddenly open in front of bicyclists. This attribute also prevents right-lane traffic being stopped by parking maneuvers.

These attributes **decrease travel time** for motor vehicles and therefore also **increase vehicle capacity** of the roadway, while simultaneously **increasing safety** for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians.



Page Mill Road (G3), 35 mph, is an official expressway.



Lawrence Expressway (G2). Since photo, sidewalk has been added here.

Route description (links), Map (links)

The most informative maps are online. Using a browser, such map enable the viewer to zoom and scroll, or view an aerial photograph version with street names, or view a road portion at street level from continuous photographs. Map links are obtained by clicking the footnote numbers, below. Detailed route descriptions are obtained by clicking the expressway names, below. The road route numbers begin with G, but local residents use the road names instead. The expressways are as follows (in general order of north to south):



Montague Expressway (G4) from drivers' view. Shoulder and sidewalk are not apparent from photo.

Oregon Expressway/Page Mill Road^[7] (G3)

This expressway is named Page Mill Road south of El Camino Real and is named Oregon Expressway north of the train station, and both names are used in between. Yet, it is considered the same expressway by County documentation.^[1] County literature recently started calling it *Oregon/Page Mill Expressway* but the road signs do not reflect that.

Foothill Expressway^[8] (G5)

Central Expressway^[9] (G6)

Lawrence Expressway^[10] (G2)

Montague Expressway^[11] (G4)

The route number is shared by San Tomas Expressway despite being considered a separate road in County documentation^[1] and by local people.

San Tomas Expressway^[12] (G4)

Capitol Expressway^[13] (G21)

Not to be confused with *Capitol Avenue*, the former name of Capitol Expressway and which still continues from it.

Southwest Expressway^[14] (No route number)

Southwest Expressway extends between I-280 and Bascom Avenue, within San Jose. It is adjacent to the Light Rail transit line that extends further, between the Diridon (main) San Jose train station and the City of Campbell. This is the only expressway in the County that is not part of the *Expressway System*.

Almaden Expressway^[15] (G8)

History

Pre-existing roads

All expressways, except San Tomas, were primarily pre-existing roads, whose names were changed from *Avenue* or *Road* to *Expressway*^[16] after the County added lanes and paved shoulders in the 1960s and early 1970s. The new shoulders, 8 to 10 feet (2.4 to 3.0 m) wide, were about twice as wide as a bike lane. Often, center landscaping with trees were added. Since then, these have been removed for more traffic lanes except for Foothill and southern Almaden Expressway, which are still 4-lane roads [see photos]. In general, speed limits were not increased after the name changes.

The following table is a brief history of each expressway (in general order of north to south).

Name today	Map link	History and prior name(s) ^[16]	Length ^[17]
Oregon Expressway/Page Mill Road	[7]	Oregon Expressway is a 35 mph arterial road and was formerly Oregon Avenue. Page Mill Road [see photo], its continuation, is an official County expressway, and shows that expressway road names do not need to end with the word <i>Expressway</i> .	4.7 mi. 8 km
Foothill Expressway	[8]	The Southern Pacific passenger train service ^[18] from Los Gatos to Palo Alto was eliminated for Foothill Expressway when, in 1964, train service was stopped and the tracks were removed to build it. ^[19] Originally, there were two tracks and the line was electrified, when used by the electric interurban trains of the Peninsular Railway from Palo Alto to San Jose, from 1905 to 1934. The Los Altos train station (at Foothill Expressway and Main Street, Los Altos) still stands. ^[20]	7.1 mi. 11 km
Central Expressway	[9]	Central Expressway was formed from three pre-existing roads: Alma Street (between the continuation of Alma today and Orchard Avenue near Highway 85), Argues Avenue (between Mathilda and today's Arques) and Kifer Road (between today's Kifer Road near Bowers Avenue and De la Cruz Blvd.).	9.7 mi. 16 km
Lawrence Expressway	[10]	Lawrence Station Road was the former name, named after the train station. Today, the reconstructed Lawrence Expressway train station is under the Expressway at the same location. Access to the industrial area north of the station was prohibited to train patrons until 1991. (See map link.) South of Stevens Creek Blvd., portions of Doyle Road also became part of Lawrence Expressway. Sidewalks were constructed for the entire length of Lawrence Expressway starting in 1993.	8.4 mi. 14 km
Montague Expressway	[11]	Montague Expressway was formed from three pre-existing roads: Montague Road (western portion), Trimble Road (central portion in line with Trimble Road today), and Landess Avenue (eastern portion, which continues today). It is interesting to note that Trimble Road had a 50 mph speed limit (changed to 45 in May 2007), greater than Montague at 45 mph.	5.9 mi. 9 km
San Tomas Expressway	[12]	San Tomas is the only expressway that was a mostly new road, mostly built along or on top of San Tomas Aquino Creek. However, the southern portion was Camden Avenue, which is its continuation today, the portion near El Camino was Los Olivos Drive, and the portion north of Central Expressway (which then was named Kifer Road) was Montague Road.	8.2 mi. 13 km
Capitol Expressway	[13]	Formerly was named Capitol Avenue, which still continues from it. Two months after adding lanes and paved, 10-foot (3 m) wide shoulders — without even changing the speed limit of 45 mph — the County highway engineers posted <i>Pedestrians bicycles ... prohibited</i> signs. After 15 years, these signs were changed to <i>bike lane</i> , finally allowing bicyclists to use the bike lane. Transit patrons were prohibited from walking to or from the Capitol Expressway light rail station until 1997. (See map link.)	9.3 mi. 15 km
Southwest Expressway	[14]	This is a 40 mph arterial road along the former Southern Pacific tracks, once the main train line between the cities of San Jose and Santa Cruz. The tracks are now a branch line of Union Pacific (one track) and light rail transit (one or two tracks).	1.5 mi. 2 km
Almaden Expressway	[15]	Formerly named Almaden Road, about one mile of the old road parallels it today.	9.3 mi. 14 km

