

= California State Route 52 =

State Route 52 ( SR 52 ) is a state highway in San Diego County , California , that extends from La Jolla Parkway at Interstate 5 ( I @-@ 5 ) in La Jolla , San Diego , to SR 67 in Santee . It is a freeway for its entire length and serves as a major east ? west route through the northern part of the city of San Diego . The road connects the major north ? south freeways of the county , including I @-@ 5 , I @-@ 805 , SR 163 , I @-@ 15 , SR 125 , and SR 67 . SR 52 passes north of the Rose Canyon Fault before traversing Marine Corps Air Station Miramar ( MCAS Miramar ) . East of Santo Road and west of SR 125 , the highway goes through Mission Trails Regional Park , a large open preserve . SR 52 is also known as the Soledad Freeway and the San Clemente Canyon Freeway .

Plans for a route between La Jolla and Santee date from 1959 , and SR 52 was officially designated in the 1964 state highway renumbering . Construction began in 1966 at the I @-@ 5 interchange with Ardath Road leading to La Jolla . It continued with the building of San Clemente Canyon Road , which was later widened to become SR 52 . The freeway was completed east to I @-@ 805 in 1970 , and was built in two stages from there to Santo Road east of I @-@ 15 ; the last phase was completed in 1988 .

The freeway east of Santo Road encountered delays from environmentalists over the endangered least Bell 's vireo , a songbird which faced habitat destruction , as well as those concerned with the destruction of homes and businesses for the freeway right @-@ of @-@ way . The extension to Mission Gorge Road opened in 1993 , and SR 52 was completed to SR 125 in 1998 . Funding issues delayed the completion of the entire route until 2011 , more than fifty years after construction began ; until then , the city of Santee faced traffic snarls . A widening project was completed in 2007 between Santo Road and Mast Boulevard ; further expansion has been put on hold due to state budget concerns .

= = Route description = =

SR 52 begins just west of I @-@ 5 at the eastern end of La Jolla Parkway . Before entering San Clemente Canyon , the road becomes a freeway as it intersects I @-@ 5 . The canyon is part of Marian Bear Natural Park . The freeway runs north of the Rose Canyon Fault , composed of Late Cretaceous rock estimated to be 90 million years old , and Mount Soledad . Following exits with Clairemont Mesa Boulevard / Regents Road and Genesee Avenue , SR 52 intersects I @-@ 805 before exiting the canyon and traveling along the southern edge of the MCAS Miramar military base .

From I @-@ 805 to SR 163 , the highway goes through an area with visible Pliocene sedimentary rocks estimated to be 10 million years old . After passing the Miramar Recycling Center and an interchange with Convoy Street , SR 52 intersects SR 163 , a freeway heading towards downtown San Diego . SR 52 intersects Kearny Villa Road before an interchange with I @-@ 15 . A collector @-@ distributor road serves these three interchanges .

After this interchange , the freeway leaves the edge of the military base and enters the San Diego neighborhood of Tierrasanta , where there is a junction with Santo Road , before traversing Mission Trails Regional Park , an open space preserve , for a few miles . The freeway ascends to Mission Trails Pass , north of the 1 @,@ 230 @-@ foot ( 370 m ) summit of Fortuna Mountain . The mountain is part of the Peninsular Range ; the highway cuts through Eocene rocks estimated to be 50 million years old and marine fossils . The road on the eastern side of the mountain is carved out of " igneous granitic rocks " that are thought to be 150 million years old , an unusual formation compared to the Eocene layer .

A dedicated two @-@ way bicycle path exists on the northern side of the roadway between Santo Road and Mast Boulevard , with access possible from both termini . East of the Mast Boulevard interchange , SR 52 crosses and begins to parallel the San Diego River . The freeway enters the city of Santee , where SR 52 was built alongside Mission Gorge Road . SR 52 intersects the northern end of SR 125 , where SR 52 traffic can exit south onto SR 125 . The freeway continues east through Santee , with interchanges at Fanita Drive , Cuyamaca Street , and Magnolia Avenue ,

before it comes to an end at SR 67 .

