



City of Arts & Innovation

Mobility & Infrastructure Committee Memorandum

TO: MOBILITY & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE DATE: MARCH 14, 2024

FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

**SUBJECT: TRANSPORTATION PROJECT PRIORITIZATION FOR RIVERSIDE COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (RCTC) DRAFT TRAFFIC RELIEF PLAN**

ISSUE:

Review and prioritize a list of projects to be included in the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) Traffic Relief Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Mobility & Infrastructure Committee review and approve staff's recommended priority ranking of projects to be included in the Riverside County Transportation Commission Traffic Relief Plan: (1) SR 91 & Adams Interchange, (2) Van Buren Boulevard Widening, (3) Columbia/Center St Interchanges, (4) I-215 Express Lanes, (5) SR 91 Auxiliary Lanes, (6) 91/215/60 Interchange Improvements, and (7) SR-91 Widening Pierce to I-15.

BACKGROUND:

On February 6, 2024 the City Council received an informational update from the Riverside County Transportation Commission on the Draft Traffic Relief Plan. In October 2023, the Commission approved the Draft 2024 Plan for circulation and public input. RCTC staff are conducting extensive outreach to hear from Riverside County residents on their transportation needs and feedback to the Plan. This feedback and input will inform the Commission as they finalize the Plan later this Spring. Funding of the plan would be reliant on a potential one cent sales tax measure, which is forecasted to generate \$20B in revenues for western Riverside County throughout the plan's 30-year lifespan. During discussion of the RCTC Plan, the Council shared support for the many projects listed within the staff report.

By law, RCTC is the regional transportation agency for Riverside County, which is governed by local elected officials of every city and all five members of the County Board of Supervisors. RCTC has statutory authority to propose and implement voter-approved sales taxes for transportation projects, and for distribution of some state and federal transportation funds. RCTC serves as an advocate and representative for the transportation interests of Riverside County on policy and funding issues.

RCTC has requested that local agencies provide a priority-ranked listing of projects to be considered for inclusion in the Traffic Relief Plan. As the City is embarking on the development of

its General Plan, which will include a detailed Circulation Element and Implementation Plan, the City will plan to revisit and update the priority ranking and project listing for Riverside projects within the RCTC Traffic Relief Plan. In the February 6, 2024 staff report introducing the RCTC Plan to City Council, staff noted that the project listing would be brought back to the Mobility and Infrastructure Committee for prioritization.

On February 8, 2024 the Mobility and Infrastructure Committee considered the Public Works Department's proposed Grade Separation Priority Ranking list. Staff recommendations were based on analysis of roadway usage by passenger vehicles, buses, pedestrians, and bicycles, along with historical collision data, freeway connectivity, and funding eligibility. After discussion, the Committee continued the item and requested that staff develop additional analysis in support of the proposed priority ranking list.

Grade separations follow a separate process for review and prioritization by RCTC and the California Public Utilities Commission, and a decision regarding their ranking does not need to be furnished to RCTC at this time. City staff will take the appropriate steps to advance selected grade separation projects following the City Council's advisement.

DISCUSSION:

Priority Ranked Project List

On February 5, 2024, City staff met with RCTC staff who shared that only specific projects would need to be prioritized by the City for inclusion in the Plan. These are projects deemed to be capacity and operational enhancements on the regional / State highway network. These projects will be specifically listed in the Traffic Relief Plan.

Staff have assembled the below priority-ranked list of projects for the Committee's consideration. In preparing the list, staff considered both project readiness and potential benefits for residents:

1. State Route 91 and Adams Interchange: This project will reduce congestion and improve traffic circulation to meet existing and projected demands at the SR-91/Adams Street Interchange. Project Approval and Environmental Documentation for this project is nearing completion with construction anticipated to begin in Fall 2027. The City anticipates total costs for the project will exceed \$130M.
2. Van Buren Boulevard Widening: This project would widen Van Buren Boulevard from approximately King Avenue (County) eastward to Bountiful Street (east of Wood Road), approximately 2.5 miles. The project would widen the road from four lanes to six lanes and would include right turn pockets at the major intersections. This is a joint project, led by the County of Riverside, which was placed on hold for insufficient funding.
3. Columbia Avenue / Center Street Interchanges: Each of these interchanges is listed within the recently adopted Northside Specific Plan; however, only Columbia Avenue falls within the City of Riverside's boundaries. As a temporary / interim improvement, the Columbia Avenue interchange ramp intersections should be considered for signalization, while reconfiguration is ultimately needed to serve the Northside and Hunter Park Business Center.