Formation of the *Expressway System*

The *Expressway System* (comprising all but one of these *Expressway* arterial roads) started as a "trafficways" study conducted by De Leuw, Cather and Company (a company that is now known as Parsons Transportation Group, Parsons Corporation) at the request of the County Board of Supervisors in July 1957.^[21] The study took over a year and the final report was submitted to the Board of Supervisors on January 15, 1959.^[22]

The De Leuw study was further developed into a complex three-phase plan by a County Trafficways Committee convened in July 1959.^[23] In August 1960, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the three-phase plan and integrated it into the County General Plan.^[23] A \$70 million bond issue backed by local property taxes was approved by the electorate in March 1961, and construction on Phase I began that same year.^[24] The current network represents nearly all of what was planned for Phase I.^[25]

Rather than use a circular cloverleaf for grade-separated intersections, County engineers developed the "square loop."^[26] These were placed at two intersections (Central & Lawrence Expressways, Central & San Tomas Expressways). Although this design is slower, it probably was easier for the county to sell the land inside the loop. Industry and some retail were located on both sides of these square loop roads, and each loop was given a unique street name. However, signs were posted prohibiting bicyclists, pedestrians and transit patrons (after getting off a transit stop) from reaching them because the expressways, that were needed for access, were prohibited to them (as recently as 2003).

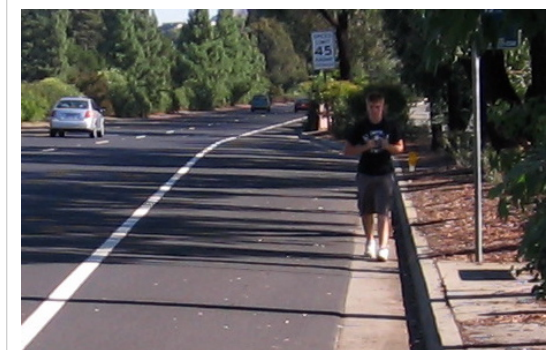
Paved shoulders that met bike lane standards were constructed along the entire length of all expressways.^[26] However, on Foothill, Lawrence, San Tomas, Central, and Capitol Expressways, these bike lanes were prohibited to bicyclists.

Only later, after decades of conflict [see section *Bicyclists*, below], were bicyclists permitted to use them. On three expressways, signs were changed from "Bicycles prohibited" to "Bike lane." Expressways that never had prohibitions of either bicyclists or pedestrians are Montague, Almaden, Oregon, Page Mill and Southwest.

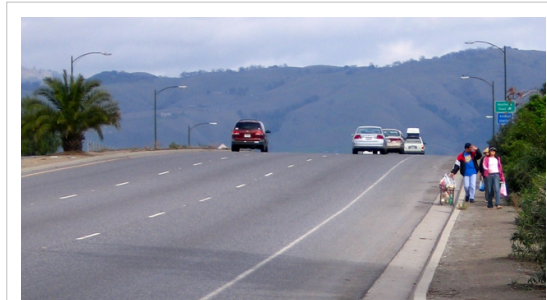
Phases II and III would have resulted in the upgrading of the expressways to full freeway status; but in 1967, the Board of Supervisors made the decision to finance Phase II with a \$10 vehicle registration fee on all vehicles registered in Santa Clara County.^[27] Within a year, county residents had passed a referendum canceling the fee, and the tax revolt movement of the 1970s (culminating in the enactment of Proposition 13 in 1978) would soon make the issue of financing Phase II infeasible.^[27]



Almaden Expressway; typical bicycling position



Almaden Expressway; near bus stop, walking position



Capitol Expressway; over-crossing of railroad/Highway 82.

Recent history

There have been decades of conflict caused by prohibiting non-motorists from these roads. However, these conflicts resulted in the successful repeal of all bicycle prohibitions and most pedestrian prohibitions and the requiring of facilities for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit patrons on all expressways. [See details in the next section, *Prohibitions and decades of conflict*.]

In 1997, the State legislature authorized the county to hire the California Highway Patrol [CHP] to patrol any segment of the *Expressway System*.^[28] Although expressways are patrolled by city police, the county hired the CHP to patrol expressway segments with High Occupancy Vehicle [HOV] lanes, because local police were too busy to enforce the HOV restrictions.^[29]

From 2001 to 2003, at the initiative of (then) County Supervisor Jim Beall, Jr., a two-year study was conducted by the County with a public input process. The result of this study was the *County Expressway Plan*^[1] which was approved in 2003 by the County Board of Supervisors. It was updated in 2009. [See details and highlights in section *Future and the County Expressway Plan*.]

Prohibitions and decades of conflict

Prohibitions and their consequences

Most cities containing expressways enacted **prohibitory ordinances** against non-motorists on the existing roads^[16] that became the *expressway system*, **with no exceptions for sidewalks, bus stops, pedestrian paths, shoulders or bike lanes**. A standard bike lane is 5 feet (1.5 m) wide so all expressways exceeded bike lane standards because shoulders were between 8 and 10 feet (2.4 and 3.0 m) wide. The fine for walking on a pedestrian facility past *Pedestrians prohibited* signs, or momentarily dismounting from a bicycle [see photo], is \$149 today.^[30]

These prohibitions were a **major disruption** to travel for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit patrons because of the **hierarchical street pattern** that has been used for new roads and developments since the 1950s. The Valley Transportation Authority, which provides the bus and light rail transit system in the County, states: "This pattern, based on a hierarchy of streets, forces all trips onto the arterial network ... whether by car, foot, or bicycle."^[31] Expressways are an integral part of this arterial road^[1] network, which spaces arterial roads about every half mile apart. If an expressway is prohibited to these users, a detour must be taken. Often, this forces going to the next arterial road, a half mile away, which would add one mile to the walking or bicycling trip.