SR 52 is part of the California Freeway and Expressway System and is eligible for the State Scenic Highway System ; however , it is not a scenic highway as designated by Caltrans because it has not successfully been through the nomination process . SR 52 is not part of the National Highway System , a network of roads that are important to the country 's economy , defense , and mobility . The entire route is known as both the Soledad Freeway and the San Clemente Canyon Freeway . In 2013 , SR 52 had an annual average daily traffic ( AADT ) of 69 @, @ 000 at the eastern terminus with SR 67 , and 103 @, @ 000 between Convoy Street and SR 163 , the lowest and the highest AADT for the highway , respectively .

= = History = =

In 1959 , Legislative Route 279 was designated as a highway from La Jolla to Santee and incorporated into the California Freeway and Expressway System . In the 1964 state highway renumbering , this became SR 52 . However , SR 52 took more than fifty years to be constructed , due to delays in the planning and construction phases .

= = I @-@ 5 to I @-@ 805 = = =

A public hearing on Legislative Route 279 and on the Ardath Road connection to La Jolla was held on November 15 , 1961 . At the hearing , there were concerns expressed regarding destruction of vegetation . City and state officials indicated that the Soledad Freeway would be constructed in the northern part of the canyon to minimize environmental damage . On November 9 , 1966 , the I @-@ 5 interchange with Ardath Road opened at the western end of what would become SR 52 . The original goal was to connect the interchange with San Clemente Canyon Road , which served as a predecessor to SR 52 ; plans were to widen the road to four lanes and designate it as SR 52 . The connecting ramps were not opened that day because the aluminum guard rails had not been delivered on time . Estimates indicated that each resident of La Jolla would save 80 hours per year by using Ardath Road . A ramp from southbound I @-@ 5 to westbound Ardath Road was never completed because of a hairpin turn that would be necessary due to the towering cliff on the west side of I @-@ 5 that Ardath Road ascends as it continues to La Jolla . On November 18 , San Clemente Canyon Road was connected to I @-@ 5 when the aluminum guard rails arrived and were subsequently installed . San Clemente Canyon Road was not fully opened until 1967 . That year , citizens expressed opposition to the construction of the Soledad Freeway because some wanted the land to be used for a park , and did not view the freeway as " necessary . "

Formal bids began in February 1969 for the first section of SR 52 between I @-@ 5 and I @-@ 805 . The state ordered the construction of this section on April 28 , 1969 . On Thursday , May 28 , 1970 , the Soledad Freeway opened , connecting Regents Road and Genesee Avenue with I @-@ 5 ; however , it did not connect to the unopened I @-@ 805 . The road was built by Kasler , Ball and Yeager for \$ 3 @. @ 9 million ( about \$ 41 @. @ 5 million in 2015 dollars ) . The construction firm deposited dirt into " an unnamed finger canyon " against the conditions of the city permit , and the city ordered the firm to remove it . The section of I @-@ 805 from SR 52 to El Cajon Boulevard was scheduled to be dedicated on March 20 , 1972 .

Ardath Road was renamed La Jolla Parkway on October 15 , 2002 , for two reasons : a nearby residential street was also named Ardath Road , and there was a desire to draw attention to this primary route to downtown La Jolla . This required the city of San Diego to pay \$ 20 @, @ 000 ( about \$ 29 @, @ 000 in 2015 dollars ) to replace the signs on SR 52 .

= = = I @-@ 805 to Santo Road = = =

The second phase of SR 52 from I @-@ 805 to 1 @. @ 1 miles ( 1 @. @ 8 km ) past U.S. Route 395 ( which became I @-@ 15 in 1974 ) was projected to cost \$ 29 @. @ 4 million ( about \$ 313 million in 2015 dollars ) . The new freeway was to provide access to Tierrasanta and reduce the

traffic on I @-@ 8 . The U.S. Navy was consulted in the planning process due to the road 's proposed routing through MCAS Miramar that would provide a delineation against further urban development . There were no concerns expressed at the public hearing on November 17 , 1970 ; however , construction did not begin for more than ten years , as California governor Jerry Brown stalled the construction of SR 52 from Santo Road to SR 67 . In 1977 , the county supervisor , a San Diego City councilman , and the mayors of La Mesa and National City wrote a letter to Brown to ask for the construction of this portion of SR 125 and other freeways , due to concerns about the types of congestion seen in Los Angeles coming to San Diego due to the incomplete freeway system . San Diego City Councilman Tom Gade wrote a telegram to Caltrans Director Adriana Gianturco about the possible deletions ; in response , Gianturco clarified that the plans were only being reconsidered and had not been removed , and a CHC member criticized the tone of the original telegram , calling it " intemperate " . In 1984 , Leo Trombatore , the Caltrans Director under California governor George Deukmejian , requested to the California Transportation Commission ( CTC ) that " formal studies toward this end be initiated immediately . Route 52 has a high statewide priority . " The CTC followed the director 's wishes , approving the studies .

