



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce

TUESDAY | Nov. 29, 2005

THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE:



Keep Options Open on 405



Coming up at the Chamber

[View all upcoming events on our web calendar.](#)

THU | Dec. 1
Member Orientation
[more info](#)

THU | Dec. 1
New Member Reception
[more info](#)

FRI | Dec. 2
Invest in the Future
[more info](#)

WED | Dec. 7
Health Care Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

THU | Dec. 8
Entertainment Industry Business Council
[more info](#)

FRI | Dec. 9
Technology Industry Council
[more info](#)

FRI | Dec. 9
Accenture Pancakes & Politics
With Councilmembers Jose Huizar, Bill Rosendahl and Herb Wesson
[more info](#)

TUE | Dec. 13
Referral Network
A Growing Companies program sponsored by Wells Fargo
[more info](#)

THU | Dec. 15
Economic Development and Land Use Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

THU | Dec. 15
Environmental Quality Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

TUE | Dec. 20
Transportation and Goods Movement Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce is the voice of business in L.A. County. Founded in 1888, the Chamber promotes a prosperous economy and quality of life in the Los Angeles region. For more information, visit www.lachamber.org

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It is hard to believe that in Southern California, in this day and age, anyone would try to place their personal interests above the movement of people and goods. The fact of the matter is no more pressing problem exists--and is in need of a solution--than our transportation crisis. Much like water early last century, transportation will be our Achilles heel if we don't get our act together, and soon.

You may remember a couple years ago when Caltrans floated several ideas about improving the 101 Freeway in the San Fernando Valley and homeowner groups stopped this dialogue in its tracks. Don't look now, but it's happening again: Only this time it's the 405 Freeway in the crosshairs.

And this time, we need to be there and not let lawmakers force Caltrans to back off from looking at *all* options, not just the ones that will have the least impact.

[According to an article](#) in the *Los Angeles Daily News*, Caltrans is "quietly" looking at a series of options to improve the 405 through the Sepulveda Pass, a stretch of freeway that seems to be in constant gridlock seven days a week, and at almost all hours of the day. And in that report, the usual suspects are pledging to stop anything that impacts private property or double-decks any part of the freeway.

This is a shame. Because of the objections of a few, options that will benefit most everyone else are squelched, without an opportunity for discussion.

At this point I don't know what is best for solving the 405 dilemma. Whatever it is, it will cost money and will require everyone to give in on something. We probably lack enough land to widen the roadway adequately through the Sepulveda Pass, and the prospect of transit probably will be so expensive as to make it unfeasible. But for now, I don't know, nor does anybody else.

And that's the point.

When it comes to transportation solutions, we are at a place where we cannot afford to reject anything out of hand -- or allow political pressure from a few to dictate the alternatives.

Homeowner groups point to the \$135 million in federal funds that Rep. Howard Berman secured for a HOV lane as the project they'll support. Rep. Berman did great work getting the money and, while I agree that an HOV lane will help a little in the Sepulveda Pass, it is not a long-term cure. And let's not forget that the project has yet to be approved, thanks to the objections of the state engineers' union. You may recall that [I wrote about that debacle](#) several months ago.

We simply cannot allow Caltrans to bow down to pressure again and keep an option off the table because some vocal people don't like it. Not only should double decking be included as an option, Caltrans should include other possibilities, such as a dedicated bus lane similar to the Orange Line or an elevated transit line for a portion of the way.

All too often on projects that would benefit many, NIMBYism has interfered with unacceptable results that please the few. We should consider all options and implement the best and most cost effective solution available to us. If you have an opinion about what should be done about the 405 freeway in the Sepulveda Pass, contact Caltrans at 213.897.3656 or use the [District 7 online feedback form](#) to give them your opinion.

And that's *The Business Perspective*.

Russell J. Hammer
President & CEO
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

The Business Perspective is an award-winning weekly opinion column by Rusty Hammer, President & CEO, L.A. Area Chamber

L.A. Business THIS WEEK

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