

California Highways and Public Works

Official Journal of the Department of Public Works
State of California



MAY-JUNE
1928

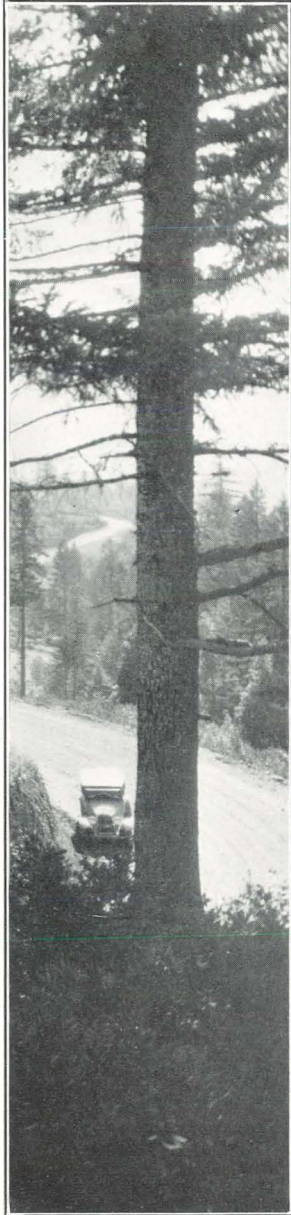


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Breaking the Newhall Bottleneck

By S. V. CORTELYOU, District Engineer, Los Angeles

THE survey for a new entrance road to the San Fernando Valley from the north has been completed. While financial and legal phases of the project are yet to be determined, the survey has shown that this will relieve the many traffic jams that have occurred in the past between Saugus and San Fernando.

The survey is for a new road over that portion of the route lying outside of the city limits of Los Angeles. The survey and preparation of plans for sections within city territory will be ready soon.

State, county and city engineering departments and the Automobile Club of Southern California have been working on a traffic congestion relief plan through the Newhall Pass for more than a year. This plan is declared to be the most logical yet devised.

DISTANCE REDUCED

The new road will leave the "Ridge" road about midway between Castaic and Saugus and extend southeasterly into and through Gavin and Weldon canyons to a junction with the San Fernando road just south of the viaduct over the Southern Pacific Railway at Tunnel Station. In addition to improved alignment and the elimination of a dangerous grade crossing for San Joaquin Valley travel, the new road will shorten the distance between the points mentioned about 1.2 miles.

From a point on the San Fernando road just north of the viaduct over the Southern Pacific Railway at Tunnel Station, it is the intention to extend a new road along the northerly side of the railway tracks to a point a short distance below the Cascades on the aqueduct. From this point the road will continue easterly to a connection with the state highway at the north city limits of San Fernando.

SOUTH ROUTE PLANNED

From a point on the south roadway near the Cascades it is proposed to extend a new highway south through the San Fernando Valley and the Santa Monica mountains to the west coast; there to connect with the state coast highway extending from Oxnard to San Juan Capistrano.

Contracts for the widening and repaving of San Fernando road between Tunnel Station and San Fernando and between San Fernando and Burbank have recently been

awarded; also, the state is planning extensive improvements in the present road through Newhall tunnel and pass.

These improvements, when completed, will enable travel to enter the metropolitan area of Los Angeles from the north with a minimum of interference and will permit of a distribution of travel from the upper end of the San Fernando Valley direct to points of destination without the inconvenience and annoyance of passing through already congested districts. This improvement will be of inestimable value to southern California.

