

## Freeways of the South Bay

- Interstate 5
- Interstate 805

### Miles of New Boulevards Make San Diego Wonder City of Southland

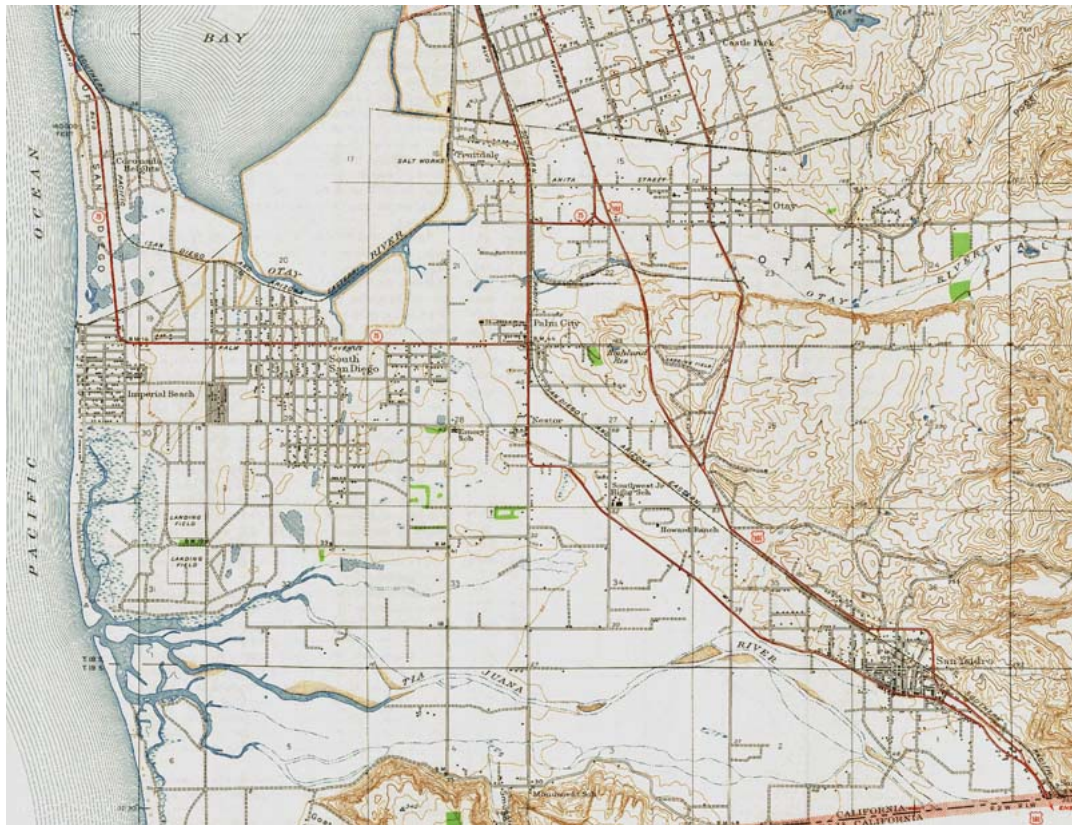


"Big Program Of City Road Development" (San Diego Union, Sept. 9, 1928). Route #1 on this map is the new Highway 101 from San Diego to the border following National Avenue. Route #2 is the old Highway 101 following Bay Blvd. through Palm City.

### Interstate 5

1909 - In 1909, the Legislature authorized the first State Highway Bond Act, for \$18,000,000 (approved by the voters in 1910). This act established a State I system and authorized construction of 3,052 miles of highways. construction began on California State Highway Contract No. 1: paving a segment of El Camino in Burlingame and South San Francisco (LRN 1 From San Francisco to Crescent City, 371.2 mi; LRN2 From San Francisco to San Diego, 481.8 mi). "LRN" the Pre-1964 Legislative Route Number. The highway was eventually designated US 101. In the special election of July 1, 1919, the voters approved a third bond issue for \$40,000,000. This act authorized creation or extension of 1,853 mi of highways. Funding was also helped in 1923, when the California's legis passed California's first gasoline tax. Revenue from the \$0.02-per-gallon tax was divided between the state and the counties for highway building and impro Signing didn't begin in California until 1928. US 101 was first signed in 1928. It began at the Mexican border, and ran north through San Diego along National Avenue, Main St., Harbor Drive, Pacific Drive, Midway Drive, Morena Blvd, and Pacific Coast Highway (all LRN 2, defined in 1909). (Faigin, Daniel P. C: Highways. <http://www.cahighways.org/>)

1934/11/18 - "New National City-San Ysidro Highway Open to Autos" - Highway 101 was opened last week in the South Bay, realigned and widened from San Ysidro, thru Palm City orange grove, three new bridges, two over Sweetwater, one over Otay; all old sharp turns been eliminated. (The San Diego Union 18, 1934)



The USGS map of 1943 shows the new route of Highway 101 following National Avenue to Anita Street, then south across the Otay valley to Dairy Mart Road, then along the railro Ysidro. The old route of Highway 101 turned south at Anita Street (at the "Coronado Cutoff"), west on Main Street and south on Bay Blvd. through Nestor, then southeast on San Ys

1943 - The Montgomery Freeway was constructed during 1950-51 as a southerly extension of a wartime project built in 1943. The previous project was 8.7 divided highway was built to serve the defense industry and is now Harbor Drive, but was called Harbor Blvd. then. US 101 followed this road from its sout terminus at Seventh St. in National City to the intersection with Pacific Highway. The California Highway Commission passed a resolution to construct a fre from the Mexican border at San Ysidro to the southern terminus at Harbor Blvd. on August 21, 1947. The freeway was given the name "Montgomery Freew honor of John J. Montgomery, a pioneer in the field of gliders who is said to have made the first glider flight in 1883 along his farm which was on the right c This freeway was upgraded eight lanes in 1973, eliminating almost all traces of the old freeway. (<http://www.gbcnet.com/ushighways/US101/101pics1.html>)