Capitol Expressway; sidewalks and the Capitol Expressway light rail station (further along the road) were prohibited to pedestrians until 1997. The official "bike lane" was also previously prohibited to bicyclists. Photo circa 1995.

Prohibitions greatly increased crash risk for non-motorists. By far, the greatest source of crashes are the intersections. Prohibitions forced non-motorists into detours

that required the crossing of, typically, 10 extra intersections as part of the detour route. In many cases, detours required crossing the expressway twice. Expressways are the riskiest to cross because the wider the road, the much greater the crash risk; and expressways are among the widest of arterial roads in the County. In contrast, expressways are the safest roads to go along, primarily due to one-fifth as many intersections per mile.

The prohibitions **conflict with recently enacted State law** such as “all levels of government ... work to provide convenient and safe passage for pedestrians on ... all streets and highways”^[32]. Another conflict with law is that pedestrians are allowed to walk in a bike lane where there is no adjacent sidewalk or path^[33] and bike lane standards are required on expressways by the County Expressway Plan^[1].

All bicycle and most pedestrian prohibitions were **repealed** by the cities starting in 1980, the result of decades of fighting for rights and safety led by the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition and the Modern Transit Society. On three expressways, signs were changed from *bicycles prohibited* to *bike lane*, which meant that bicyclists were prohibited from using the bike lane for about 20 years. Today, the only remaining expressways with *pedestrians prohibited* signs on both sides of the road are San Tomas and Foothill, both being 45 miles per hour (72 km/h) arterial roads with shoulders, mostly 8 feet (2.4 m) wide or wider.

Train and bus patrons versus highway/traffic engineers

There have been decades of conflict between transit patrons and highway/traffic engineers, who effectively prohibited their use of transit, or tried without success, as follows:

- Foothill Expressway:** Southern Pacific passenger train service between Los Gatos and Palo Alto (continuing to San Francisco) was eliminated in 1964 for the expressway. This occurred despite the fact that there is room within the right-of-way for both the track and the 4-lane Expressway, even today. A petition signed by 170 train patrons to keep the train service was disregarded.^{[18] [19]} All forms of transportation other than motor vehicles — public transit (by eliminated trains), bicycling and walking — became prohibited.



Lawrence Expressway train station crosses under the expressway. Train patrons were prohibited from walking to Silicon Valley's main industrial area, two blocks north of the station, until 1991. The center tracks are used by express trains.



This pedestrian underpass, crossing under Central Expressway (4 lanes) at Lawrence Expressway (8 lanes), was prohibited by the City of Santa Clara and posted *Pedestrians prohibited* signs, from 1966 to 1991.



Light-Rail trains over-crossing Montague Expressway at night.

- Lawrence Expressway train station:**^[10] Train patrons were prohibited from walking to the main industrial area of Silicon Valley, two blocks north of the station, until the Santa Clara City Council repealed the prohibition in 1991 at the request of the Modern Transit Society. The City traffic engineer, Mr. Chris Fernandez, opposed allowing pedestrians — most were train patrons — use of the shoulders, 8 feet (2.4 m) wide, along Lawrence Expressway (formerly, Lawrence Station Road). The pedestrian underpass that is two block from the station, crossing under Central Expressway [see photo] at Lawrence, was also prohibited, and train patrons had to walk past *Pedestrians prohibited* signs when using this pedestrian underpass on their way to work.
- Capitol Expressway light rail station:**^[13] Transit patrons were prohibited from accessing the station, which opened for service in 1991, unless they drove a car into the park-and-ride lot. This violated pedestrians' right to use the public roadway.^[34] The Modern Transit Society requested the San Jose traffic engineers for compliance with the law, for years, but was repeatedly stonewalled, so requested the County for compliance in 1996. The legal opinion from County Counsel agreed that there was a violation of law by illegally prohibiting the pedestrians.^[35] It took another year to get County highway engineers to comply, now due to the County staff stonewalling. The *Pedestrians prohibited* signs were removed, not just at the station, but for the entire length of Capitol Expressway in 1997, in accordance with the law.
- Montague Expressway light rail station:**^[11] Pedestrians have never been prohibited from Montague Expressway. Yet, County highway engineers started a campaign in 2005 to prohibit pedestrians from Montague by claiming pedestrian paths and shoulders are unsafe. However, they failed in their attempt^[36] to insert prohibitions into the County Expressway Plan^[1] Update of 2009. In an earlier attempt, they failed to insert prohibitions into the 2003 Plan. Had they succeeded, it would have banned transit patrons from employment at dozens of industrial companies directly on Montague Expressway, and all within walking distance from the Montague Expressway light rail station. It would also have banned two shopping centers on Montague Expressway, in addition to individual stores [see photo], to pedestrians.
- Many **bus patrons** walk along expressways. A typical example is taking a bus along a regular arterial road and getting off at the expressway intersection, but their destination is near the next expressway intersection, necessitating a one-block walk along the expressway. For those taking an expressway bus, if the destination is directly on the expressway, walking along the expressway is necessary since buses only stop at intersections.



Pedestrian, on the shoulder of Montague Expressway, is shown approaching a driveway, about two blocks from the station. Many industries and stores are directly on the expressway.



Capitol Expressway; bus stops were prohibited to transit patrons until 1997.

