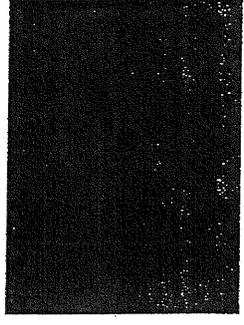
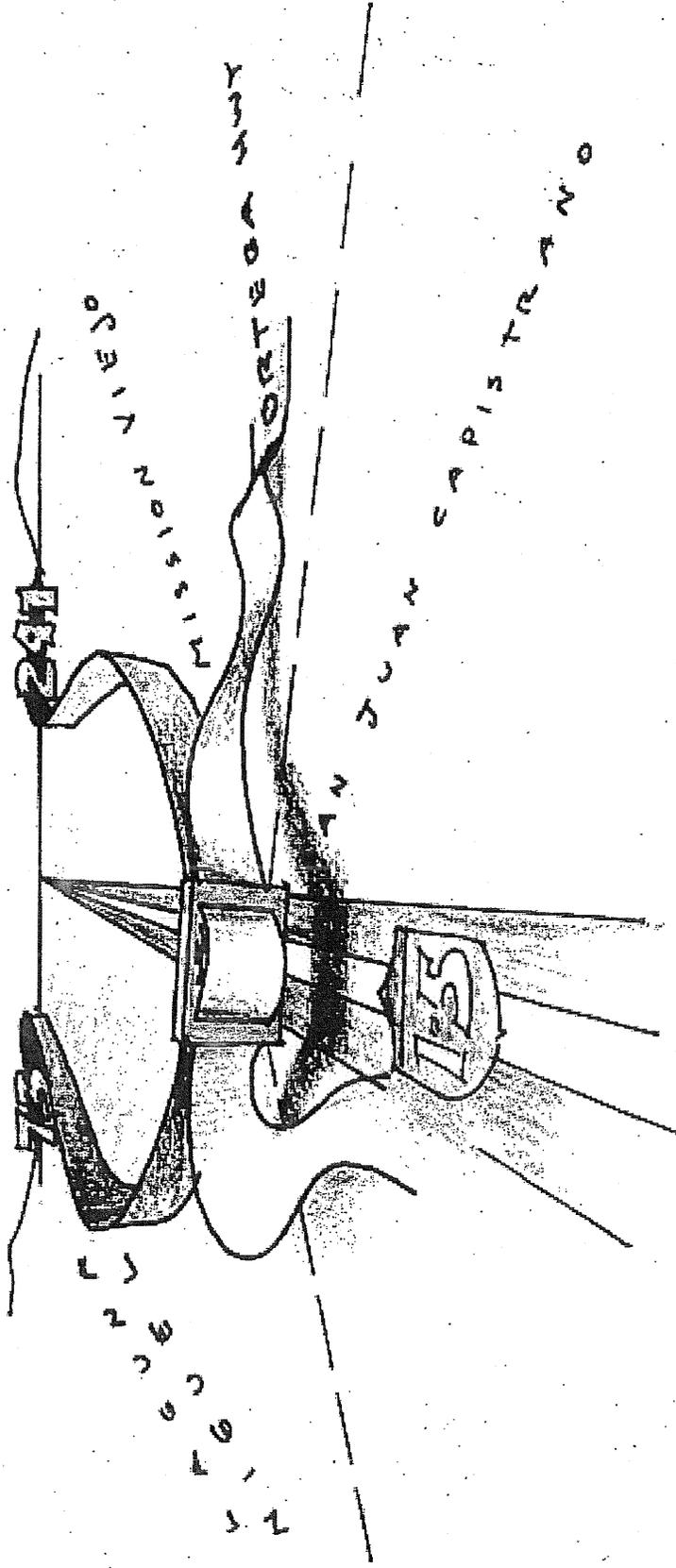


