= Interstate 680 (California) =

Interstate 680 (I @-@ 680) is a north ? south Interstate Highway in Northern California . It curves around the eastern cities of the San Francisco Bay Area from San Jose to Interstate 80 at Fairfield , bypassing cities along the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay such as Oakland and Richmond while serving others more inland such as Pleasanton and Concord .

Built in the 1920s and designated in 1955 , I @-@ 680 begins at a junction with I @-@ 280 and US 101 (Bayshore Freeway) , and heads northeast and north @-@ northwest through the northeast part of San Jose . After passing State Route 237 (SR 237) in Milpitas and SR 262 in Fremont , I @-@ 680 abruptly turns northeast (where a connection to a SR 238 freeway was planned) and enters the hills and valleys of the California Coast Ranges . The highway crosses over Mission Pass , also known as the Sunol Grade , and descends into the Sunol Valley , where it meets SR 84 near Sunol . From Sunol , I @-@ 680 again heads north @-@ northwesterly through valleys , including the San Ramon Valley , along the Calaveras Fault . Junctions along this portion include I @-@ 580 in Dublin and SR 24 in Walnut Creek . Beyond the latter interchange , a three @-@ way directional junction with the SR 24 freeway west to Oakland , I @-@ 680 heads north into Pleasant Hill , where SR 242 splits and I @-@ 680 again heads northwesterly . After the junction with SR 4 in Martinez , the highway crosses the Carquinez Strait on the Benicia @-@ Martinez Bridge , immediately meeting the east end of I @-@ 780 on the Benicia end . The remainder of I @-@ 680 , from Benicia to I @-@ 80 at Fairfield , lies between a hilly area to the west representing the southwestern tip of the Vaca Mountains , and a marshy area (along the Suisun Bay and Cordelia Slough) to the east .

= = Route description = =

I @-@ 680 is part of the California Freeway and Expressway System . This route is eligible for the State Scenic Highway System from the Santa Clara @-@ Alameda county line to SR 24 in Walnut Creek . , and is a scenic route from either SR 238 or SR 262 (CalTrans 's designation is unclear ; just defines it as Mission Blvd .) to the Contra Costa county line , and from the Alameda county line to SR 24 . It 's routed legislatively as (a) Route 101 near San Jose to Route 780 at Benicia passing near Warm Springs , Mission San Jose , Scotts Corners , and Sunol , and via Walnut Creek , and (b) Route 780 at Benicia to Route 80 near Cordelia .

The route begins at U.S. Route 101 at the Joe Colla Interchange , where it acts as a continuation of I @-@ 280 eastward . From here , it begins its journey northward through San Jose , where it meets the Capitol Expressway , signed as CR G21 , about a mile northeast of I @-@ 680 's southern terminus . The next exit northbound is SR 130 , which is also known as Alum Rock Avenue , unsigned at the intersection . As it continues through Santa Clara County , it meets numerous local roads before interchanging with the Montague Expressway . Here , it exits San Jose and enters the city of Milpitas , California , where it meets SR 237 , often referred to as Calaveras Boulevard . After one more intersection , I @-@ 680 exits Santa Clara County and enters Alameda County .

In Alameda County , the freeway begins in the city of Fremont , where it intersects SR 262 , which was unsigned until 2000 . Continuing through the city , it meets Mission Boulevard at SR 238 before exiting the city . Prior to 2002 , two ghost ramps existed here , remains of an abandoned freeway project replacing Mission Blvd . Amid Alameda County , it abruptly turns northeastward and enters a hilly area , where it crosses over Mission Pass , and descends into the Sunol Valley , where it runs concurrently with SR 84 for a short while . Afterwards , it enters Pleasanton and intersects with I @-@ 580 , currently California 's longest auxiliary interstate providing access to Oakland and the Central Valley . It enters Dublin for a short segment before exiting the county and entering Contra Costa County .

Upon entering Contra Costa County , the route meets numerous local roads through the cities of San Ramon , Danville , and Alamo before entering Walnut Creek , where it meets SR 24 . I @-@ 680 then enters Pleasant Hill for a short time and Concord , where it meets SR 242 . Upon exiting Concord , it meets SR 4 . It then enters Martinez , where it follows the Benicia @-@ Martinez Bridge over the Carquinez Strait , on which the route crosses the county line and enters Benicia in Solano

County . On the Benicia @-@ Martinez bridge , I @-@ 680 northbound requires a toll , while I @-@ 680 southbound is free direction . In Benicia , I @-@ 680 interchanges with I @-@ 780 . It then exits the city and after passing through rural areas routing parallel to the San Joaquin Delta , it enters Fairfield , where it meets I @-@ 80 , which is the route 's northern terminus .

In the wake of the September 11 Attacks , a U.S. flag was painted on a large piece of concrete on a hill along the Sunol Grade . It stayed there for nine years before Caltrans painted it over , as the mural had been painted on without authorization . Due to this action being taken shortly before July 4th , 2010 , and also due to the mural 's fame , this was met with controversy . The flag was replaced shortly later .

Of the above names , only the name Sinclair Freeway for its designated portion usually appears on maps , and the other portions on maps are always unnamed , referred to as simply I @-@ 680 .

= = = High @-@ occupancy lanes = = =

A 14 @-@ mile (23 km) southbound high @-@ occupancy toll (HOT) lane along I @-@ 680 between SR 84 in Alameda County and SR 237 in Santa Clara County opened on September 20 , 2010 . Solo drivers are required to pay a toll via a FasTrak transponder . Studies regarding the implementation of northbound HOT lanes on I @-@ 680 are currently underway .

HOV Lanes exist on this portion from slightly north of I @-@ 580 to Walnut Creek , and again from Concord to the Benicia @-@ Martinez Bridge . The portion leading to the Benicia @-@ Martinez Bridge requires a car with 3 + persons , unlike California 's regular carpool lanes of 2 + persons .