1950/05/25 - New super freeway to be named the John J. Montgomery freeway. The portion now under construction is from 10th st in NC to G st in CV, a le miles, at cost of \$1.3m by Charles McCloskey, R. E. Hazard and C. G. Willis and son. The work was started in Nov. 1949 to build a 4-lane road with 12 brid When the current 3-mile portion is completed, the road will done from Harbor Dr to G st. Plans are being formed for the next part from G st to Palm, and fr to the border. Traffic volume will be 13,000 cars at Palm and 23,000 cars at Harbor. (Chula Vista Star, May 25, 1950)

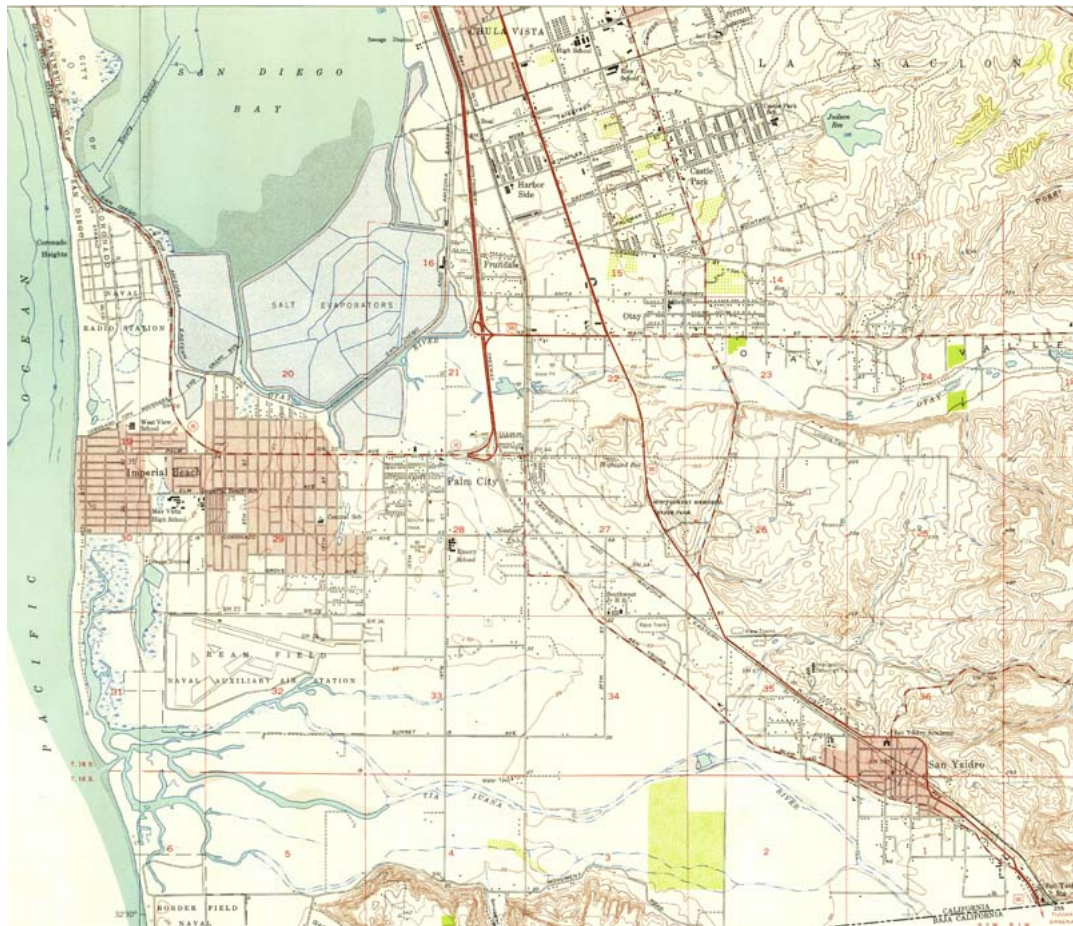
1951 - by 1951, the Montgomery Freeway section of Interstate 5 had been constructed, creating a direct connection between San Ysidro and the larger City of Diego. The freeway separated Calle Primera and the southern part of the original neighborhood from the rest of the community. Along with the freeway, San Boulevard was altered to six lanes to accommodate the high volume of traffic in 1953. It does not appear that this change affected the buildings on San Ysid Boulevard, and the thoroughfare has since been changed to four lanes. The widening of San Ysidro Boulevard further enforced the primacy of the commerci corridor's development and circulation pattern. By 1967, San Ysidro Boulevard was no longer used as the international highway, as these traffic patterns shi Interstate 5. (Historic Context Statement Final October 11, 2010 San Ysidro San Diego, CA Prepared for: California Office of Historic Preservation Prepare of San Diego City Planning & Community Investment 202 C Street, San Diego, CA 92101 & Page & Turnbull)

1951/02 - "Montgomery Freeway. Will Relieve Traffic in South San Diego." California Highways and Public Works, January/February 1951.

1951/10 - San Diego county has lost one of its most historic buildings, with the complete destruction of the old Arguello Ranch House, at La Punta, (near th Salt Works), to make way for the new Montgomery Freeway. Right where the building stood is one of the cloverleafs of the new freeway, and all signs of th are gone. (The Southern California Rancher, Oct. 1951)

1952/03/20 - State Highway Commission will relinquish rights to the 3 miles of National Ave. and move to Montgomery Freeway. (Chula Vista Star, Mar. 2

1952/04/24 - Montgomery Freeway through Chula Vista was officially open to traffic yesterday as far south as Palm city. This marks the completion of a litt than 75% of the project from 8th Ave. The State Hwy. commission announced they now have funds available to extend the highway 2 miles south of the Pal underpass to a point that will eliminate the often-referred-to death corner south of Palm. The new Montgomery Highway now offers divided four-lane traffic city to Palm city In Chula Vista there are turnoffs at E St. G St. H St. and else (Chula Vista Star, Apr. 24, 1952)



The USGS map of 1953 shows the Montgomery Freeway completed to Palm Avenue.