The OC Beltway



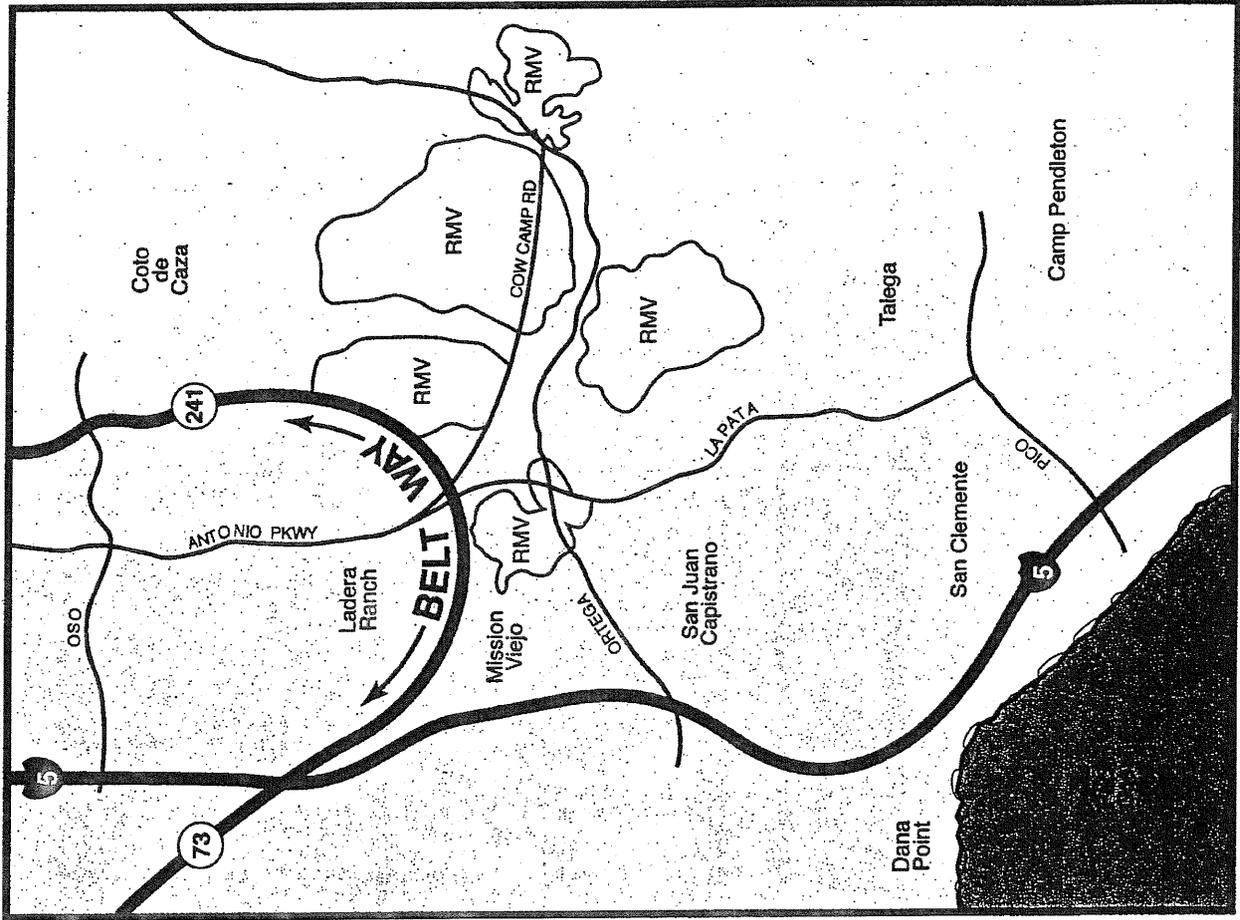
www.SaveTrestles.com

Fix-the-5 Working Group

Introducing the OC Beltway.

- Rancho Santa Margarita, Mission Viejo, Ladera Ranch, and future Rancho Mission Viejo connect directly with John Wayne Airport, Irvine, and Costa Mesa
- **Synergy:** toll payers on the 241 would become toll payers on the 73
- Foothill residents get their own superhighway to the I-5 and 405
- Peak demand on Crown Valley, Oso, and La Paz would be greatly reduced
- OC residents can circle from Tustin to San Juan Capistrano via the 133 or Jamboree and *never touch a freeway!*
- Our freeway traffic is reduced

THE OC BELTWAY - THE SMART CONNECTION





- 2025: traffic will increase by 39%
- 4 more lanes on the I-5 increases capacity by 50%
- Improving the I-5 provides a higher level of service for regional *and* local traffic than building 241 South
- We'll have to improve the 5 anyway. Let's start now.
- **No private property needs to be taken**, the current alignment is wide enough for 4 more lanes.



