

= California State Route 54 =

State Route 54 (SR 54) is a state highway in San Diego , California that connects Interstate 5 (I @-@ 5) in Chula Vista and National City to the city of El Cajon . The westernmost part of the highway is a freeway , intersecting with I @-@ 5 , I @-@ 805 , and SR 125 ; the part of the highway east of SR 125 is undivided , and portions are maintained by the county .

The first section of the freeway opened in 1963 , east of I @-@ 805 . The extension of the freeway west to I @-@ 5 was delayed because a flood channel for the Sweetwater River was built with the extension . While construction started in 1984 , a court stopped the process for a few years , and this portion was not complete until 1992 . The final section of freeway , which was upgraded from an expressway , opened in 2007 , to coincide with the extension of SR 125 south to Otay Mesa .

= = Route description = =

SR 54 starts as a six @-@ lane freeway from I @-@ 5 near the mouth of the Sweetwater River in National City . Both directions of the freeway are divided by the river ; eastbound traffic traverses the south bank and westbound traffic traverses the north bank . The two sides join near the junction with I @-@ 805 , and the roadway continues east for several miles through Paradise Hills in San Diego . As the freeway turns north , it merges with SR 125 north and SR 54 exits at Jamacha Boulevard in La Presa . The routing follows Jamacha Boulevard as an undivided highway northeast through Spring Valley until reaching Campo Road , although some maps only sign Jamacha Boulevard as County Route S17 (CR S17) , and the state does not maintain this portion of the route .

SR 54 then runs concurrently with SR 94 through the unincorporated but developed area of Rancho San Diego , following Campo Road about one @-@ half mile (800 m) east . SR 54 and CR S17 continue northeast on six @-@ lane Jamacha Road to El Cajon , while Campo Road and SR 94 split off to the southeast . East of Brabham Street , four @-@ lane SR 54 continues to where it currently ends at the El Cajon city limit , though the Jamacha Road street name continues into the city to the route 's previous terminus at the intersection with I @-@ 8 .

SR 54 is part of the California Freeway and Expressway System , but is not part of the National Highway System (though SR 125 is) , a network of highways that are essential to the country 's economy , defense , and mobility . The route has three different names , including Jamacha Road from Campo Road to East Main Street in El Cajon , South Bay Freeway from I @-@ 805 to SR 94 , and the Filipino @-@ American Highway from the western terminus to SR 125 .

In 2014 , SR 54 had an annual average daily traffic (AADT) of 21 @,@ 800 at the eastern end of the route , and 131 @,@ 000 between I @-@ 805 and Reo Drive , the latter of which was the highest AADT for the highway . In early 2012 , portions of the interchange with I @-@ 5 were included on the Caltrans District 11 's Spring 2012 Top Ten Congested Segments list .

= = History = =

= = = Early construction = = =

A road through Jamacha is mentioned in The San Diego Union as early as February 1908 , and was oiled in 1935 from US 80 to Sweetwater Valley and in other places by the Sweetwater River .

In 1956 , the routing of what would become the South Bay Freeway had been determined . Three years later , the California State Legislature added Route 280 from near the Sweetwater River to El Cajon to the state highway system . The South Bay Freeway was included in the county 's 1960 ? 1961 budget as the most important project . By 1961 , E Street in Chula Vista continued along the Sweetwater River , turning northeast and becoming Sweetwater Road before entering into Lemon Grove .

Bidding took place in November 1962 for the part of the freeway from eastern National City and Valley Road to La Presa and Jamacha Road ; it was to loosely parallel Sweetwater Road . This

portion of freeway opened on September 27 , 1963 , and the entire project cost \$ 2 @. @ 25 million (about \$ 37 million in 2015 dollars) ; however , although it was a four @- @ lane freeway , it was declared as an expressway since there were at @- @ grade intersections . While the road was originally planned to have eight lanes , only four were constructed due to the additional cost and the lack of funds . Meanwhile , SR 54 was officially designated in the 1964 state highway renumbering .

= = = Sweetwater River channel = = =

SR 54 was extended west as a freeway to I @- @ 5 from I @- @ 805 at the same time the Sweetwater River flood control channel was constructed ; the state proposed routing the flood channel in between the two roadways of the freeway in 1963 , and it would also delineate the boundary between the cities of Chula Vista and National City . Later that year , the county proposed an extension of the freeway east to US 80 and Third Street in El Cajon . In 1966 , the U.S. Army 's Board of Engineers supported the construction of the flood channel , to protect the surrounding region from flooding ; the integration of SR 54 was included in the proposal .

Two years later , county officials expressed concerns over the delay of getting state and federal approval , and considered building the freeway without the flood control component of the project . The county hoped to build both projects at the same time to save \$ 4 million (about \$ 48 million in 2015 dollars) in costs , even though it was estimated to require three years ' worth of legislation to be accomplished in a single year by the county board of supervisors in order to use the Interstate Highway System funding that was set to expire in 1972 . The U.S. Congress gave approval for the project . But later that year , it was announced that the target date for completing the system would be extended from 1972 to 1974 .