Bicyclists versus highway/traffic engineers

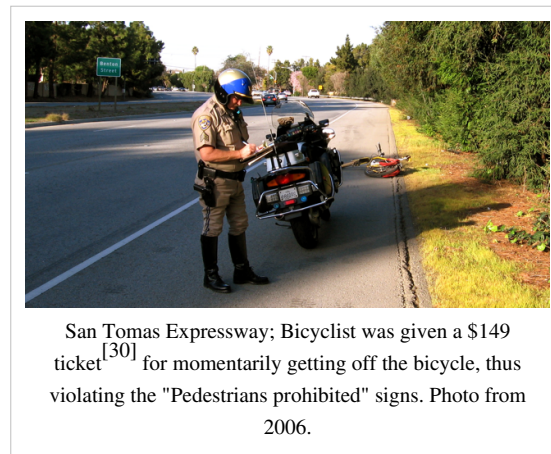
The Santa Clara Valley Bicycle Association (since renamed **Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition**) was formed circa 1970 with the main purpose of repealing bicycle prohibitions that were being imposed on existing public roads^[16] that never before had such prohibitions. The prohibitions came about concurrently with adding paved shoulders, 8 to 10 feet (2.4 to 3.0 m) wide. Comparing widths, a standard bike lane is 5 feet (1.5 m) wide, a minimum-width bike lane is 4 feet (1.2 m) wide, a traffic lane for arterial roads, including these expressways, is 11 feet (3.4 m) wide, and a freeway lane is usually 12 feet (3.7 m) wide.

The first repeal of a bicycle prohibition was from **Foothill Expressway** in 1980. Due to the prohibition, a huge detour up a very steep road was imposed upon bicyclists, while cars were allowed the flat and shortest route. The repeal effort was led by the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition. The Los Altos traffic engineer, Dave Donahue, opposed repeal, but the City Council voted 4 to 0 to repeal. Palo Alto also repealed the bicycle prohibition. [Details not yet available.] After repeals, the signs stating "Pedestrians bicycles and equestrians prohibited" had the word "bicycles" taped over, and "bike lane" signs were added to the roadway. The words "bike lane" were painted onto exactly the same shoulders [see photo] that the traffic engineer previously claimed to be too dangerous for bicyclists.

In 1982, prohibitions were repealed on **Central Expressway** by the Sunnyvale and Santa Clara City Councils, led by the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition. [Details not available.] In Mountain View, the traffic engineer, Mr. Dennis Belluomini, supported both bicyclists and pedestrians along Central Expressway and ordered the signs removed.

Sunnyvale repealed the bicycle prohibition in 1987 on **Lawrence Expressway**, despite opposition from the traffic engineer, Mr. Ray Williams. The effort was led by John Forester, author of *Effective Cycling* and (then) resident of Sunnyvale. Mr. Williams opposed bicyclists using the paved shoulders, 8 feet (2.4 m) wide, along Lawrence Expressway, but had no qualms forcing bicyclists to ride in narrow, 45 mph traffic lanes of parallel roads (Java Drive and Mathilda Avenue) as a result of prohibiting them on the much safer route, Lawrence Expressway (formerly named Lawrence Station Road).

In 1988, County highway engineers requested the **Board of Supervisors** to obtain a new law at the State level that would re-impose bicycle prohibitions that had been repealed by some cities, and to prevent future repeals. This passed the County Transportation Commission, but the Board of Supervisors took an opposite action. Instead of simply voting against the highways engineers' request, the Board voted by 4 to 1 that it "supports bicycles on expressways"^[38] and directed a committee (Highways and Bikeways Committee) to ensure that bicycles were



accommodated on all expressways. At this committee, County highway engineers continued their opposition to bicyclists' use of expressway shoulders, claiming there was "no room for bicycles" after adding future traffic lanes. However, this claim was shown to be false by the Modern Transit Society and the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, and the Committee voted that a minimum of 5 feet (1.5 m) for shoulder width, the same as a standard bike lane, be kept for bicycles even with future lane additions. This requirement was approved by the Board in 1989^[38].

In 1989, **San Jose** repealed the prohibition of bicycles, at the request of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, by an 11 to 0 vote, despite vigorous opposition by City traffic engineers. The traffic engineers repeatedly stonewalled on compliance with the Council directive to draft a revised ordinance and it took a half year of fighting the traffic engineers before they placed this draft ordinance on the agenda so the City Council could vote for repeal.^[39]

In 1991, **City of Santa Clara** (by a 4 to 3 vote) repealed the bicycle prohibition from Lawrence and San Tomas. The City traffic engineer, Mr. Chris Fernandez, had fought for 4 years against allowing bicyclists use of paved shoulders, 8 feet (2.4 m) wide.

The last remaining bicycle prohibition in the entire County was by **Campbell** in 1991. Technically, Campbell still prohibits bicyclists today from using the southern portion of San Tomas Expressway^[40], which includes the bridge over Los Gatos Creek and crossing under Freeway 17. This portion of San Tomas was formerly named **Camden Avenue**.^[16] It did not have prohibitory signs even after the name change to *Expressway*, except for a short period (circa 1983) when signs were illegally posted by County highway engineers without holding the public hearing that is required by law for closing a road to the public. The signs were soon removed by advocates because State law empowers any person to remove illegal signs along roadways.^[41]

This **San Tomas Expressway (formerly Camden Avenue^[16]) bridge over Los Gatos Creek** has still more history. In 1982, County highway engineers **destroyed bicycle/pedestrian facilities** on this bridge when adding more traffic lanes, and forced pedestrians to walk in the 45-mph traffic lane.^[42] This was despite the fact that the river and freeway crossing was and is among the most-used expressway portions by bicyclists and pedestrians because of its access to the Los Gatos Creek Trail that is underneath the San Tomas bridge, and the lack of an alternative crossing of the nearby Freeway 17. The Modern Transit Society then fought County highway staff for 17 years to restore the bicycle/pedestrian facilities.^[42] As a result, shoulders for bicycles and sidewalks on both sides of this bridge were approved in 1991^[43], but these were not constructed until still more lanes were added to the road in the year 2000. Despite restoring bicycle facilities, the ordinance^[40] still bans bicycles on this portion, although there are no prohibitory signs.

Another interesting historical fact concerning this bridge is that it was used by the electric **Peninsular Railway** line between San Jose and Los Gatos. This line was forced to be abandoned when its right of way was desired for more traffic lanes by State highway engineers widening Bascom Avenue, which was the former Highway 17, circa 1933.