WILD HERITAGE PLANNERS

JACK EIDT

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January-12, 2006

Transportation Corridor Agencies
125 Pacifica, Suite 100
Irvine, CA 92618

RE: FOOTHILL-SOUTH SR 241 EXTENSION – EIS-SEIR DE-CERTIFICATION

Wild Heritage Planners (WHP), a coalition of environmentalists and urban planners in Orange County has envisioned a Smart Growth Alternative that completes the Foothill-South Toll Road system and saves the San Mateo Campground and Trestles Beach. We recommend that the Final EIS-SEIR **not be certified** until it evaluates what we are calling the 241/73 Beltway Connection Alternative. We assert that this would be the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative, proving superior to the chosen A7-FEC-M Alignment that would bisect the sensitive habitat of the Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy and obliterate San Onofre State Park. State Parks must remain inviolable. The Interstate 5 must be widened immediately, free from all Non-Compete Agreements. As well, arterial improvements to Avenida La Pata and Ortega Highway must be undertaken immediately to service local and regional traffic for the coming decades.

Looming Gridlock from Rancho Mission Viejo. Rancho Mission Viejo's (RMV) Master Plan calls for 14,000 homes and almost 5 million square feet of commercial development. As proposed, their County-approved traffic plan would dump thousands of peak hour trips onto arterial streets in San Juan Capistrano, Mission Viejo, and Ladera, significantly increasing already congested thoroughfares like Ortega Highway and Crown Valley Parkway.

Unfortunately, the final chosen alternative from the EIS/SEIR does not deal with the significant increase in peak hour vehicular trips heading toward employment centers in Newport Beach, Long Beach, and Santa Ana. Instead, the alignment runs between Camp Pendleton and Yorba Linda, far from South County commute destinations. As well, the SEIR Alternatives Analysis fails to suggest a practicable alternative that is in any way "least environmentally damaging." For this reason, WHP demands that the Final SEIR **not be certified**.

RMV needs a **dedicated access road** that would bring the more than 40,000 new residents off existing city streets to their places of employment to the north and west. The 241/73 Beltway Extension Alternative would be the necessary traffic relief for a more urbanized South Orange County.

A Circular System of Toll Roads - THE OC BELTWAY. WHP envisions turning the entire toll road system that includes State Routes 241, 261, 133, and 73, into a generally circular "beltway" connecting the Newport-Costa Mesa-Irvine area and the Riverside County line with South County. This means the last stretch necessary is to extend the FTC-South from Oso Parkway near Coto de Caza to where the San Joaquin Hills (73) meets Interstate 5 near Avery Parkway in Mission Viejo - **the 241/73 Beltway Connection.** Through use of tunnels and bridges, impacts to existing properties near Avery Parkway in Mission Viejo could be minimized.

Free the I-5 From the Non-Compete Clause. The Arterial Improvements Plus Alternative could be slightly revised to upgrade local thoroughfares and widen the I-5, providing a superior level of service while avoiding sensitive habitats and parkland. High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes could be added instead of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, providing a significant source of revenue to offset costs of widening. Through design modifications, projected displacements could be minimized to almost zero.

The Smart Growth Alternative. The imperative of Smart Growth calls for aligning roads and infrastructure with new housing and commercial-employment areas, while preserving precious wilderness and aquatic resources in large habitat blocks. Part of the rationale for the toll road route through the San Mateo Creek watershed was to facilitate development of those hills. After the environmental settlement with RMV significantly reduced housing and shopping centers planned, a new transportation facility is no longer needed.

With the OC Beltway and a widened I-5, future transportation mobility through South Orange County will be assured, while saving our precious San Onofre State Beach and the San Mateo Watershed. Any Environmental Impact Report must investigate all practicable alternatives, and the FTC-South DEIS-SEIR has been shown as woefully deficient in this regard. Please deny this project as proposed and act fast to preserve the quality of life for South Orange County residents and the last remaining wild public beach in Southern California.

Sincerely,



Jack Eidt

Director of Planning
Wild Heritage Planners

Why a Beltway in South Orange County

As a single purpose agency the TCA has focused on toll road alignments as their answer to South Orange County's traffic problems. In their sole purpose of creating toll roads they've grossly over exaggerated the negative impacts improving the I-5 would have on existing South County communities - and have failed to look at other innovative, modern, realistic, smart traffic solutions.