The first part of this phase , from I @-@ 805 to Convoy Street , began construction in December 1986 . It was dedicated at a community celebration on July 11 , 1987 , and was scheduled to open to traffic a few weeks later . The first callboxes in San Diego County were installed on SR 52 near Convoy Street on June 20 , 1988 . On June 30 , 1988 , SR 52 from Convoy Street to Santo Road opened to traffic . The I @-@ 15 interchange was built with state funds from the CTC .

In 2000 , Hazard Construction Company added a single westbound lane on SR 52 from SR 163 to I @-@ 805 , a distance of 2 @.@ 5 miles ( 4 @.@ 0 km ) , at a cost of \$ 1 @.@ 7 million ( about \$ 2 @.@ 6 million in 2015 dollars ) . In 2006 , the Metropolitan Transit System , in cooperation with the San Diego Association of Governments ( SANDAG ) , Caltrans , and the California Highway Patrol , began a pilot program to run transit buses along the shoulders of SR 52 between Kearny Villa Road and I @-@ 805 . During rush hour , buses were able to use these shoulders to bypass slow traffic in the main lanes . The trial was considered successful as more than 99 percent of trips arrived on time , customer feedback was favorable and no safety concerns were encountered . On May 9 , 2007 , the San Diego Union @-@ Tribune published a story which raised reader concerns about a dangerous dip in the freeway . The dip had developed in a section of the highway constructed on top of the Miramar Landfill , and had been caused by trash settling ; it was repaired by the next day .

= = = Planning for eastern portion = = =

The planning process for the remainder of SR 52 began as early as 1970 , when the initial plan was to route the freeway through the city of Santee along Mission Gorge Road and the San Diego River . Planning was delayed until 1984 , along with the construction of the I @-@ 805 to Santo Road segment . The City of Santee opposed the original plans , hoping to route the freeway on Prospect Avenue or north of the San Diego River . By April 1985 , a second route along Prospect Avenue , proposed by Caltrans , earned the support of the City Council ; however , the required demolition of many small businesses led many of those affected to start a petition against this route . On the other hand , there were objections about the " river route " costing approximately \$ 15 million more ( about \$ 45 @.@ 9 million in 2015 dollars ) and cutting through a future " Town Center development " . The Lakeside Chamber of Commerce preferred the route along the San Diego River , citing the proximity to that city . The environmental impact report was found to be deficient by the Federal Highway Administration in late 1986 .

In January 1987 , the Santee City Council voted to commence a study of a more northern route , even though local residents and workers objected that this would postpone construction . In March , the study , done by BSI Inc . , supported the Caltrans decision to abandon plans for the northern path due to the increased cost from the " mountainous , undeveloped " terrain . The council voted to support a southern alignment through the town , with both the Prospect Avenue and San Diego River alternatives still viable . In the same month , the mayor of La Mesa , Fred Nagel , started a

petition drive supporting the extension of the freeway due to the recurring traffic on I @-@ 8 . The Caltrans environmental impact report indicated that the Prospect Avenue route would cost \$ 89 million ( about \$ 248 million in 2015 dollars ) , compared to the river route 's \$ 121 million ( about \$ 337 million in 2015 dollars ) . The city council of El Cajon publicly supported the Prospect Avenue routing ; however , some employees of the City of Santee , including some city planners and engineers , were concerned that portions of the report were " outdated . " The petitions were given to the CTC in May , when San Diego officials made several arguments in support of the construction

In June 1987 , the CTC staff initially recommended against allocating money for the SR 52 segment ; however , SANDAG agreed to fund the project with \$ 1 million ( about \$ 2 @.@ 78 million in 2015 dollars ) . Residents of Santee opposed the possible routes through the city at a public forum on June 10 because of the necessary destruction of homes to build on those routes . In late June , Caltrans considered making small modifications to the Prospect Avenue alignment to destroy fewer homes , including those in mobile home parks . On June 25 , 1987 , the CTC voted to support the SR 52 extension , with the requirement that \$ 4 @.@ 8 million ( about \$ 13 @.@ 3 million in 2015 dollars ) come from local funding sources . Finally , on September 23 , the City of Santee recommended the Prospect Avenue Route to the CTC .