1955/04/28 - "The opening of Highway 75 Saturday symbolizes what has been going on, and if you haven't driven down there recently - well, you wouldn't old place. San Ysidro's celebration for the new Freeway will be later, and it, too, will throw the glare of public light on a rapidly changing area. With the cor the good highways will come more growth. The star of the South Bay is in its ascendancy." (Editorially Speaking by Jerry Freeman, Chula Vista Star-News, 1955.)

1955/06/20 - South Bay road budget to be \$816,276. "Biggest single job for the 1955-56 fiscal year is the \$181,000 for widening of National avenue to four between CV and NC, a county road department budget item. This includes a contract job estimated at \$103,000 for widening and redecking of the two bridg this stretch of the avenue." (Chula Vista Star-News, June 20, 1955.)

1955/06/30 - Montgomery freeway history outlined by engineer, began in 1949. (Chula Vista Star-News, June 30, 1955.)

1957/08/22 - Montgomery Freeway construction began south of L Street, including 3 new interchanges at Palomar, Palm City, and Dairy Mart Road, to be c June 1. The city is starting to widen H street from Third Ave to Broadway. (Star-News, Aug. 22, 1957)

1957-1958 - Montgomery Freeway (U.S. 101) between Mexican Border and National City upgraded to full freeway status with completion of interchanges at Mart Road, 27th Street, and Palomar Street.

1959/01/13 - Work on crosstown freeway to begin with interchange; construction of 8-story unit to start in summer at southwestern Balboa Park; top deck of carrying eight lanes of U. S. 101 over Cabrillo Freeway, will tower 72 feet (about eight stories) over the lower level. (San Diego Union, January 13, 1959)

1960 - As the 1960's approached, it was obvious that the "downtown revolution" was in full swing in San Diego. The auto had won. The California Division Highways had in its first construction stages a great curving freeway that would sweep across the top of the City, chopping off a corner of Balboa Park, as a new coastal Highway 101. The City Council as early as 1955 had approved the route of the crosstown freeway which, while it would provide easy access in the downtown area. (Pourade, City of the Dream, 1967, Chapter 8. )

1963/01/04 - Highway Program Progresses Rapidly. Highway construction in San Diego County moved at a last pace last year all current plans indicate a cc of brisk construction activity during the coming year. The California Division of Highways, in a year-end report, noted the completion of major projects and work planned for U.S. Highways 101 (Interstate 5), 80 (Interstate 8) and 395, and California Highways 78, 94 and 67. The major project completed on 101 I was the downtown section of the San Diego Freeway, including the four-level interchange at 395, from Palm boulevard to Palm street at a cost of \$8.7 millic construction are 4.3 miles from division street to Park boulevard and an interchange with 94 at a cost of \$14.7 million. Budgeted for fiscal 1963-64 are eight freeway between 8th street in National City and the connection with Montgomery Freeway at a cost of \$1.6 million, a six-lane freeway between Maple stree Washington street in San Diego at a cost of \$3.3 million, an eight-lane freeway between Via de la Valle near Del Mar and San Marcos road north of Encinita widening of 2 miles of highway to four lanes north of Del Mar Race Track. (The San Diego Union, Jan. 4, 1963)

1963/08/22 - Sign erected on Highway 101 facing Mexican border. (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 22, 1963. )

1963/08/29 - South Bay Freeway dedication Sept. 18, Highway 54 through Bonita, work started Nov. 1962. to be part of state 280 freeway connecting 101 and National (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 29, 1963. )

1963/10/17 - The "Coronado cutoff" in Otay is back in operation by board of supervisors who ordered removal of obstacles on Main St that prevented left turn northward on the cutoff. 1600 cars a day turned north up the cutoff to avoid a left turn at the signal at Main and National ave. Accidents had caused the change to prevent left turns from eastbound traffic on Main. Bob Grover of Grover Chemical Co. said his access to the freeway had been blocked because trucks are unable to make a left turn northward on National from Main because of the extreme angle. (Chula Vista Star-News, Oct. 17, 1963.)

1964 - Old U.S. Highway 80 extending east from I-5 to Arizona was officially renamed Interstate 8 in 1964 and in 1971 extended to Sunset Cliffs and Nimitz Boulevard. State Route 94 running parallel to I-8 became an alternate route east through the areas of Lemon Grove and La Mesa to Jamul, Dulzura and Camanche communities sparsely populated until recent times. Interstate 5, completed in 1971, spanned the Pacific Coast from Mexico to Canada; I-805, built between 1975, formed a connector from I-5, crossed I-8 and reached to the Mexican border at San Ysidro; and I-15, replacing portions of U.S. 395, U.S. 91 and others through Rancho Bernardo on its way to Escondido and points northeast.

1964/12/02 - map shows Highway 54 freeway route established in 1961 through Sweetwater Valley. The extension of Highway 54 from the intersection of National Road and Sweetwater Road to Interstate 5 shows two proposed routes being considered. (Chula Vista Bulletin, Dec. 2, 1964, Highways Folder, Sweetwater Civic Association (SVCA) Archives I, Bonita Museum, Bonita CA.)

1965/01/14 - photo of billboards along freeway, but will be prohibited by new city ordinance. Next month, state will begin to widen freeway from National south of Street, adding one lane to west side. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jan. 14, 1965.)