Today, myself and my associates, after 5 years of digesting the 241 South Extension possibility, after studying - and living South County commuting - having lived through TCA's merger wars - we feel it our citizen duty to not only protest what many outside the TCA feel to be a seriously flawed and out dated traffic plan - a toll road to Trestles, but to offer what we imagine to be, a better solution - a true alternative to the 241 south extension - we've labeled it "The Beltway." Connecting the 241 and the 73 at the I-5 in one smooth flowing synergistic loop. Tying the 73 and the 241 together - at I-5.

Our Beltway Model brings the 241 south extension - south, as does the TCA model - south through the new RMV development, but there it curves gracefully west, to connect smoothly into the 73 toll road. In our Beltway model, the 241-south, never crosses south of Ortega Highway. Why? Because traffic south of Ortega Highway is more efficiently served by a Caltrans improved I-5 - but - TCA's Non Compete Agreement holds San Clemente's portion of I-5 hostage. Just as the 91 was held hostage by Non Compete Agreements. Every highway expert in this room knows - improving I-5 from Pendleton to Las Rambles, roughly 7-miles, takes no homes, requires no double decking, and if completed according to Caltrans Master Plan would in fact relieve future north-south traffic to a far greater degree than a needless, unaffordable toll road through wilderness and state park.

Simply put - a toll road south of Ortega Highway - is the wrong place to resolve South County's looming traffic snafu - because, as OCTA has lectured us all, the 500 pound traffic gorilla in South County comes from the east and west - from the Inland Empire, Riverside and Los Angeles County - now add in 14,000 more homes at the intersection of Ortega Highway and Antonio Parkway, and 4,000 more homes at the intersection of the 241-north and Silverado Canyon in the city of Orange - and Irvine Co's new development at the 91 and the 241 north - knowing all the while few if any of these 75,000 new OC commuters will be driving to work in San Diego - rather they'll be commuting in and around South County, to John Wayne Airport, Newport, Costa Mesa, Irvine, Mission Viejo, San Clemente, etc - our Beltway Plan works to where we've been lectured, the problems exist.

The smart solution - stop this wrong way road to Trestles and look seriously at our Beltway model. Get rid of the non-compete zones so we can fix one of America's major arteries - the I-5 "Once and for ALL," and get our county traffic moving in the right direction by putting roads where they're needed most - not where we thought they should be 25 long years ago. It's a new day. We need a 21st Century Traffic Plan.

The Beltway is the Better Road to keep us 'all' moving in the right direction.

Here're four reasons, toll roads are BAD for transportation in Orange County:

Number One.-- Toll roads are designed to CREATE congestion on our freeways.

Your Non Compete Agreements are intended to dissuade Caltrans and all public agencies from improving traffic on South County roads. They raise the cost of improvements by imposing fines-- which you call "compensation--" for working on the I-5. You hold the I-5 hostage and we, county taxpayers, will have to ransom the right to improve it.

This is exactly what happened on the 91 toll lanes: Orange County had to BUY OUT the owner, to widen the freeway.

Only a cynic could call what you do transportation planning

Number Two.-- The 241 extension is irrelevant for regional traffic.

Say you need a heart bypass. It cost \$20-thousand. You go to your doctor, and he says, "Uh... I can't do a bypass, but I've got a better idea. I'll run an artery from you left foot to your left hand instead. And I'll charge you \$40-thousand. Trust me. You'll love it!"

That's exactly what TCA wants to do. Run a road from San Onofre to Yorba Linda. When the biggest problem we face in South County is traffic on the I-5. The absurdity is obvious to ANYone who can read a map.

I'm not saying no one will ever drive it. This is California and someone will ALWAYS drive on ANYthing we pave. But we don't build superhighways for a tiny minority. At lease, not 'til the TCA came along.

Number Three.-- TCA has co-opted transportation planning in Orange County for its own selfish reasons.

A single purpose agency, it exists only to build its toll roads. These were California state routes which, in the 1980s, were only lines on a map.

At that time, state, county, and city officials could meet and set priorities for any and all of those lines. Not any more. TCA has leveraged itself atop the pyramid.

You lobby from city councils all the way to Washington. And despite claims to be privately funded, you've bagged millions of our Federal HIGHWAY dollars. Money that COULD have gone into our freeways. And you've extract millions more, from local home buyers and businesses in so-called "impact fees." Money that SHOULD be going into our ARTERIAL highways.