Pedestrians versus highway/traffic engineers

Bicycle, pedestrian and transit patron advocates – many were in both organizations – faced fierce opposition by most city traffic engineers and County highway engineers against allowing non-motorists to use these arterial roads. The strategy of these advocates was to repeal the bicycle prohibitions first. After this was accomplished, the Modern Transit Society went back to city councils to request repeal of the pedestrian prohibition, or to obtain compliance with laws that prevented prohibiting pedestrians. These are detailed below. Despite repeal of all bicycle prohibitory ordinances by 1991, advocates again faced fierce opposition from highway/traffic engineers for repeal of pedestrian prohibitions.

In 1988, most prohibitory signs along most of **Lawrence Expressway** in Santa Clara were removed because they were in violation of State law that only permitted prohibitions on freeways, and only if all right of access had been acquired.^[44]

In 1989, signs were removed from **Central Expressway** in Santa Clara, after a fight with County highway engineers to comply with the law, because the City didn't prohibit pedestrians on Central since allowing bicycles there in 1982.

In 1991, the **Board of Supervisors** enacted a policy for pedestrian safety following a request by the Modern Transit Society. Most notably, the Board directed their highway engineers to create pedestrian paths along the “entire expressway system”^[43] ^[38] and the staff report stated this would be accomplished in “several years” (from 1991). Creation of these paths would have ended the pedestrian conflicts, but County highway engineers never complied with this order, not even for one block, despite periodic reminders by the Modern Transit Society. This policy also required sidewalks on all expressway crossings of freeways, rivers and railroads, and forbade destroying sidewalks. Yet, County highway engineers ignored this policy and destroyed many pedestrian facilities, such as the sidewalk on the bridge crossing Guadalupe River in 2005 when adding lanes. The policy was replaced by the 2009 Expressway Plan^[1] Update, which included sidewalks rather than unpaved paths.

Lawrence Expressway is in three jurisdictions. In 1991, Santa Clara (City) repealed part of the pedestrian prohibition^[44] (see details in Lawrence Expressway train station, above) and all *Pedestrians prohibited* signs were removed soon after from Lawrence in the City. This was followed by repeal of Sunnyvale's pedestrian ban on Lawrence in 1993. San Jose traffic engineers have, to date, successfully fought against repeal of the City ordinance that prohibits pedestrians with no exception for sidewalks, pedestrian paths or bus stops.^[45] However, in 2003, they finally agreed to allow pedestrians to use the existing sidewalks along Lawrence Expressway, which are along one side of the road. They removed the *Pedestrians prohibited* signs that were posted at each end of every sidewalk. [See photo.] This effectively removed the last pedestrian prohibitions along Lawrence because people can walk at least on one side of the road without getting a ticket.

In 1997, signs were removed for the entire length of **Capitol Expressway** due to the highway/traffic engineers violating State law that protected pedestrians' right to use this public road by posting illegal *Pedestrians prohibited* signs.^[35] [See details above under Capitol light rail station.]

In 2003, **Sunnyvale** repealed the pedestrian prohibition on Central Expy. Nonetheless, County highway engineers refused to remove the prohibitory signs^[36], which was a violation of State law because the City, which has jurisdiction, had repealed. They also contradicted the County Expressway Plan^[1] that supported shoulder use by pedestrians^[6]. The Modern Transit Society requested compliance from the Board of Supervisors, and the Board ordered removal of those signs in 2004^[46] ^[38], putting an end to one year of stonewalling by County highway engineers.

In 2004, County highway engineers authored a **secret change in State law**, where legal text was added to an unrelated bill [SB 1233 of 2004], that eliminated the right to bicycle or walk along public roads, effective Jan. 1, 2005. In 2006, at the request of the Modern Transit Society, the County



Lawrence Expressway in San Jose; a sign was posted at each end of every sidewalk, prohibiting sidewalk use, until 2003.



San Tomas Expressway; pedestrian path is prohibited today (except for walking to the bus stop) and has *Pedestrians prohibited* signs (shown). Bicycling is allowed here, since 1991. (Bicycle is placed for scale.)

Board of Supervisors ordered staff to seek repeal of that.^[47] ^[38] However, staff never even attempted to seek repeal as ordered, as was acknowledged in a memo from staff.^[48] Instead, County highway staff tried to make use of the new powers which they had authored.

Starting in 2005, the year this law became effective, County highway engineers led a campaign to prohibit pedestrians from most expressway miles, and went around to the cities to get support. While the new law enabled prohibiting from not only expressways but most arterial roads, a new prohibition would have still required a local vote (of the cities, in this case) to pass an ordinance. While the County Expressway Plan (2003)^[1] states "Shoulder or path facilities can serve ... for occasional pedestrian use"^[6], County highway engineers contradicted that statement and opposed both shoulder and pedestrian path use.^[49] They also never complied with, and did not mention, the 1991 County order^[43] that required County highway engineers to create pedestrian paths "along the entire ... expressway system." That order, if complied with, would have eliminated two decades of fighting to repeal pedestrian prohibitions.

In the fall of 2006, County highway staff tried to obtain support to prohibit pedestrians from most expressway miles by going before the **Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committees (BPACs)** of most cities (those with expressways). Of the three BPACs that took a vote, San Jose, Santa Clara (City) and VTA/County, all voted opposite to what highway staff requested. They voted that the pedestrian prohibitions should be repealed. County highway staff failed in their campaign because the County Expressway Plan (2009)^[1] contains no pedestrian prohibitions at all. The San Jose BPAC also approved a letter to the City Council requesting repeal of the prohibition^[50], but the letter was never forwarded to the City Council by the City traffic engineers, who act as staff liason to the BPAC.