In July 1987 , the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service expressed concerns that construction near the San Diego River crossing might result in the destruction of the endangered least Bell 's vireo habitat . Two of the four alternative routes considered by Caltrans passed through the Carlton Hills golf course , which the public opposed . In April 1988 , the Sierra Club denounced the Prospect Avenue route ; federal negotiators recommended shifting the route from Hollins Lake towards the golf course . Environmental concerns raised in June 1988 related to the least Bell 's vireo included decrease of insects , a darker environment after overpasses are constructed , and the fragmenting of habitat . Nevertheless , Caltrans still desired the Prospect Avenue route over concerns of a more expensive and less traveled northern route . Upset because of the delays , the Santee City Council wrote to U.S. senators Pete Wilson and Alan Cranston , asking for their assistance . Councilman Jim Bartell alleged that the issue would affect the city council elections .

In March 1989 , the Fish and Wildlife Service agreed to the project , on the conditions of altering the route to cross the San Diego River and pass east of the center of the town , and constructing 44 acres of additional habitat as mitigation . SANDAG voted against building a full bicycle lane along the route in July 1989 , citing the high costs . Finally , on July 27 , the final routing of SR 52 was determined , running along Prospect Avenue . In May 1990 , Santee councilman Roy Woodward was censured for having a conflict of interest in voting to support the proposals for the freeway because he " held interests " in three properties that would benefit from the freeway , thus violating the Political Reform Act as these interests exceeded \$ 10 @,@ 000 . One of the holdings was near Cuyamaca Street , the location of an offramp on a path that he voted to support . He was fined \$ 2 @,@ 000 ( about \$ 4 @,@ 700 in 2015 dollars ) for each property , for a total of \$ 6 @,@ 000 ( about \$ 14 @,@ 000 in 2015 dollars ) .

= = = Santo Road to Mission Gorge Road = = =

In April 1990 , the Santee City Council agreed to begin purchasing land , over the environmental concerns of Councilman Jim Bartell . Construction finally began on the four @-@ lane section of SR 52 between Santo Road and Mission Gorge Road on July 19 , 1991 . The work was projected to cost \$ 52 million ( about \$ 119 million in 2015 dollars ) . For environmental mitigation , a new 45 @-@ acre ( 0 @.@ 070 sq mi ) songbird habitat was constructed that cost \$ 8 @.@ 3 million ( about \$ 19 million in 2015 dollars ) . Fossils of " small foraging mammals " were discovered during construction in late 1991 . The construction company , HDB Construction , was required to keep noise below 61 decibels to protect the birds . The project was funded primarily with revenue from a voter @-@ approved sales tax in 1987 . The opening of this portion was scheduled for December 16 , 1993 . This new segment ended just southeast of the Mast Boulevard interchange , after the San Diego River overpass .

The opening of this stretch of SR 52 had many effects on the transportation of the East County region . Traffic decreased significantly on I @-@ 8 in early 1994 , with an estimated 30 @,@ 000 commuters switching from I @-@ 8 to SR 52 . Fewer cars traveled on the western part of Mission Gorge Road , leading to a decrease in revenue for businesses located along that road . On Mast Boulevard and Mission Gorge Road in Santee , much more traffic was present , leading to residents complaining to the city . In 1998 , the city began to widen Mission Gorge Road between Carlton Hills Drive and Fanita Road to handle the extra traffic from the incomplete SR 52 .