1965/04/08 - (photo) new billboard on the 101 for Imperial Beach. (Imperial Beach Star-News, Apr. 8, 1965)

1965/05/27 - San Ysidro woman's club donated replica of the El Camino Real mission bell that used to line the highway from the border to Sonoma. The replica will be placed every 10 miles. This first bell in the restoration of the Mission Trail will be placed in the doorway of the San Ysidro Police Dept. The bell was displayed at the 50th anniversary dinner last week of the club. Special honors went to Mrs. C. J. Buehere who holds the longest membership, 45 years, and was president 1953-54. The club was organized in 1915 as the Little Lander's Club with 15 women meeting as a sewing circle. Today the club has about 100 members. It has sponsored a playground at the San Ysidro Recreation Center. It has also planted trees including 10 trees at Southwestern College. In 1920 they were the first to contribute to a state wide project "Save Redwoods in Humboldt County" and for 45 years have contributed to "Pennies for Pines" project. (Chula Vista Star-News, May 27, 1965.)

1966/05/05 - Landowner Battles State on Freeway Plan. A last-ditch effort to the state Division of Highways from building an interchange at Interstate 5 and National in Chula Vista has been mounted by Robert Carlin, a Chula Vista landowner. He has filed a written protest with the highway department and asked the Chula Vista City Council to reverse its demands for an interchange at J street. Carlin owns 4.7 acres at the interchange of Interstate 5 and National. (Imperial Beach Star-News, May 6, 1966)

1969/02/06 - I-5 widening will not be complete until 1974. (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb. 6, 1969)

1969/04/24 - first steps to widen I-5 will be taken in a few months. (Chula Vista Star-News, Apr. 24, 1969)

1969/07/31 - E Street ramp under construction. (Chula Vista Star-News, July 31, 1969)

1969/08/10 - San Ysidro gets facelift in massive redevelopment (1st of 2 articles), due to I-805 displacement of people. Gersten is building a 398 unit apt on National Blvd for uprooted citizens, federally subsidized by the Model Cities program. (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 10, 1969.)

1969/11/02 - I-5 to border construction forces relocation of 230 San Ysidro families. (Chula Vista Star-News, Nov. 2, 1969)

1970/04/26 - Freeway will be widened to 8 lanes from Palm to San Ysidro turn-offs during next 3 yrs. (Chula Vista Star-News, Apr. 26, 1970)

1971/02/25 - Construction has started on I-5 widening bet K Street and Palm Ave. \$15 million I-5 widening work slated for spring 1973 finish. Construction project to widen Interstate 5 between K St. in Chula Vista and Palm Ave in Otay has begun. Completion is slated for the spring of 1972. State division of highways project engineer Milton Costello said Interchanges at Palm, Main St., Palomar, L and K Sts will be rebuilt. A new highway bridge will be built over National, and the railroad bridge now crossing the highway there will be replaced by a new one. Additionally, said Costello, a new diamond interchange will be constructed at J St. The highway itself will be widened from a four-lane road to an eight-lane one. The Chula Vista Environmental Control Commission got together this week when it queried Costello about proposed removal of some mature Eucalyptus trees on the east side of the freeway between E and F Sts. Commission chairman Dr Clifford Glenn asked Costello if there was any chance of using a retaining wall to preserve the trees. "I don't have any great hopes for the idea," answered. "Retaining walls are expensive and not exactly good-looking. If we take these trees out they will be replaced with a landscaped embankment, which will be more attractive than a wall." The engineer explained the trees had to come out since plans called for a steeper bank because of the new interchange. (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb. 25, 1971)

1972/10/26 - State has budgeted \$29 million for I-5 and I-805 construction next yr. (Chula Vista Star-News, Oct. 26, 1972)

1972/10/26 - connection of I-5 and I-805 in southern CV has been delayed due to adjournment of Congress. (Chula Vista Star-News, Oct. 29, 1972)

1973/01/21 - Daily commuters to and from the South Bay can look forward to completion of construction on Interstate 5 in July, according to the State Division of Highways. The widening process will have filled 23 dusty months since construction began in August of 1971 on the 10.1-mile stretch of highway between Chula Vista and the International Border. There are three portions of I-5 left to be widened this year which will cost taxpayers \$30.1 million. A 1.8 mile segment from the border to Sycamore St. in San Ysidro, a route now lined with blinking construction barricades and piles of red dirt, will open two more lanes in each direction. As the work progresses motorists dodge about as the road twists in strange patterns because of the construction disorder. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jan. 21, 1973)

1973/07/29 - In August the widening of a 9-mile stretch of I-5 in South Bay will be completed. (Chula Vista Star-News, July 29, 1973)

1973/08/02 - (photo) antique car opens expanded I-5 freeway from CV to border. (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 2, 1973.)

1976 - The 905 freeway was completed between I-5 and Otay Mesa Road in 1976. SR 905 was formerly routed on Otay Mesa Road, which had been in exis since at least 1927. Before it was SR 905, the route was first designated as part of SR 75, before it was redesignated as SR 117. The border crossing opened after several delays in obtaining funding for the construction of what would become SR 905. After becoming SR 905 in 1986, the highway was converted to expressway in 2000, and a freeway in 2010 and 2011.

1977/01/14 - (Photo) State Department of Transportation workers Lee Polhamus, left, and Ron Forsberg put the finishing touches to one of the signs design county's newest highway < State 117. This 6.7-mile road connects Brown Field with Interstates 5 and 805. It originally was numbered 75 but was changed to confusion with State 75 that runs through Imperial Beach into Coronado. The freeway section of the road extends from I-5 to Otay Mesa Road. The remaind regular two-lane, two-way road. (The San Diego Union, Jan. 14, 1977)

1983/04/28 - Calif. Coastal Commission gives approval to construction of the Sweetwater Flood Control Channel, a section of state Route 54, and widening Interstate 5. (Chula Vista Star-News, April 28, 1983)

1983/06/08 - The long-delayed Sweetwater River Flood Control Project took a leap forward yesterday as the House passed a bill providing \$4.9 million to s construction. The \$4.9 million for Sweetwater pleased San Diego County representatives who have been awaiting such action since 1972. Final authorizatio Sweetwater project was made possible when the federal government agreed in 1981 to buy 180 acres of land to protect the habitat of the least tern and clapp two endangered birds whose nesting grounds would have been disturbed by the flood control work. County lobbyist Roger Honberger praised Rep. Duncan Coronado, for his effort and persistence in making sure the funding was in the bill. "It wouldn't have happened without him," Honberger said. (San Diego Tr June 8, 1983)