In **Santa Clara**, the City Council voted [on 6/20/2006] to postpone a decision for repeal of the pedestrian prohibition^[44] [City Resolution 5603] until after the update of the County Expressway Plan^[1]. This update occurred in 2009, but City staff is now saying they want a further postponement until new sidewalks, soon to be constructed along San Tomas, are complete. The County Expressway Plan^[1] Update (2009) added future sidewalks along all expressways, usually along both sides, unless a nearby alternative route exists. The Modern Transit Society agrees with the Plan. Previously, highway/traffic engineers often pointed to an alternative route that was a 1 or 2 mile detour, expecting that to be a viable walking alternative in their fight against pedestrian use of "Expressway" arterial roads.

Summary of conflicts

One final tally. Despite opposition^[51] from County highway engineers, the Modern Transit Society and the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition won all seven out of seven votes ^[38] at the County Board of Supervisors regarding pedestrian and/or bicycle agenda items. Each of the pedestrian policies of the Board (the 1991 policy^[43], the 2003 County Expressway Plan^[1] ^[38] and the 2009 Update^[38] of that) involved a huge fight to retain pedestrian access and to keep their facilities. In an attempt to avoid compliance with the law and policy, County highway engineers made statements to the Supervisors such as, "The Modern Transit Society has opposed County policy on expressway pedestrian access for at least the last 15 years."^[36] The truth is, the Modern Transit Society *requested compliance* with Board policies that previously had been enacted as the result of its efforts, and the Board ordered County highway staff to comply by removing illegal *pedestrians prohibited* signs.^[46]

Future and the County Expressway Plan

The master plan of Santa Clara County for expressways is formally named *Comprehensive County Expressway Planning Study Implementation Plan, County of Santa Clara*^[1]. It is simply called the *County Expressway Plan* or *Expressway Plan* or *Expressway Master Plan* by people involved with these roads: employees, local politicians, and advocates. It was approved by the County Board of Supervisors on August 19, 2003 after a two-year public hearing process and endorsement by cities. With regard to pedestrians and bicyclists along expressways, the County Expressway Plan of 2003 has these major changes to County policy:



San Tomas Expressway (G4) from bridge over U.S. Route 101. Since photo, sidewalk has been added here. Sidewalks are planned for the length of San Tomas Expressway.

- Recognizes that all **expressways are in fact arterial roads**: "The expressway vision statements [one for each expressway] all classify the expressways as arterials."^[2] . This contradicts claims by County highway engineers, and some city traffic engineers, that expressways are "freeways"^[36]. These claims were used in their attempts, all unsuccessful since 1980, to enact new prohibitions or to keep existing prohibitions of bicyclists, pedestrians and transit patrons from these arterial roads.
- Recognizes that expressway **shoulders and pedestrian paths are safe for occasional pedestrian use**: "shoulder or path facilities can serve ... for occasional pedestrian use."^[6] . Previously, County highway engineers claimed that shoulders and bike lanes are "unsafe" for both bicyclists and pedestrians, and that pedestrian paths are "unsafe" for pedestrians.
- While bicycle accommodation has been required since 1989 by County policy, only the minimum width of a standard bike lane was specified, 5 feet (1.5 m). Now, detailed **bike lane features at all intersections** are also required in the *Bicycle Element*^[5] of the Plan. This excludes posting the "bike lane" signs themselves, which are optional and are decided by cities containing respective expressway portions.

The County Board of Supervisors approved an Update to the Expressway Plan,^[52] ^[1] on March 3, 2009, that includes **sidewalks along expressways, usually on both sides of the road**, with exceptions if a nearby alternative route is available. Pedestrian-expressway maps, one for each expressway, were generated^[53] and the Modern Transit Society verified the exceptions as being valid. Previously, a typical detour involved one mile of extra walking if the expressway was prohibited to pedestrians, due to the hierarchical street patterns. Yet, highway/traffic engineers had pointed to such long detours, although infeasible to pedestrians and transit patrons, as viable alternative routes when opposing pedestrians' use of shoulders and paths along expressways.

A **light rail transit line** is planned to be added to the northern portion of Capitol Expressway.^[1] ^[54] The tracks of the Alum Rock – Santa Teresa line, which currently end on Capitol Avenue three blocks from Capitol Expressway, will be extended about three miles along Capitol Expressway to the Eastridge Transit Center in the Eastridge Mall, near Quimby Road.

Trails are planned (and partly completed) along part of San Tomas Expressway (connecting with the San Tomas Creek Trail) and along a portion of Capitol Expressway (connecting to the Silver Creek Trail).^[1] ^[54] These trails are paved paths, 10 feet (3.0 m) wide, and will have a center line that makes passing of pedestrians easier by bicyclists.

The County Expressway Plan also has tables of projects to incrementally increase the automobile capacity of some of these roads, including a few **grade separations** and adding **traffic lanes** to some portions. However, for many expressways, the maximum number of lanes that would fit into the right-of-way has already been reached.

Administration, *Expressway System* designation

Expressways that are administered by Santa Clara County are collectively named *Expressway System* or *Santa Clara County Expressway System*. These total 62 miles (100 km) in length. While it is not a system in the physical sense, the County Expressway Plan (of 2009)^[1] uses the term *Expressway System* a total of 31 times. No other county (at least within California) uses the legal term *county expressway system*. This term is based on California law^[55] dating from the formation of these expressways. The County maintains, designs and contracts for construction on the *Expressway System* roads (except freeway crossings which are under State jurisdiction) despite virtually all miles being within various city boundaries.

Southwest Expressway is the only expressway in the County that is not part of the *Expressway System*. In addition, a section of Capitol Expressway (west of Highway 87) and of Almaden Expressway (north of Highway 87) have been relinquished by the County and now belong to San Jose. Oregon Expressway in Palo Alto, once belonging to the city, later became part of the *Expressway System*.