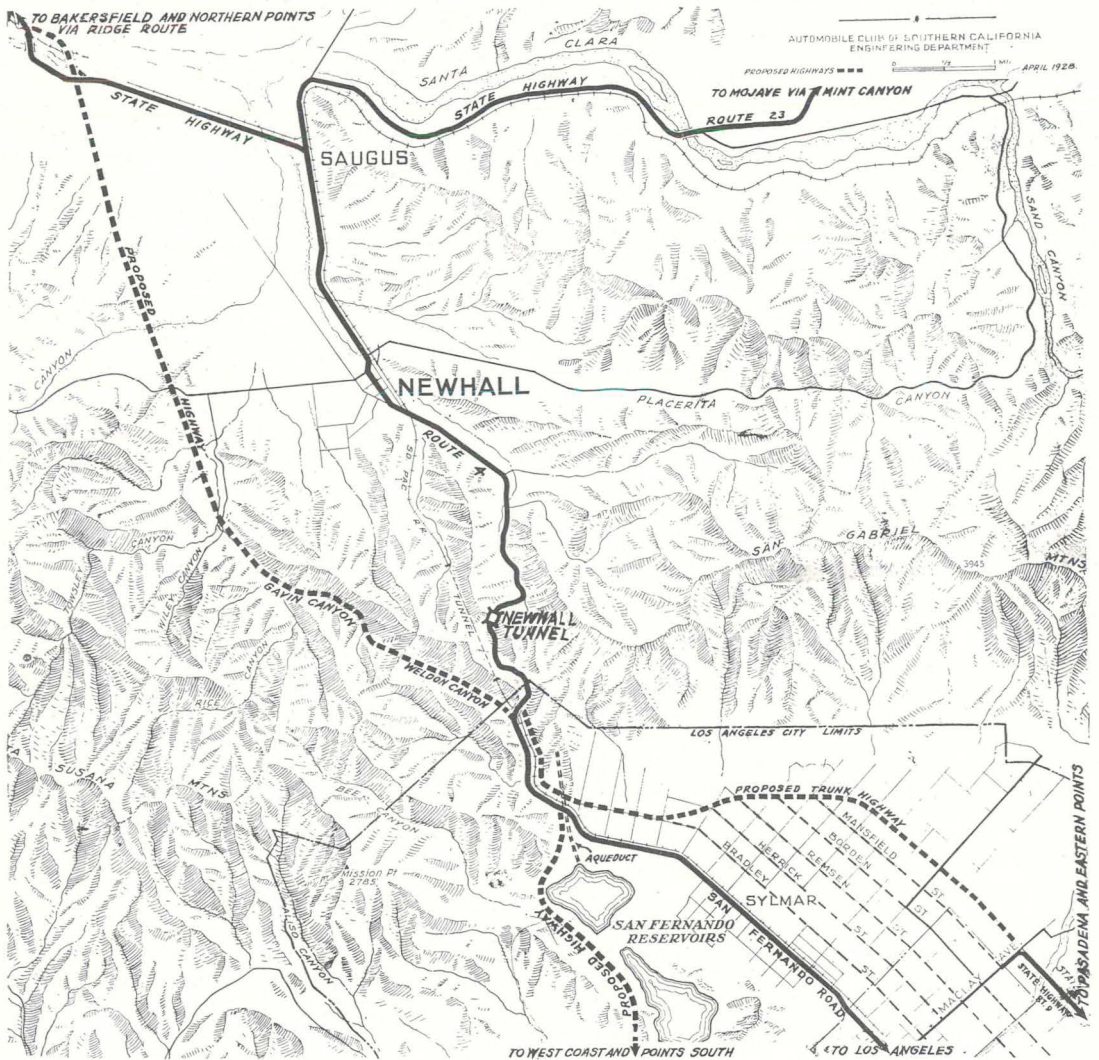
The improvements noted above will be constructed by the state and city and county of Los Angeles. The state work will be confined to that portion lying without the city limits, and the city and county to that portion within the city. The two divisions of the work, however, are inseparable and the state will not expend money upon its section until definite assurance has been made that the city and county will carry out their part of the plan, for travel would still be "bottlenecked" at and below Tunnel Station.

Walled in as it is on three sides by the San Gabriel, Santa Susana and Santa Monica mountains and the Pacific Ocean, Los Angeles County is vitally concerned in maintaining adequate entrance roads. Entrance from the north is confined to the Cajon and Newhall, and from the west to the Santa Susana and Calabasas passes.

The Newhall Pass is of particular importance to the south. Since that memorable day in December, 1854, when Phineas Banning, seated on the box of a Concord stage drawn by six mustangs, drove over the old pack trail to the summit and "nose-dived" down the north slope, this route has been the only direct connection between Los Angeles and the San Joaquin Valley.

Fort Tejon was established in 1854, and following Banning's adventure the merchants of Los Angeles were quick to see the trade possibilities in this route and set about to raise, by public subscription, funds to construct a wagon road over the Newhall Pass. By February, 1855, the road had been improved and in that month the first wagon train, forerunner of a mighty commerce, passed over the new road en route to the fort and the Kern River country.

From 1910 to 1913 the present road and tunnel were constructed by Los Angeles



MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF SUGGESTED HIGHWAY

County through a bond issue. That part of the road lying between Saugus and the north city limits of Los Angeles was made a part of the state highway system in 1916 and is maintained by the state. The original improvement, however, remains as constructed by the county.

In 1910 when Los Angeles County started the improvement of the Newhall Pass, there were registered in California, 44,132 automobiles. The population of Los Angeles County in that year was 504,131.

In 1927, Los Angeles County registered 689,902 automobiles and the population of the county was estimated to be more than 2,250,000 people.

A traffic census taken for a 24-hour period in August, 1920, by the Automobile Club of

Southern California, showed a total of 1207 vehicles using the San Fernando road between the north city limits and Saugus. A recent traffic check on this section shows a total of 23,150 vehicles during a 24-hour period.

It will be noted that the plan contemplates the ultimate extension of the principal streets of San Fernando westerly to an intersection with the proposed trunk highway. This will enable travel to filter into San Fernando and points along the northerly side of the Southern Pacific tracks along more direct lines. It is coming to be generally recognized that congestion on business streets tends to depreciate property values and encourages the development of business centers in less congested localities.