4. I-215 Express Lanes: Similar to the 91/215/60 interchange, congestion along the I-215 corridor regularly pushes traffic onto City roadways, including goods movement traffic. Improvements to the corridor to add express lanes alongside potential general-purpose lanes could help to relieve traffic along City roadways.
5. SR 91 Auxiliary Lanes (Various Locations): Construct auxiliary lanes, connecting on and offramps, at various locations along State Route 91. This project would improve corridor operations and safety.
6. 91/215/60 Interchange Enhancements: Congestion through this major interchange routinely encourages cut-through traffic on City roadways. Improvements to the interchange would relieve City roadways and residents.
7. State Route 91 Widening – Pierce Street to I-15: The project would widen State Route 91 between Pierce Street and Interstate 15, with the intent of improving operations.

A map of the priority-ranked projects is shown below in Figure 1. While not included in the priority-ranked list, the City remains supportive of the Cajalco Road Widening Project, which is already included in RCTC's current transportation relief plan.

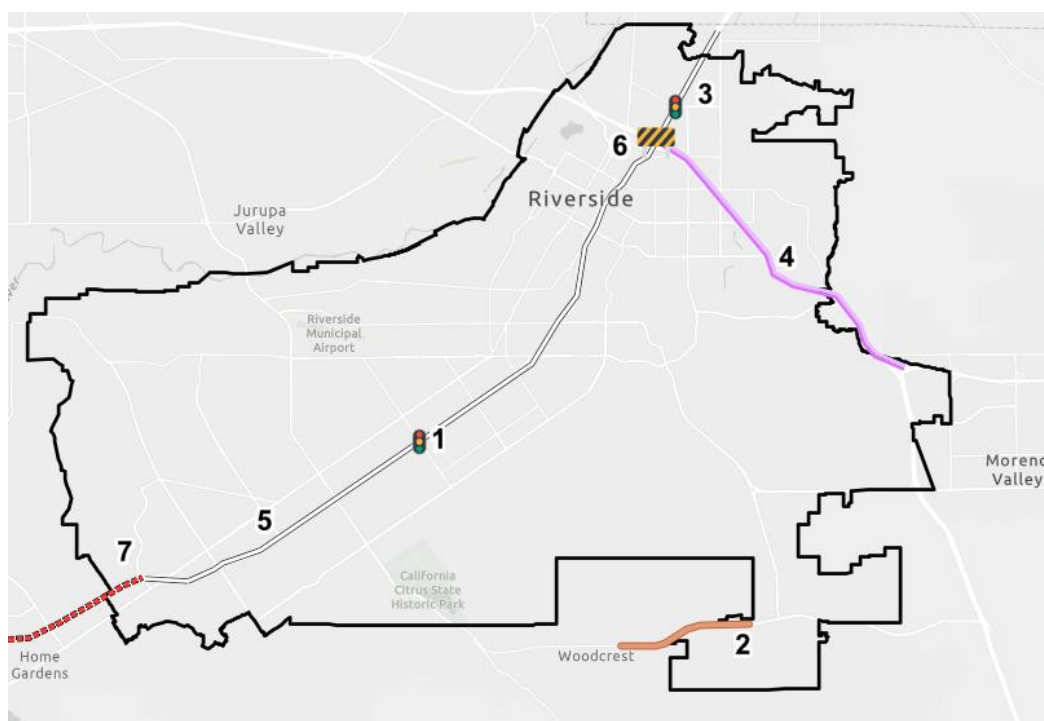


Figure 1: Map of priority-ranked projects

Additional Projects

The RCTC Draft Traffic Relief Plan identifies seven categories of investment. These categories are broadly defined and allow for flexibility in plan expenditures throughout the envisioned 30-year lifetime of the plan. Local agencies will have opportunities to seek funding for individual projects not explicitly listed in the Plan which qualify under the plan category descriptions.

A brief description of each plan category is shown below, along with the envisioned percentage of total plan investment (\$20B for Western Riverside County). City Staff have advocated for additional funds to be allocated to the Safe Streets and Roads category and for these funds to be placed under direct local control. Similarly, Staff have requested that local agencies with an adopted active transportation master plan and/or complete streets ordinance be directly allocated funds for Active Transportation projects. Full descriptions of each plan spending category are included in the Draft Traffic Relief Plan (Attachment 1).