The cities have retained legal jurisdiction of the *Expressway System* roads, including specifying speed limits and prohibitory ordinances, except that parking and traffic signals have been transferred to the County.^[56] Traffic signs to be posted (or removed) along these roads are based on city councils enacting city ordinances, but physically posted (or removed) by County staff. Many cities prohibited bicyclists, pedestrians and transit patrons for a time, but subsequently most repealed such ordinances. Cities also provide (or contract for) law enforcement on these roads within their boundaries.

The County does traffic signal synchronization along *Expressway System* roads and controls duration of "green" signal times, and has video cameras at many intersections to observe traffic.

External links

- Transit system map^[57] by VTA^[58] shows bus lines and light rail lines along expressways and crossing expressways (where usually there is a bus stop or light rail station).
- Comprehensive County Expressway Planning Study Implementation Plan^[59]. For a summary, see section, *Future and the County Expressway Plan* (above). For pedestrian-related excerpts, see next line.
- Modern Transit Society's *County Expressway Plan, pedestrian-related excerpts of the County document*^[60]
- Modern Transit Society's *Expressway Topics, Links page*^[61] has detailed timeline, sorted by jurisdiction (County and cities), of the effort to repeal prohibitions and require bicyclist/pedestrian facilities along these expressways.
- Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition^[62]

References

- [1] County Expressway Plan, formally titled *Comprehensive County Expressway Planning Study Implementation Plan*. 2003 with 2009 update. For a summary, see section *Future and the County Expressway Plan* (above). For details, see External links.
- [2] County Expressway Plan, 2003, page 88, states, "The expressway vision statements [one for each expressway] all classify the expressways as arterials."
- [3] While not a system in the physical sense, the County Expressway Plan (of 2009) uses the term *Expressway System* a total of 31 times. See details in section *Administration, Expressway System designation*.
- [4] Charles S. McCaleb, *Rails, Roads & Runways: The 20-Year Saga of Santa Clara County's Transportation Agency*, (San Jose: Santa Clara County Transportation Agency, 1994), page 121.
- [5] Bicycle Element, an attachment to the County Expressway Plan, is a separate paper document or pdf file.
- [6] County Expressway Plan, 2003, page 93, states, "shoulder or path facilities can serve ... for occasional pedestrian use."
- [7] Oregon Expressway—Page Mill Road map (http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=Oregon+Expressway,+Palo+Alto,+CA&aq=0&sll=37.0625,-95.677068&sspn=45.467317,90.175781&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=Oregon+Epxy,+Palo+Alto,+Santa+Clara,+California&ll=37.428794,-122.14061&spn=0.002799,0.005504&t=h&z=18), centered at the adjacent California Avenue train station
- [8] Foothill Expressway map (http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=Foothill+Expressway,+Los+Altos,+CA&aq=0&sll=37.395013,-122.076661&sspn=0.00198,0.002752&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=Foothill+Epxy,+Los+Altos,+Santa+Clara,+California&ll=37.377519,-122.117983&spn=0.002801,0.005504&t=h&z=18), centered at (former) Los Altos train station

- [9] Central Expressway map (http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=Central+Expressway,+Mountain+View,+CA&aq=0&sll=37.0625,-95.677068&sspn=45.467317,90.175781&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=Central+Expy,+Mountain+View,+Santa+Clara,+California&ll=37.395013,-122.076661&spn=0.00198,0.002752&t=h&z=19), centered at Mountain View train station
- [10] Lawrence Expressway map (http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=Lawrence+Expressway,+Santa+Clara,+CA&aq=0&sll=37.351772,-121.998775&sspn=0.005689,0.011061&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=Lawrence+Expy,+Santa+Clara,+California&t=h&ll=37.370559,-121.99645&spn=0.000974,0.001262&z=20), centered at the Lawrence Expressway train station
- [11] Montague Expressway map (http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=montague+expressway,+santa+clara+county&aq=&sll=37.371887,-121.996737&sspn=0.003895,0.007247&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=Montague+Expy,+San+Jose,+Santa+Clara,+California&ll=37.41017,-121.893729&spn=0.003893,0.007247&t=h&z=18), centered near Montague Expressway light rail station
- [12] San Tomas Expressway (http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=San+Tomas+Expressway,+Santa+Clara,+CA&aq=0&sll=37.428794,-122.14061&sspn=0.002799,0.005504&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=San+Tomas+Expy,+Santa+Clara,+California&ll=37.352488,-121.968606&spn=0.002802,0.005504&t=h&z=18), centered at El Camino Real with #522 (express) and #22 (local) bus lines
- [13] Capitol Expressway map (http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=capitol+expressway,+santa+clara+county&aq=&sll=37.0625,-95.677068&sspn=44.744674,82.705078&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=E+Capitol+Expy,+San+Jose,+Santa+Clara,+California&ll=37.27459,-121.863114&spn=0.00195,0.003624&t=h&z=19&lc=transit_comp), centered at Capitol Expressway light rail station
- [14] Southwest Expressway map (http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=Southwest+Expy,+San+Jose,+CA&aq=0&sll=37.0625,-95.677068&sspn=45.467317,90.175781&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=Southwest+Expy,+San+Jose,+California&ll=37.310251,-121.918094&spn=0.001402,0.002752&t=h&z=19), centered at the Fruitvale light rail station
- [15] Almaden Expressway map (http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=Almaden+Expressway,+San+Jose,+CA&aq=1&sll=37.310251,-121.918094&sspn=0.001402,0.002752&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=Almaden+Expy,+San+Jose,+California&ll=37.30188,-121.876557&spn=0.002804,0.005504&t=h&z=18), centered at the Guadalupe Parkway (Highway 87) / light rail over-crossing
- [16] Old maps are from the Martin Luther King Library (a collaboration between the City of San Jose and San Jose State University) (<http://www.sjlibrary.org/>), in the California room.
- [17] Length information is from a prior Wikipedia editor and can be verified using Google maps. It closely matches mileage information from the County, after subtracting portions of Capitol and Almaden that are no longer in the *Expressway System*.
- [18] Article *Saratoga Stereopticon* in *Saratoga News* (now, part of *Mercury News*), November 17, 1999, by Willys Peck. Article contains photo of this train by the author. Link to article and photo. (<http://mytown.mercurynews.com/archives/saratoganews/11.17.99/stereopticon-9946.html>)
- [19] Article *Barron Park History* in *The Barron Park Association Newsletter*, Fall 1999 issue, by Douglas Graham, Barron Park Historian. Link (<http://www2.bpaonline.org/bp-news/1999-fall/index.htm#history>), then either scroll down or click the contents for the article.
- [20] Website of AbandonedRails.com (http://www.abandonedrails.com/Los_Altos_Branch)
- [21] Charles S. McCaleb, *Rails, Roads & Runways: The 20-Year Saga of Santa Clara County's Transportation Agency*, (San Jose: Santa Clara County Transportation Agency, 1994), 117.
- [22] Charles E. De Leuw, Letter to the Board of Supervisors, *Trafficways Plan for Santa Clara County, California* (San Francisco: De Leuw, Cather and Company, 1959), i.
- [23] McCaleb, 119.
- [24] McCaleb, 119-120.
- [25] McCaleb, 122.
- [26] McCaleb, 122-123.
- [27] McCaleb, 123.
- [28] California Vehicle Code § 2400.7 (http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/vctop/d02/vc2400_7.htm).
- [29] McCaleb, 126.
- [30] Ticket/Citation (http://moderntransit.org/expy_graphics/ticket.jpg) states "21461.5 VC [Vehicle Code] SIGNS POSTED NO PEDESTRIANS". The fine amount is shown in the Court document (scanned excerpt) (http://moderntransit.org/expy_graphics/court.jpg)
- [31] VTA's "Community Design and Transportation" document (dated 2003, and approved Nov. 7, 2002 by the VTA Board). The quote is from chapter 4, page 3, column 2. VTA is the Valley Transportation Authority, providing bus and light rail service for the County.
- [32] California Vehicle Code (CVC) § 21949
- [33] California Vehicle Code (CVC) § 21966
- [34] California Vehicle Code (CVC) § 21960 has since been modified, in 2004.
- [35] Legal opinion from County Counsel, Kathy Kretchmer, dated Nov. 12, 1996. See a scanned copy (<http://moderntransit.org/expy/legal.html>).
- [36] In the staff report dated 3/16/2004 to the HLUET. See a scanned copy (<http://moderntransit.org/expy/ra.html>) and details (<http://moderntransit.org/expy/bos-letter-web.html>).
- [37] State law, California Vehicle Code (CVC) § 21404 and § 21100.1. The California Sign Chart (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/signtech/signdel/signchart.htm>) and CVC § 21400 provide more information