TCA can't offer any REAL alternatives to you roads because you don't WANT alternatives to exist.

Number Four.-- I believe the toll roads' financial morass will WORSEN if the 241 is extended. County taxpayers need to understand the financial obligations to which you have committed US. You've never made that clear.

Introducing The Beltway

Connecting-up the 73 and 241 toll roads at I-5.

The Smart Alternative to paving a needless toll road south of Ortega Highway to Trestles.

Getting traffic moving through South County - South County's looming traffic snafu is an east-west problem. Not north-south as advertised by the TCA in their rush to pour miles of concrete where it's not needed, south of Ortega Hwy. In wilderness.

Connecting the 241 and the 73 in Mission Viejo – at I-5 eases south-county's east-west commute-conundrum by offering OC's foothill communities a direct route to Irvine, Costa Mesa and John Wayne Airport,

The Beltway (73/241 joined) creates a perfect south-county traffic loop. With improvements to Jamboree and Laguna Canyon Road now complete, residents could circle OC from Tustin to San Juan Capistrano and never touch a freeway!

Putting roads where they're needed!!! Thousands live in OC's eastern foothill communities;

Rancho Santa Margarita, Ladera Ranch, Mission Viejo, and will soon be joined by 40,000

new residents of Rancho Mission Viejo's 14,000 home development east of Mission Viejo –

all commuting east-to-west.

But TCA's wishful 241-south extension – heads north and south. Why???

Old ideas die hard. History: TCA maps were drawn-up in the 80's and 90's when county "leaders" were *banking* on El Toro Airport financially anchoring OC's toll road triangle.

Coincidence or Plan?: El Toro Airport was to be finished in 2020, the same year OC's toll road Bonds reached maturity. Remember, the airport was a slam-dunk. Just like TCA claims a toll road to Trestles is a slam dunk now – going on 20 years now?

Times and highway requirements change. It's a new day. Traffic in South County today is running in new ways.

The Beltway – re-purposing a failing toll road asset.

The Beltway is the logical "re-purposing" of a flummoxed 241 and 73 toll road plan by offering commuters, passing through South County a necessary east/west 'seamless' corridor.

The Beltway brings financial benefits to a revenue-strapped TCA.

Financially troubled, the 73 and the 241 would reap increased revenues because drivers would flow

nonstop from one toll road to the other. A level of traffic *synergy* not possible with any other plan.

Traffic-connectivity is key to maintaining traffic flow - and harmony - at the TCA. OC's toll road "network" is run by two competing Boards of Directors – one for the 73

and one for the 241. Together they make up the acrimonious TCA – OC's divided-house of toll road-dysfunction describes the Transportation Corridors Agency.

The Beltway marries the 2 toll roads, and the 2 battling-TCA Boards – putting a stop to TCA's ongoing *War of The Roads* divorce proceedings.

The Beltway Plan (marriage) is overdue – and not a new idea.

The County Master Plan of Arterial Highways-- cited by TCA to justify their projects - originally scribed an eastward-extension at Avery Parkway right about the time TCA had their toll road epiphany and zap! - the Avery-extension mysteriously disappeared from all maps. Hmm.

The Beltway redraws that *Smart* traffic connection.

It would:

- * have a multilane extension of the 241, built parallel to the original Avery Parkway route.
- * connect the 241 with the 73 at I-5.
- * be tunneled, trenched, or bridged to minimize local impacts
- * work perfectly with new roads already approved between Rancho Mission Viejo and San Juan Capistrano
- * link to Ortega Hwy - intersect Antonio Pkwy - serve Ladera, Mission Viejo, and Rancho Santa Margarita.

The Beltway's 241 south-extension *never* crosses south of Ortega Highway.

No need to. What is needed - county leaders must take the shackles off OC's freeway-traffic by dumping

TCA's Non-Compete Agreement like they did in the 91 Buy-Back so we can fix San Clemente's portion of I-5, eliminating the need for a toll road south of Ortega Hwy.