= = History = =

= = = Historic routing = = =

By the 1920s , a road ran south from Martinez through Walnut Creek , Dublin , Danville , and Sunol to Mission San Jose , where it met State Highway Route 5 (Mission Boulevard , signed over the years as US 48 , US 101E , SR 9 , and now SR 238) . It was not yet paved south of Dublin , where it crossed Mission Pass between the Sunol Valley and the San Francisco Bay basin . The majority of this roadway was added to the state highway system in 1933 as portions of several routes : Route 108 from Mission San Jose to Sunol , Route 107 from Sunol to Walnut Creek , and Route 75 from Walnut Creek to Pleasant Hill .

At Martinez , the Martinez @-@ Benicia Ferry took automobiles across the Carquinez Strait to Benicia , where Route 7 , one of the original state highways from the 1910 bond issue , led north and northeast past Fairfield towards Sacramento and Oregon . The portion north from Benicia to Fairfield became part of Route 74 in 1935 , when Route 7 was realigned to the more direct American Canyon route that is now I @-@ 80 . None of the aforementioned roads were given state sign route numbers in 1934 , when that system was laid out , but by 1937 they had been numbered SR 21 . This route began at the intersection of Warm Springs Boulevard and Brown Road in Warm Springs , where Route 5 and Route 69 (SR 17) split , followed Route 5 along Mission Boulevard to Mission San Jose (this part later became an overlap with SR 9) , and then continued to US 40 (Route 7) at Cordelia . The routing was very close to the present I @-@ 680 , following such roads as Pleasanton Sunol Road , San Ramon Valley Boulevard , Danville Boulevard , Main Street in Walnut Creek , Contra Costa Boulevard , and Pacheco Boulevard .

The portion of SR 21 between Pleasant Hill and Martinez was finally added to the state highway system in 1949 , as a branch of Route 75 . The ferry approach in Benicia became a spur of Route 74 in 1947 , and in 1953 it was transferred to Route 75 . The same law , effective immediately as an urgency measure , authorized the Department of Public Works to acquire the ferry system , then operated by the city of Martinez , which was planning to shut it down . Ownership was transferred just after midnight on October 6 , 1953 .

History as an Interstate

  The Bureau of Public Roads approved urban routes of the Interstate Highway System on September 15 , 1955 , including a loop around the San Francisco Bay , soon numbered I @-@ 280 and I @-@ 680 . The east half (I @-@ 680) began at the interchange of US 101 north of downtown San Jose and followed the Nimitz Freeway (SR 17 / Route 69 , now I @-@ 880) to the split at Warm Springs (the present location of SR 262) , SR 21 to Benicia , and Route 74 (no sign route number) to I @-@ 80 in Vallejo . The first piece of I @-@ 680 freeway built , other than the pre @-@ existing Nimitz Freeway , was in the late 1950s , along the SR 24 overlap between North Main Street in Walnut Creek and Monument Boulevard in Pleasant Hill . A southerly extension , bypassing downtown Walnut Creek to South Main Street , opened on March 22 , 1960 , connecting with the SR 24 freeway to Oakland . In the next decade , the freeway was completed from Vallejo south to SR 238 at Mission San Jose , and the roadway north from Benicia to Fairfield , which became the only remaining piece of SR 21 , was also upgraded to freeway standards .
  In the 1964 renumbering , the legislative designation was changed to Route 680 . SR 17 was officially moved to former Route 5 between San Jose and Warm Springs , which had not had a signed designation since the Nimitz Freeway (then I @-@ 680) was constructed , but this was instead marked as part of SR 238 (which replaced SR 9 north of Mission San Jose) , and SR 17 remained signed along the Nimitz Freeway . This was very short @-@ lived , as the Bureau of Public Roads approved a shift in the south end of I @-@ 680 in October 1964 . The legislature changed the routes in 1965 , swapping Routes 17 and 680 south of Warm Springs , and creating a new SR 262 on the short roadway at Warm Springs where they had overlapped to switch sides . However , until I @-@ 680 was completed in the early @-@ to @-@ mid 1970s , it remained signed along the Nimitz Freeway , and the old road between San Jose and Warm Springs continued to be marked as SR 238 . One more change was made to the routing of I @-@ 680 : in July 1973 , the remainder of SR 21 , from Benicia to Fairfield , was added to the Interstate Highway System . This became the new alignment of I @-@ 680 , and the old route to Vallejo became I @-@ 780 . The corresponding changes were made by the state legislature in 1976 .

Joe Colla Interchange

  The interchange at the beginning of I @-@ 680 at I @-@ 280 and U.S. Route 101 was constructed years before its completion . The two bridges , with no on ramps or off ramps stood as a 110 foot tall monument to inefficiency for years in the 1970s . It became the butt of many local jokes . The highlight prank occurred in January 1976 , when a 1960 Chevrolet Impala was placed on the highest bridge overnight , where it obviously would be impossible to drive . The following day , San Jose City Councilman Joe Colla was photographed standing next to the car , a photo which was circulated across many newspapers . It has been suggested this stunt nudged the wheels of progress to find the funds to complete the freeway . In 2010 , the interchange was named the Joe Colla Interchange .

Exit List

  Except where prefixed with a letter , postmiles were measured on the road as it was in 1964 , based on the alignment that existed at the time , and do not necessarily reflect current mileage . R reflects a realignment in the route since then , M indicates a second realignment , L refers an overlap due to a correction or change , and T indicates postmiles classified as temporary (for a full list of prefixes , see the list of postmile definitions) . Segments that remain unconstructed or have been relinquished to local control may be omitted . The numbers reset at county lines ; the start and end postmiles in each county are given in the county column .