- [38] Click letters at left for the seven votes by the Board of Supervisors won by non-motorists. The eighth letter is the referring sentence.
 - [39] Article *Despite Unanimous San Jose City Council Vote, the Struggle was Not Over*, Nov.-Dec. 1989 issue of *Spinning Crank*, the newsletter of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition. See a copy of this article (<http://moderntransit.org/ctc/ctc09.html>).
 - [40] Campbell Municipal Codes § 10.20.030 and § 10.16.050
 - [41] California law, Civil Code §§ 3493, 3494, 3495 and Vehicle Code § 21467
 - [42] See 17-year fight to restore bicycle-pedestrian facilities on the San Tomas (formerly Camden Avenue) bridge. (<http://moderntransit.org/expy/san-tomas.html>)
 - [43] Approved by County Board of Supervisors on 8/20/91. For a scanned copy (6 pages total) see External links for Modern Transit Society's *Expressway Topics*, *Links page*, then see under Timeline, 1991.
 - [44] Resolution # 5603. It has no exception for sidewalks, bus stops or shoulders. See a copy. (<http://moderntransit.org/expy-pdf/sc-resolution5603.pdf>)
 - [45] San Jose Municipal Code § 11.32.070. For a copy, see link (<http://moderntransit.org/expy/sjordinance.html>)
 - [46] Board of Supervisors meeting of May 4, 2004, agenda #63.
 - [47] Board of Supervisors meeting on 1/10/2006, agenda #25. For a scanned copy, see excerpt of minutes (<http://moderntransit.org/expy/quote/quote6.png>) with referenced agenda attachment page (<http://moderntransit.org/expy/quote/quote6b.png>).
 - [48] Memo from Jane Decker, Deputy County Executive, 4/13/2007. Click for a scanned copy. (<http://moderntransit.org/restore/squashed.html>) Also, see the rebuttal to this memo (<http://moderntransit.org/restore/rebut.html>).
 - [49] At the City Council of Santa Clara meeting, 6/20/2006, County highway engineers spoke and wrote a letter. The City video tapes the meetings. See video clips of statements and a scan of their letter. (<http://moderntransit.org/expy/st-verbal.html>)
 - [50] Letter dated 11/20/2006 and signed by BPAC Chair C. Payne. [<http://moderntransit.org/expy/sj-bpac-letter.pdf> See copy.
 - [51] at least initially, because sometimes they lost at the committee level before going to the Board
 - [52] This Update is usually referred to as *2008 Update* in County's literature, although approval was delayed to March 3, 2009.
 - [53] Pedestrian-expressway maps are located in expressway-specific documents, one for each expressway, which are attachments to the main County Expressway Plan and are in separate pdf files.
 - [54] County Expressway Plan (2009), page 46.
 - [55] California law, Streets and Highways Code § 941.4
 - [56] California law, Streets and Highways Code § 1730
 - [57] http://www.vta.org/schedules/pdf/system_map.pdf
 - [58] <http://www.vta.org/>
 - [59] <http://www.expressways.info/>
 - [60] <http://moderntransit.org/expy/ped-element.html>
 - [61] <http://moderntransit.org/expy>
 - [62] <http://svbcbikes.org>
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