The Non-Compete Agreement - OC's Traffic Nightmare Scenario

In 1993 OC politicians forced Caltrans to sign the *Non-Compete Agreements* which:

- * prohibits Caltrans from improving freeways within 5 miles of a toll way if – such improvements lure drivers from a toll way.
- * requires Caltrans to pay TCA - compensation for “lost” tolls if Caltrans improves a freeway anyway.
- * requires Caltrans to use all of its influence, with the public, and with local agencies, to support TCA's toll way dreams - and to dissuade others from improving roads within the 5-mile *Non-Compete zone*.

Who owns toll roads - When TCA completes a toll way, it becomes the property of the State of California, maintained by Caltrans, and patrolled by the CHP.

Who pays – You do. You pay for both Caltrans and CHP service.

Why do we pay tolls to use roads “we” own? Because costs to design and build the roads aren't

(supposedly) paid for with your tax dollars. The money is raised through bonds - sold to investors with

the promise of making a profit on their investment. **The 73's toll road bonds are currently junk-status.**

Non-Compete Agreements are supposed to guarantee bondholders their due.

As an OC driver you have a choice - pay to use the toll ways - or drive the freeway.

The worse the freeway - the more likely you are to pay the toll.

EXCEPT!!! (welcome to toll road Catch-22) TCA's **Congestion-Management** model prices you off

toll roads during peak traffic hours - by setting sky-high tolls.

Unhappy Result: we have toll roads we pay for but can't use.

If we do pay the toll - we're paying twice.

Once in taxes and again at the tollbooth, as we sit stalled on a freeway we also-pay-for but

are legislated from fixing because of TCA's *Non-Compete Agreement*. Phew.

There's No Good Road Around TCA's Evil *Non-Compete Agreements*.

OCTA found this out in wanting to improve Safety & Flow on the 91. To do it they had to buy-back the 91 Toll Lanes?

At 4-times the cost of construction (a brief 4 years prior, from its French owners, who still manage it) *with \$\$\$millions of your tax dollars!!!* just to add freeway lanes.

Obviously TCA doesn't care if I-5 needs improvements to make it Safer & Flow (Caltrans has the plans ready to go),

even when I-5 improvements move more traffic - more efficiently - with less frustration - **you will pay - the TCA.**

Why can't we just dump the ridiculous *Non-Competes*?

Sad OC-Commuter Held-Hostage tale of traffic woe:

We pay for everything - the toll road - use it or not – and the stalled freeway the *Non-Compete* keeps you from fixing.

Who draws up these crazy highway plans? TCA Board members are selected and appointed, one from each OC City Council.

So except for 1 south-county city, the people you vote into office are keeping you mired in toll road/freeway commuter-hell.

Their plan for 06 and the future. - your future – is to keep doing it – to you.

If The Beltway fits - wear it.

A watered down version of the Beltway is being considered as a Measure M project by the Orange County Transportation Authority' (OCTA).
Let's not settle for watered down - let's get it right - once and forever.

If the Beltway Plan makes sense to you - spread the word.

Forward this information to anyone driving south-county roads.

We expect opposition to the Beltway concept - Why?

Because it's based on common sense traffic solutions, not blurry old-boy politicized thinking.

You won't read about The Beltway anywhere but here.

TCA scoffs at any idea keeping a 241-extension from crossing south over Ortega Highway,

precisely where it's not needed.

Removing the *Non-Compete-Agreement* enables improvement of the I-5 - expediting traffic flow.

No Homes Taken - ever:

Research by Interstate traffic experts show a planned-for a Caltrans I-5 fix requires:

* no double-decking

* no taking of homes

* would absorb twice as much expected traffic, than a \$12 one-way 241 toll road from San Onofre to the 91.

What Can I Do?

Tell OCTA and the TCA you support the 73 /241/I-5 Beltway Connection.

How and Where Do I Do That?

At your City Council - you elected them - go to a meeting - ask them these questions - watch them squirm.

Start the Debate - now.

**If we're all smart enough to live in South Orange County,
why can't our traffic model be just as smart?**

Let's get our traffic moving - now.

**Click on www.SaveTrestles.com
for more information**

Beltway Concept

Foothill-South

- **Could provide east-west traffic relief and could improve congestion on Ortega Highway**
- **The Beltway Concept would not provide relief on I-5 without widening of the I-5**
- **Would result in considerable community impacts**

Beltway Concept



- **The concept of linking 73 to 241 has been discussed as a potential future east-west connection**
- **Responsibility of local jurisdictions to determine merit for inclusion in OCTA Master Plan of Arterial Highways**