The year after the September 11 , 2001 attacks , the military erected a fence to block a deer tunnel underneath the freeway that connected the base and Mission Trails Regional Park , since the tunnel could be used to gain unauthorized access to the base . In 2006 , construction began to add a third lane on westbound SR 52 between Mast Boulevard and Santo Road . The expansion cost \$ 3 @.@ 4 million ( about \$ 4 @.@ 09 million in 2015 dollars ) and was funded by the state and the county TransNet sales tax . The new lane opened on May 8 , 2007 ; however , the widening generated complaints from angry commuters facing a " bottleneck " at Santo Road . Because the additional lane was constructed in portions , the opening of the third lane between Santo Road and the existing third lane closer to I @-@ 15 was delayed ; however , construction for the missing 2 @,@ 100 feet ( 640 m ) was approved in April 2007 . The extension opened on July 20 , 2007 .

= = = Mission Gorge Road to SR 67 = = =

Construction on the next portion of SR 52 , from Mission Gorge Road to SR 125 , was scheduled to begin in late 1995 , at a total cost of \$ 60 million ( about \$ 116 million in 2015 dollars ) for the entire project . Property acquisition began in 1994 , with many property owners along the south side of Mission Gorge Road being forced to move out of the way of the freeway and subsequent road construction , as Mission Gorge Road was moved south to accommodate the new freeway . About \$ 40 million ( \$ 77 @.@ 6 million in 2015 dollars ) was spent on the property acquisition . After weather @-@ related construction delays due to the El Niño season of the winter of 1997 ? 1998 , the extension of SR 52 between Mission Gorge Road and SR 125 was dedicated on May 9 , 1998 . The eastbound lanes were scheduled to be opened a few days later , and the westbound lanes were to be opened in mid @-@ July of that year . L.R. Hubbard Construction Company built the portion for \$ 17 million ( about \$ 28 @.@ 8 million in 2015 dollars ) .

The city of Santee faced problems in the construction of the freeway from SR 125 to SR 67 . As early as 1995 , it was clear that the environmental impact report was delayed and that there would be funding difficulties . SANDAG allocated \$ 23 million dollars ( about \$ 37 @.@ 1 million in 2015 dollars ) in 1999 to purchase properties needed for the right @-@ of @-@ way . In 2001 , SANDAG gave \$ 138 million ( about \$ 207 million in 2015 dollars ) to the expansion of SR 52 to SR 67 , which was necessary for extending the freeway past Cuyamaca Street . But by 2003 , the transportation committee of SANDAG voted to delay the project due to decreased state funding . The city of Santee was required to make improvements to Forester Creek to accommodate potential flooding , which cost \$ 30 million ( about \$ 37 @.@ 8 million in 2015 dollars ) ; the work began in May 2006 . Funding issues were finally resolved in 2006 with voter @-@ approved statewide transportation bonds . In 2007 , highway construction costs increased ; that year , the SANDAG transportation committee voted to fund the construction , taking money from a planned reversible lanes project on SR 52 .

" Heavy construction " of SR 52 from SR 125 eastward to SR 67 began in February 2008 . More than 360 properties were acquired to build the freeway ; at least 60 were mobile homes . This portion was divided into three construction projects : from SR 125 to Cuyamaca Street , from there to Magnolia Avenue , and the interchange with SR 67 , which began construction in mid @-@ June 2008 . The middle project had to be shut down briefly in February 2009 due to funding issues . Completion was scheduled for 2010 , but was postponed to early 2011 due to weather @-@ related delays . This new portion was opened to traffic on March 29 , 2011 . The cost of this project was \$ 525 million , funded with state and federal funds as well as TransNet revenue . The opening was predicted to reduce traffic on I @-@ 8 as well as Mission Gorge Road and other Santee

thoroughfares . The official " ribbon cutting " ceremony took place on March 19 , 2011 on the freeway at the Cuyamaca Street interchange .

Reactions to the extension between SR 125 and SR 67 were mixed . There were reports of faster transportation through the East County area , yet commuters noted a rush hour backup at SR 125 headed westbound because there were only two lanes traveling west through the interchange . Traffic along Mission Gorge Road was reported to have decreased by 20 percent .

= = Future = =

There are plans to add one lane in each direction , as well as two reversible lanes , from I @-@ 15 to SR 125 . These plans were put on hold in 2008 due to a budget shortfall . Completion is scheduled to take place by 2040 . Caltrans recommends adding two more lanes between I @-@ 5 and I @-@ 805 , and two HOV lanes between I @-@ 805 and I @-@ 15 .

= = Exit list = =

The entire route is in San Diego County .