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State Assemblyman Jim Frazier, D-Oakley, speaks at a ribbon cutting for the first phase of the I-80/I-680/SR-12 interchange project on Tuesday. (Robinson Kuntz/Daily Republic)

Fairfield Frazier says big transportation bill to be unveiled

By **Todd R. Hansen** From page A1 | August 10, 2016

FAIRFIELD — Assemblyman Jim Frazier, accompanied by a kind of handbome drum roll by members of the audience, told a gathering of elected officials and other transportation brass Tuesday that details of a new comprehensive state funding bill would soon be released.

Frazier, D-Oakley, offered little in the way of details except to note that the transportation package, in conjunction with Sen. Jim Beall, D-Campbell, will cover the estimated \$6 billion in road and highway needs in the state.

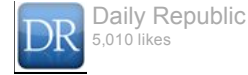
“We are right now putting the final touches on it,” Frazier said.

Frazier said his and Beall’s versions should be introduced in the next couple of weeks. He also promised the kind of “reform language” voters want to see to emphasize efficiency.

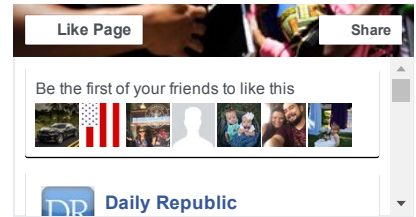
Frazier’s comments were in sharp contrast to the local funding outlook as well as Rep. John Garamendi’s assessment that Congress had failed Americans by not providing enough funding for infrastructure.

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“We have a five-year transportation bill. That’s the good news,” Garamendi, D-Walnut Grove, said at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Interstate 80/Interstate 680/Highway 12 interchange project. “The bad news is there are only \$1 billion of new money each year.”

Garamendi said of the applications for the 212 projects seeking funding in the last round, only 18 were funded, and other grant funding sources also were insufficient.

And while there was a lot of applause and back-slapping for what has been accomplished, there was a general feeling that funding for future projects was in limbo.

That could include the next six phases of the current interchange project, which has an estimated price tag of \$740 million.

The first phase – or package as the state Department of Transportation refers to it – cost \$110 million, including \$64 million for construction.

Solano County Supervisor Jim Spering lamented the failure of Measure H and again noted that Solano is the only Bay Area county that does not have a sales tax measure for transportation.

“It really was a good effort that fell short and hopefully we will attempt this again in the future,” Spering said.

He noted the successes of using toll money for projects, but said in the light of lower gas tax revenues, a local source of transportation funding is needed.

Another critical message raised during the ceremony is that the work is critical – and offers its own economic return.

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Garamendi said that for every dollar spent, there is \$3.54 in economic activity generated, and further said that 21,650 jobs are created with every \$1 billion in funding.

“It impacts everything we do, and all the services we have,” Spering said of the regional transportation system.

Reach Todd R. Hansen at 427-6932 or thansen@dailyrepublic.net.



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