1984/01/29 - I-5 widening to begin in April. Travelers both north and southbound on Interstate 5 can look forward to an eight-lane detour between 24th Stre National City and E Street in Chula Vista for the next three years, beginning in April, when construction commences on the first phase of the \$100 million fi funded I-5/State Route 54 freeway interchange and Sweetwater River flood control project. The initiation of the project marks the end of almost two decade planning and pushing through red tape to correct the bottleneck situation on the 1.5 mile stretch of I-5. The stretch of road has only three lanes in each direc than the standard four lanes along the interstate. Tied to the project is construction of a flood control channel along the Sweetwater River and construction o between I-5 and I-805 ening to Route 54 will be constructed on the dikes used to build the flood control project. During a press conference hew this week a Sen. Wadie Deddeh's office, Deddeh, flanked by long-time proponents of the plan < Mayor Greg Cox, Assemblyman Steve Peace, Neil Haas of Supervisor T Hamilton's office, and representatives from the offices of Congressman Jim Bates and Duncan Hunter < announced that the city would open bidding this Mo the contract to widen I-5. The bidding on the estimated \$7 million project will close in six weeks. The first contract calls for the building of a high speed eig detour that will probably be of higher quality than the existing road, said Bill Dotson, district director for the California Department of Transportation (Caltr widening the I-5 bottleneck, one of the areas with the highest rate of fatalities in California will begin in be eliminated. The four-phase project is expected to completed in four years, he said. The second phase, which will take place next year, will be to connect legs from I-5 to 54 and to dig the flood channel out e toward I-805. The third phase of the project involves the building of the interchange from Highland A venue, where a bridge will be built, to I-805 and the the channel out to I-805. A bridge will also be built across Edgemere, a move that will help to prevent ; future flooding that has plagued the area, Dotson sai final phase of the plan, to take place in 1988, will be the paving of Route 54 and some final interchange work and a traffic braid on I-5 to tie the freeway net together. Many of the differences over the project in the past centered around preserving the marshlands to the west of I-5 where two endangered bird specie the least tern and the light. . . (Imperial Beach Star-News, Jan. 29, 1984)

1984/05/11 - After 22 years of playing a major role in delaying construction of State Highway 54 through the Sweetwater Valley, the California least tern wi final say in the matter. A ground-breaking ceremony scheduled today in National City was ballyhooed as the "beginning of major construction" for an Inter State 54 interchange and for the Sweetwater River flood-control project. The first phase of the project will be a high-speed, eight-lane detour on I-5 between Street in National City and E Street in Chula Vista. "But we can't begin building the detour until Aug. 15 because this is the nesting season for least terns th state Department of Transportation (Caltrans) spokeswoman Shirley Webber. Army engineers will build the flood-control channel, part of which will separa eastbound and westbound lanes of State 54, which are to be built by Caltrans. That freeway will connect I-5 and I-805 with four lanes in each direction alo mile length. The flood-control channel will be 3.4 miles long. Part of it already has been built to skirt the Plaza Bonita shopping center. The remaining 1.9 i be concrete-lined, about 250 feet wide at the base and 300 to 400 feet wide at the top. Webber said the next phase of construction will include realigning I-5 channel to 24th Street, building a section of channel between San Diego Bay and Highland Avenue, reconstructing part of National City Boulevard over the and realigning the San Diego Trolley tracks near the freeway interchange. The cost of the second phase is estimated at \$40 million. It is scheduled to be cor late 1985 or in 1986. The \$33.6 million third phase will see extension of the channel to east of I-805. Phase 4, scheduled for completion in 1988 at a cost of million, will end the project. One of National City's contributions, \$128,000 to widen the National City Boulevard bridge over the Sweetwater channel, was this week by the City Council. Webber said today's ground-breaking would be the culmination of 22 years of almost unceasing pressure by local city, count and federal legislators and leaders for the flood-control channel and an east-west highway through the valley. (San Diego Evening Tribune, May 11, 1984.)

1989/05/26 - The final phase of Route 54, a freeway section that will follow the border between Chula Vista and National City, is expected to start in severa now that the state Transportation Commission has approved a \$20.5 million contract for the project. The east-west highway will stretch two miles from Inter to Interstate 5 before heading south toward E Street in Chula Vista. About 35,000 motorists are expected to use the new route daily once it is completed in la according to Jim Larson, a spokesman for the state Department of Transportation. The project was started in 1984. The California Transportation Commissio approved the contract for the last segment of the four-phase, \$100 million project last week. According to Larson, the route will eventually extend 16 miles t Cajon, but no timetable for that extension has been set. (San Diego Union, May 26, 1989)

1990/12/11 - A one-mile stretch of freeway connecting Interstate 5 with Interstate 805 in the South Bay opened yesterday, about six years after work began. Eastbound lanes opened to traffic yesterday afternoon. Westbound lanes near I-805 were scheduled to open today. Only three-fourths of the \$17 million proj been completed. The four ramps connecting I-805 to the new freeway are complete, but only two of the four at the I-5 interchange are finished. The final po the project will be completed in mid-1992, according to Caltrans. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Dec. 11, 1990)

