

= California State Route 55 =

State Route 55 (SR 55) is an 18 @-@ mile (30 @-@ km) long north ? south highway in the U.S. state of California . The portion of the route built to freeway standards is known as the Costa Mesa Freeway (formerly the Newport Freeway) . SR 55 runs between Finley Avenue south of Pacific Coast Highway (SR 1) in Newport Beach and the Riverside Freeway (SR 91) in Anaheim to the north , intersecting other major Orange County freeways such as SR 22 , SR 73 , and Interstate 405 (I @-@ 405) . The freeway passes through suburban Orange County .

SR 55 was first added to the state highway system in 1931 , known as part of Legislative Route 43 , and was routed on surface streets . It was renumbered SR 55 in 1959 , and the construction of the freeway portion began in the 1960s and continued until 1992 . Due to congestion , several alternatives are being discussed to expand the freeway portion past its current end in Newport Beach . SR 55 received the first carpool lane in Orange County in 1985 , and the first direct carpool ramp in 1995 .

= = Route description = =

Starting at Finley Avenue on Newport Boulevard in Newport Beach , 0 @.@ 3 miles (0 @.@ 48 km) south of SR 1 , SR 55 (Newport Boulevard) is a four @-@ lane expressway for approximately 0 @.@ 75 miles (1 @.@ 21 km) to its intersection with 17th Street in Costa Mesa . It then follows a traditional street routing through a retail and commercial section of Costa Mesa until its intersection with 19th Street . The segment on Newport Boulevard includes a limited @-@ access interchange at SR 1 . Following the 19th Street intersection , SR 55 becomes an eight @-@ lane below @-@ grade freeway that bisects the northbound and southbound lanes of Newport Boulevard until the Mesa Drive undercrossing .

North of Fair Drive , SR 55 is an at @-@ grade or above @-@ grade freeway , with the exception of a 1 mile (1 @.@ 6 km) stretch between the 1st Street / 4th Street exit and the 17th Street exit in Santa Ana , which is below @-@ grade . SR 55 intersects SR 73 and I @-@ 405 next to John Wayne Airport . The freeway continues north into Santa Ana and Tustin , where there is an interchange with I @-@ 5 . The southbound side of the Costa Mesa Freeway does not have a direct link to northbound I @-@ 5 .

SR 55 continues north into Orange , where it meets the eastern terminus of SR 22 . Following this , the freeway continues almost due north until turning northeast to merge with SR 91 eastbound , and intersecting ramps for SR 91 westbound near the Santa Ana River .

Today , SR 55 is a heavily @-@ travelled corridor linking southern Orange County with SR 91 , the main corridor between the Inland Empire and the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area , as well as I @-@ 5 , the main north ? south corridor for California . A HOV lane has been built along the entire route , with its own off- and on @-@ ramps , including one for I @-@ 5 . However , congestion is still very prevalent throughout the day , as is the norm with many Orange County freeways ; Route 55 experiences a peak daily traffic volume of 262 @,@ 000 vehicles and 17 @,@ 292 trucks .

SR 55 is part of the California Freeway and Expressway System and the National Highway System , a network of roadways important to the country 's economy , defense , and mobility . SR 55 from SR 91 to Costa Mesa is known as the Costa Mesa Freeway , as named by Assembly Concurrent Resolution 177 , Chapter 86 in 1976 .

= = History = =

SR 55 was built in 1931 and originally numbered Route 43 . It was built from the southern terminus of SR 1 (the Pacific Coast Highway , or " PCH ") and continued northbound on roughly the same route it follows today , following Newport Road (today Newport Boulevard) northeast to Tustin , and then Tustin Avenue north to near its current terminus at SR 91 . From here , Route 43 continued east on what is now SR 91 towards Riverside . In 1959 , the highway was renumbered as Route 55 , and its route was shortened from Route 1 to the also @-@ renumbered Route 91 . The freeway

portion from Chapman Avenue to SR 91 opened on January 18 , 1962 , at a cost of \$ 4 @. @ 6 million (about \$ 79 @. @ 1 million today) . The segment between SR 73 and Chapman Avenue opened in 1966 .

SR 55 was the first freeway in Orange County to receive carpool lanes , opened in October 1985 between I @- @ 405 and SR 91 . The stretch of SR 55 between Mesa Drive and 19th Street in Costa Mesa was opened in 1992 ; plans to extend SR 55 freeway south from 19th Street to State Route 1 were never realized due to community opposition , fueling an amendment to the city charter to prevent this extension .

In 1995 , the direct carpool lane ramps between I @- @ 5 and SR 55 were completed ; these were the first in Orange County . The year also saw further widening of SR 55 between SR 22 and McFadden Avenue . Between 1996 and 2002 , the fifth lane in both directions was constructed between I @- @ 5 and SR 91 , funded with a sales tax of half a cent approved by Measure M. In April 2007 , the Orange County Transportation Authority approved funds to study the feasibility of extending the Costa Mesa Freeway south to 17th Street via tunnels or flyover ramps . The segment of SR 55 from Finley Street to the Newport Channel bridge was legally authorized to be turned over to the city of Newport Beach in 2009 .

SR 55 was formerly called the Newport Freeway . In 2010 , the stretch between Chapman and Katella avenues in the City of Orange was renamed the Paul Johnson Freeway for longtime local radio television traffic reporter Paul Johnson , who died the same year .

= = Major intersections = =

The entire route is in Orange County .