1. Safe Streets and Roads [8% of Plan Investment]:
 - a. Pothole Repair and Maintenance
 - b. Roadway Improvements
 - c. Traffic Calming
 - d. Improvements to Railroad Crossings
 - e. Median Barriers
2. Highways [25% of Plan Investment]:
 - a. Improving traffic flow on the state highway system
 - b. Innovative technologies
 - c. Interchanges
3. Public Transportation [25% of Plan Investment]:
 - a. Increased frequency and safety of trains and buses
 - b. New tracks, parking and stations
 - c. Micro Transit
 - d. Zero-emission buses
4. Regional Connections [12% of Plan Investment]:
 - a. Multimodal transportation corridors
 - b. Relieve congestion on local roads & highways
 - c. Improve safety
5. Commuter Assistance [2% of Plan Investment]:
 - a. Expand freeway service patrol
 - b. Maintain carpool & vanpool services
 - c. Park & Ride lots
6. Active Transportation [3% of Plan Investment]:
 - a. Improve safety and expand access
 - b. Sidewalks and bicycle lanes
 - c. Recreational trails
7. Environmental Mitigation [25% of Plan Investment]:
 - a. Support the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan
 - b. Mitigate Vehicle Miles Traveled
 - c. Promote public health
 - d. Support transit-oriented development and housing

Alongside the list of priority-ranked projects, City Staff will provide the below list of projects eligible for funding through the Plan. This list of unfunded infrastructure projects will be updated as needed and would not require an amendment to RCTC's plan. Staff envision that the forthcoming General Plan Circulation Element Update will result in additions and modifications to the below-listed projects, which are shown below in no particular order:

1. City of Riverside Priority Grade Separations (following adoption of the priority ranked list)
2. Downtown Pedestrian Bridge
3. Santa Ana River Trail – Enhancement & Regional Connectivity
4. Gage Canal – Trail completion + Regional Connectivity

5. Pedestrian bridge over RR XING for trails network (University Neighborhood)
6. La Sierra Metrolink Station Improvements & development
7. Downtown Metrolink Station Improvements & development
8. Citywide implementation of the Riverside PACT – bikeways and pedestrian connectivity
9. Citywide Intelligent Transportation Systems
10. Continual bridge inspection and repair funding
11. Regional transit connections to: Ontario Airport, Palm Springs Airport, and San Diego County
12. Riverside Fleet Conversion to Zero Emissions & Supporting Infrastructure
13. Implementation of concrete approaches at signalized intersections in industrial zones
14. 91, 215, 60 Coordinated Adaptive Ramp Metering
15. Stop for the Coachella Valley Rail in Downtown Riverside

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item aligns with **Strategic Priority 6 – Infrastructure, Mobility, and Connectivity** by improving safety, circulation, and providing critical infrastructure for our community to thrive and is in accordance with **Goal 6.2** – Maintain, protect, and improve assets and infrastructure within the City's built environment to ensure and enhance reliability, resiliency, sustainability, and facilitate connectivity.

Furthermore, this project aligns with each of the four Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – Riverside is transparent and makes decisions based on sound policy, inclusive community engagement, involvement of City Boards and Commissions, and timely and reliable information. Activities and actions by the City serve the public interest, benefit the City's diverse populations, and result in greater public good.
2. **Equity** – The City seeks to provide a safe and reliable roadway network to schools, places of work, shopping centers and to various neighborhoods, thereby improving quality of life for all residents.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Pursuit of grant funding leverages City funds to secure State and Federal funding to construct large and complicated projects. Grant pursuit shows the City is responsive to community priorities by pursuing available funding opportunities to expedite critical infrastructure projects.
4. **Innovation** – Riverside seeks to deliver innovative projects to meet residents' needs while minimizing costs and securing outside funding sources.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Projects envisioned for Riverside roadways will comply with the Complete Streets Ordinance, seeking to improve roadways for all users.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by: Nathan Mustafa, Deputy Public Works Director / City Engineer
Approved by: Gilbert Hernandez, Public Works Director
Certified as to

availability of funds: Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. RCTC Draft Traffic Relief Plan
2. Presentation