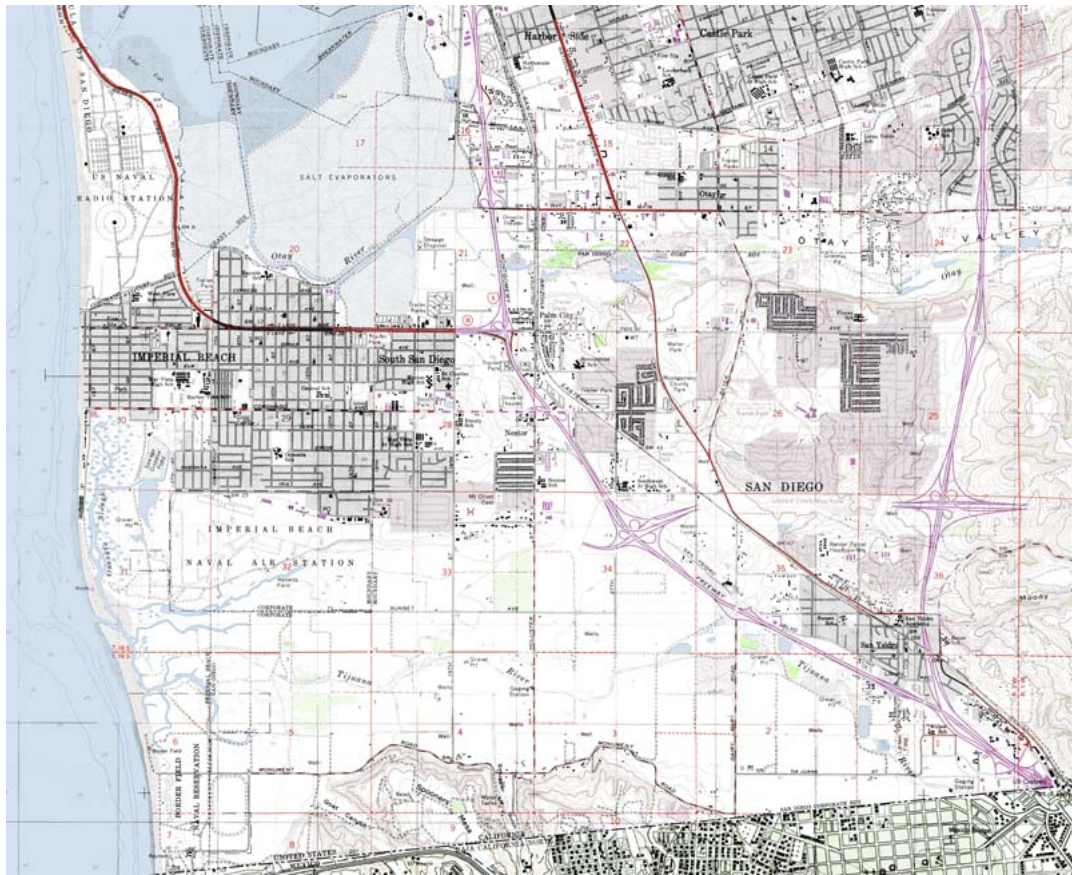
1992/01/15 - Four miles of road and the lives of some of the people who live along it will be forever altered in the name of progress. . Ninety parcels of mos residential land will eventually have to be acquired for the expansion of State Route 54, said Caltrans spokesman Kyle Nelson. Bonita and National City are

the communities to be affected. The SR 54 expansion project will be carried out in four stages. In every area, the existing expressway will be expanded into freeway and interchanges will be built. Stage one, slated to begin in fall of this year, will be an interchange at Valley Road in National City. The cost is estimated at \$14.9 million. Stage two is a Woodman Street interchange near Bonita, scheduled to start in summer 1993 at a cost of \$15.2 million. Also for summer 1993, there is a Briarwood Road interchange in Bonita at a cost of \$13.8 million. Nelson said eight of the 30 parcels of property needed for stage one have already been acquired. Stage two requires acquisition of 55 parcels, while stage 3 only requires the purchase of five. Though acquiring property will be a time-consuming process for Caltrans, Nelson said the long-term benefit of the project will be noticed. "It's going to impact traffic patterns in all of the South Bay when completed," Nelson said. "It will pull a lot of traffic off of a lot of local streets." Caltrans statistics indicate that 50,000 vehicles a day travel the current route. It is estimated that vehicles will use the route by 2010. Traffic volumes on Sweetwater Road, Reo Drive and Worthington Street should also be reduced by the expansion of the expressway, Caltrans said. A fourth stage of the project is on hold until a decision is made about the proposed State Route 125. SR 54 is being designed as a vital link with SR 125, but Caltrans and the private firm it has contracted to build the proposed toll road are the subjects of a lawsuit filed by the City of Chula Vista. Caltrans officials say SR 125 is needed to alleviate worsening traffic, and estimate an interchange with SR 54 would bring the total cost of the project to about \$100 million. "We're certainly hoping the road will be adopted," Nelson said. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jan. 15, 1992)

1992/07/18 - After years of labor and legal wrangling, the long-awaited Interstate 5-State Route 54 interchange project is set to fully open to commuters. The project will get a little less hectic for about 150,000 drivers who daily use that stretch of South County highways. Starting this weekend, motorists will be able to travel from Route 54 from the south on I-5, and by Monday, motorists traveling west on Route 54 will be able to connect to southbound I-5, Caltrans officials said. Also, travel from southbound I-5 onto E Street is expected to open today, and by mid-August, the connection from northbound I-5 to eastbound Route 54 will be open. Nelson said that before the upgrading of the area, the I-5 freeway portion between E and 24th streets "was the most dangerous stretch of any two-mile segment in the state of California." The \$20 million interchange is the final phase of an \$89.3 million project that began construction eight years ago. The complicated project extended Route 54 from I-805 to I-5; realigned the trolley; created a new river channel between National City and Chula Vista; and brought I-5 up to interstate standards. The Sierra Club temporarily stopped construction with a 1987 lawsuit, forcing the project's original price to go up by millions of dollars. The suit was settled when Santa Fe Land Co. donated about 300 acres of the Sweetwater Marsh to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a refuge for the endangered least tern and light-footed clapper rail birds that were threatened by the construction. The Army Corps of Engineers created 36 acres of estuary and 16 acres of new marsh, in addition to extending a 400-foot-wide flood control channel to San Diego Bay. Most of the project was federally funded, Caltrans officials said. State Route 54 is part of a 33-mile link of freeways around San Diego called the inner loop, which eventually will include the east-west Route 52 between La Jolla and Santee, and the north-south Route 125 from Santee to South County. It is being built as an alternative route to traditionally used freeways. The transportation corridor is seen as so important that Caltrans also plans to widen Route 54 and add four more miles of interchanges -- at Valley Road, West Street and Briarwood Road. (San Diego Union-Tribune, July 18, 1992.)

