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## Lane work cost rises

### \$30 million more will be required

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The cost of adding car-pool lanes through the congested interchange of the Antelope Valley Freeway and Interstate 5 jumped an additional \$30million because of design issues and price increases in construction materials, transportation officials said.

One of the top transportation priorities for northern Los Angeles County officials, the freeway-widening project was estimated to cost \$81million as recently as 2005. After a second big jump, the latest estimate is \$157million, with \$127million in funding.

"This significant cost increase was due to changes in Caltrans (state Department of Transportation) seismic design criteria standards that the project has to comply with, the need to redesign the bridge widening at a single location to meet the Metrolink vertical clearance standards, and the continuous rising of the concrete and steel prices," Caltrans project manager Osama Megalla said in a letter to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

The MTA's planning and programming committee is expected to vote Wednesday to come up with the extra \$30million. Design work on the project is about 95percent done, and it's expected to go out for bids in April.

North Los Angeles County officials said the new lanes are vital for serving commuters from the Antelope and Santa Clarita valleys. Tens of thousands of commuters crowd the interchange daily.