By 1971 , the projected start of construction had slipped to within three to four years from then ; however , Caltrans had approved the project . In July 1974 , the California Coastal Commission unanimously decided to halt the entire project , since many of the necessary approvals from governmental bodies had not been obtained ; this overrode an exemption granted by the San Diego Coast Regional Commission . Both the mayors of Chula Vista and National City were dismayed at this ; Mayor Kile Morgan of National City stated that " we in the South Bay are getting tired of being kicked around " , referring to other stalled projects such as SR 157 and SR 125 . Meanwhile , the interchange at I @- @ 805 was constructed , with completion scheduled for the next year . A U.S. Fish and Wildlife report predicted that the project would destroy 20 acres (8 @. @ 1 ha) of marshland and harm three bird species that were endangered , among other negative environmental consequences ; the conclusions were disputed by local officials .

In 1976 , Caltrans said that SR 54 had not been included in construction plans for the next six years , due to a lack of funding and a shift in priorities to maintenance from the building of new road . The water subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives later recommended that the wildlife refuge be put on hold , since the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had not finished their proposal . Over the next few years , support for the project was expressed by a local citizens ' group , the Chula Vista city council , and the San Diego Chamber of Commerce .

By 1980 , funding was the major obstacle for completing the project , which the Army Corps of Engineers was working to resolve . Public concerns about the project were that it was not needed and would be too costly . The Army Corps of Engineers announced in 1981 that the need to do an environmental impact report was holding up the rest of the project , following the Endangered Species Act of 1973 ; the least tern and light @- @ footed clapper rail were considered endangered , and construction would have affected their habitat . The next year , the environmental impact report process began , funded by the Army Corps of Engineers .

Construction on the part west of I @- @ 805 and the interchange with I @- @ 5 started in May 1984 , with the construction of a detour for I @- @ 5 ; the Army Corps of Engineers paid for some of the costs , and federal funding related to the Interstate Highway System was also used . That same year , the county agreed to create a wildlife preserve on 188 acres (76 ha) of marshland to resolve the dispute . Meanwhile , the existing part of the South Bay Freeway had become the " most dangerous five @- @ mile stretch of highway in the county " , as declared by local fire chief Orville

Moody , due to the high number of traffic accidents . By early 1986 , the extension of the SR 54 freeway to El Cajon was declared a " lower priority " by Caltrans .

That year , the Sierra Club filed a lawsuit that halted construction on the project the next year , due to concerns about damage to the least tern and light @-@ footed clapper rail bird populations caused by the construction of a nearby hotel and the effect that the construction of roads to the hotel would have . Chief U.S. District Judge Gordon Thompson stopped the work because the preserve had not been created . It was estimated that the shutdown resulted in the state losing \$ 25 @,@ 000 (about \$ 70 @,@ 000 in 2015 dollars) a day , as well as over 185 people being laid off .

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service received 300 acres (120 ha) of land in the Sweetwater Marsh from the Santa Fe Land Company to mitigate the environmental damage , and the lawsuit reached a settlement . Construction resumed in early November 1989 ; the halting of construction meant that the project had to be rebid , and one bridge was partially constructed , resulting in it being known as " the bridge to nowhere " . The eastbound roadway opened to traffic on December 10 , 1990 , at an approximate cost of \$ 89 @.@ 3 million (about \$ 196 million in 2015 dollars) . The westbound roadway was completed in July 1992 .

= = = Later developments = = =

The expressway portion east of I @-@ 805 to South Worthington Street was upgraded to a freeway in the late 1990s , and a HOV lane opened in each direction , east of I @-@ 805 only . The first part from I @-@ 805 to near Woodman Street was finished in November 1993 . The second part was to begin the construction phase in 1994 ; this was complete by 1998 . The state legislature allowed for the relinquishment of SR 54 from the El Cajon city limit to I @-@ 8 to the City of El Cajon in 1999 , and the transfer took place that year .

The remaining expressway portion of SR 54 was replaced by a freeway in two phases in the late 1990s and the 2000s . The first phase corresponded with construction of SR 125 north of Jamacha Boulevard to SR 94 ; construction began in 1996 and was completed in 2003 . The second phase consisted of the construction of the SR 125 toll road and opened on November 19 , 2007 . While California Transportation Ventures owned the franchise on the tolled portion of SR 125 , the interchange with SR 54 was constructed with \$ 160 million (about \$ 186 million in 2015 dollars) of public funding . From 2005 to 2007 , 1 @,@ 500 @,@ 000 cubic metres (53 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 cu ft) of rock were blasted through in 160 separate explosions to allow for the interchange to be built . The project to convert the HOV lanes to regular mixed traffic lanes was authorized in 2006 . Caltrans determined that the lack of room for law enforcement to pull over those violating the carpool requirements , as well as a missing barrier separating the HOV lanes from regular traffic , made the lanes less effective . As of October 2014 , Caltrans was considering relinquishing the part of SR 54 from the SR 94 junction up to the El Cajon city limits to the County of San Diego .

= = Major intersections = =

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 entire route is in San Diego County .