1994/02/03 - South Bay commuters are expected to gain some relief from traffic congestion on state Route 54 next year after Caltrans expands a two-mile stretch of the road from four to six lanes, officials said yesterday. "We're turning what's an expressway into a freeway," said Caltrans spokesman Kyle Nelson. Construction will start in May or June and finish by early summer of 1995, costing an estimated \$19.8 million. The 2.1 mile segment to be expanded starts west of Woodman Street and ends east of Briarwood Road. This is the second stage of a project along Route 54 that began west of Interstate 805 and ended west of Woodman Street, which was completed in November. Route 54 is part of a network of proposed roads in the region, known as the inner loop. The widening of this highway is designed to eliminate stop-and-go traffic, and thereby improve air quality and lessen fuel consumption, Nelson said. About 50,000 commuters drive Route 54 each weekday, and 100,000 vehicles are projected to be using the highway daily by 2010, officials said. Another project slated to start in 1996 would connect state routes 54, 125, 94 and Interstate 905. The estimated cost is \$146 million, Nelson said. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is spearheading the Route 54 widening projects through Proposition A, the 1987 local half-cent sales tax initiative for road improvements, a SANDAG official said. Meanwhile, Caltrans is about to start on a \$4.32-million seismic retrofitting program involving 11 bridges countywide, three of which cross the Sweetwater River. The aim of these projects is to support columns to withstand earthquakes. Project engineer Hanh Khuu said this retrofitting program has been in the works for about 18 months and was prompted by the recent earthquake in Northridge. Work on the three South Bay bridges, however, may proceed only between September and March so as not to disturb area wildlife, said Khuu. "It's a window of opportunity there and it has to do with the mating season of endangered birds," Nelson said. The three-lane northbound and southbound bridges where Interstate 805 crosses the Sweetwater River both will be retrofitted, Khuu said. The third bridge to be strengthened is a two-lane connector between northbound I-805 north and eastbound Route 54. (San Diego Union-Tribune, Feb. 3, 1994)

## Interstate 805



The USGS map of 1976 shows the widened Interstate 5 that replaced the Montgomery Freeway after 1971, and Interstate 805 that followed the route of the "Inland Freeway" proposed in 1955.

1955/04/21 - Map on front page of proposed 110-mile Inland freeway for navy - US 395 extension will become I-805 (Chula Vista Star-News, Apr. 21, 1955)

1955/05/19 - State leg passed bill for Highway 395 connection called the "Cloyed Route" from 101 north of Del Mar south thru Murphy Canyon to Wabash and southwest to Highway 75 near Palm City.

1956/02/02 - For the first time in history, general agreement has been reached between south bay cities and San Diego on Highway 395 plan to run along ea NC and CV. (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb. 2, 1956.)

1958/07/17 - map of proposed Belt Line Freeway (I-805) route from Sorrento Valley to border. (Chula Vista Star- News, July 17, 1958)

1958/07/24 - Belt Line Freeway Route Wins Federal OK, highway from Sorrento Valley to border approved by Federal Bureau of Public Roads. (Chula Vista News, July 24, 1958.)

1958/10/14 - A letter was read from the Planning Commission recommending that the City recommend to the State Division of Highways that the interchange, proposed Beltline Freeway with Montgomery Freeway be located between "D" Street and Sweetwater River, and that the City agree to the removal of the ramp and from the Freeway at "E" Street if the State so requested. It was moved by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman McMains and carried, that the City Administrator be directed to contact the State Division of Highways for a survey, and inform them emphatically that the Council does not wish to lose the County valley area. (City Council Minutes, October 14, 1958.)

1959/02/26 - In Sacramento, the Assembly Ways and Means Committee today approved a bill authorizing a route for the San Diego Beltline freeway. The freeway, when completed, will connect northern San Diego to San Ysidro and will be the southernmost segment of the San Diego freeway, linking the border to the San Fernando Valley. The route of the Beltline freeway, skirting the eastern boundaries of San Diego, National City and Chula Vista is still to be set by the Highway Commission, according to Jacob Dekema, district engineer for the state Division of Highways. Dekema said the Beltline freeway will be the ultimate connector between U. S. Highway 80, U. S. Highway 395, state Route 94 and Wabash freeway, and also will carry the heavy north-south traffic of U. S. Highway 101. (San Diego Union, February 26, 1959.)

1962/08/30 - Freeway map on page 1 showing the state's 20-year master plan, including US 101 [I-5], and 241 [I-805] and 281 [South Bay Expressway and 280 [Highway 54]. (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 30, 1962.)

1964/02/06 - Cutting ribbon on Chula Vista's E street extension is Miss Chula Vista, Penny Stroh, accompanied by (from l.) John Peacock, president of the Chamber of Commerce; Mayor Keith Menzel and Clinton D. Matthews, president of South Bay Highway Assn. The \$110,000 project between First Ave and Bonita Road eliminates a jog onto First from E and is a direct route from US 101 to proposed Highway 241 (I-805). (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb. 6, 1964)

1967/04/02 - I-805 freeway will remove some 300 homes in its path - photo of home being moved from 1116 Osage Ave. (Chula Vista Star, Apr. 2, 1967)

1967/05/04 - I-805 work starts at H Street. (Chula Vista Star News, May 4, 1967)

1968/08/01 - J Street partial interchange deleted in favor of full interchange at H St. (Chula Vista Star News, Aug. 1, 1968)

1968/09/12 - San Ysidro on verge of major social upheaval, I-805 will displace 1 of 6 San Ysidrans. This is the 1st of 2-part article. 85% of the city's popula Mexican American. (Chula Vista Star News, Sept. 12, 1968)

1968/12/22 - Work will begin this summer on 2.5 mile stretch of I-805 in CV. (Chula Vista Star News, Dec. 22, 1968)

1969/06/12 - Widening of F and J streets to handle traffic from I-5 and extension of Palomar before construction of I-805 recommended by Chamber of Con (Chula Vista Star News, June 12, 1969)

1969/08/10 - San Ysidro gets facelift in massive redevelopment (1st of 2 articles), due to I-805 displacement of people. Gersten is building a 398 unit apt on Blvd for uprooted citizens, federally subsidized by the Model Cities program. (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug. 10, 1969.)

1969/11/13 - Picture shows start of overpass at Orange Ave in Otay. Two other major interchanges will be at Telegraph Canyon Roads and Otay Valley Road Vista Star News, Nov. 13, 1969)

1970/06/07 - County supervisors have agreed to extension of H street and Palomar street east to connect with I-805. (Chula Vista Star News, June 7, 1970)

1971/01/14 - Mar. 1 opening targeted - Work on 3.8 miles of I-805 is about 93 % complete, residence engineer Hank Kreft said this week. Kreft said the \$4.1 project is progressing on schedule, with only planting, guard rail and sign installation and cleanup work remaining on the portion constructed between Teleg Canyon and Otay Valley Rds., to be opened March 1. Part of the job included grading and other earth work for succeeding portions of the road. Work on the began September, 1969. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jan. 14, 1971)

1971/02/28 - The first South Bay section of the new Interstate 805 will be officially dedicated tomorrow at ceremonies at the west side of the Naples St. brid Chula Vista. Assemblyman Wadie P. Deddeh of Chula Vista will be principal speaker at the ceremonies that will dedicate 3.8 miles between Otay Valley Road and Telegraph Canyon Rd. The Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce will sponsor the dedication at 1:30 p.m. James P. Mulvaney, vice-president of the San Diego will be master of ceremonies. Other speakers will be Jacob Dekema, district engineer for the state Division of Highways; Mayor Tom Hamilton and Chamber President Norval Richardson. The Chula Vista section of 805 is part of 28.5 miles being constructed from just north of the International Border Crossing at I south of Del Mar, where it rejoins Route 5. When completed by spring of 1975, the route will be the backbone of the San Diego freeway network, according highway division. (Chula Vista Star News, Feb. 28, 1971)

1971/06/13 - Barrio San Martin groundbreaking will start \$2 million housing project for families displaced by new freeway under the state's Ralph Act. (Chula Vista Star News, June 13, 1971)

1972/07/20 - CV planners have asked City Council to rezone area around I-805 and Telegraph Canyon Road to more commercial type development. (Chula Vista Star News, July 20, 1972)

1972/09/14 - Land around I-805 and Telegraph Canyon Road rezoned for one large shopping center. (Chula Vista Star News, Sept. 14, 1972)

1973/01/25 - Call for bids to construct southern section of I-805 from I-5, about half mile north of International Border to Otay Valley Road. (Chula Vista Star News, Jan. 25, 1973)

1974/06/20 - I-805 completion next year delayed because of strike of SD carpenters, cement masons and laborers. (Chula Vista Star News, June 20, 1974)

1975/07/20 - Ceremony Wed. to open the southern 10-mile section of I-805 from the border to Plaza Blvd in NC. (Chula Vista Star News, July 20, 1975)

1975/09/04 - Final section of I 805 opens to traffic today. The new freeway was built in 13 segments and that last 3.2-mile stretch is really the link that makes freeway usable for most South Bay motorists. Until now, South Bay residents had only a 10.2-mile stretch open from Plaza Blvd. south to the border, where freeway linked up again with I-5. That segment opened July 23, and opening ceremonies there were a somewhat premature celebration of the entire systems although it was another six weeks away. With the opening of Interstate 805, the South Bay and the international border will be easier to reach by San Diego of-the-area drivers. The completion of I-805 will give drivers a look at a part of the South Bay many have never seen, its virtually undeveloped backcountry with rolling hills and residential sections. It is away from the billboards, railroad tracks, factories and Navy ship that mark the horizon along neighboring I-5 to the north. The exposure of the eastern edge of Chula Vista and National City is expected to be an impetus for growth in that area. Already there are plans for major commercial developments at I-805 and future Highway 54 in National City, a regional shopping center to replace the Bonita Golf course. A restaurant, a motel and Mexican insurance company is planned for the Bonita Rd. interchange in Bonita. Just what will take place at the H St. interchange in Chula Vista is unknown. It was a proposed regional shopping center and a sports arena defeated by voters. (Chula Vista Star-News, Sept. 4, 1975.)

1977/01/14 - The San Diego City Council has approved a proposal to widen a major section of Beyer Boulevard in San Ysidro, but has not yet determined how to finance a portion of it. The \$1.8 million project is planned between Dairy Mart Road and Interstate 805 and has been protested by several adjoining landowners concerned about plans for an assessment district to pay for part of the widening. The proposed assessment district is for about \$328,000, but the council, in its decision, delayed for future consideration whether to proceed with it. About 40 parcels of property would be assessed under the plan. A hearing on the proposal is planned for the near future. The city proposes to condemn some land as part of the widening, which will involve taking land on both the north and south sides of the street. Two structures on the north side of Beyer Boulevard and two on the south side will be removed. (The San Diego Union, Jan. 14, 1977)

1977/02/17 - The barren stretches of Interstate 805 in Chula Vista may soon be landscaped with 1,330 trees donated by local individuals and organizations. The Department of Transportation reportedly will do the planting. (Chula Vista Star News, Feb. 17, 1977.)



