

Outstanding Local Streets and Roads Project

Award Nomination



Temescal Canyon Road Widening Project

Dawson Canyon and Dos Lagos Segments

Presented by:

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Project Need

Temescal Valley, a mostly rural unincorporated area, is located on the west edge of the County of Riverside between the cities of Lake Elsinore and Corona, approximately 50 miles southeast of Los Angeles. Interstate 15 running through this narrow valley serves as a transportation corridor for regional commuter traffic originating from bedroom communities as far south as Temecula and traveling into workplaces in the Los Angeles area.

The corridor had already seen an increase in regional traffic due to steady housing development over the past decades. The Riverside County Transportation Commission was addressing the regional growth with 91 freeway and I-15 express lane projects in Corona. However, the express lanes did not continue south of Corona through Temescal Valley.

In 2015, upon completion of major widening to the state 91 freeway in Corona, traffic congestion improved on the 91 freeway, but unexpectedly created a bottlenecked on the unwidened portion of I-15 south of Corona. As a result, freeway commuters sought an alternative route to escape the congestion.

Within the Temescal Valley, the only north-south corridor parallel to the I-15 freeway was Temescal Canyon Road — a rural 2-lane road located immediately adjacent to the freeway, which had often served as an emergency bypass route. However, severe congestion on the freeway no longer just occurred during emergencies. Instead, severe congestion occurred every day. There was a chorus of complaints from local families in Temescal Valley that their morning trips to drop off children at school had turned into one-hour round trip commutes.

In response, the County of Riverside's Transportation Department immediately sought funding for congestion relief by widening Temescal Canyon Road from a 2-lane rural road to 4-lane Major Highway, as designated on the County's General Plan. The Riverside County Transportation Commission and the Western Riverside Council of Governments came together to program \$23 million in regional state and local transportation funding. The County of Riverside contributed another 4 million in local transportation funds.



Project Description

The County identified two segments of Temescal Canyon Road between Dos Lagos Drive and Dawson Canyon Road to widen. The widened length would total 1.3 miles and would expand the length of fully widened 4-lane highway along Temescal Canyon Road to a length of 3.6 miles.

The project would additionally address the need for **Complete Streets** by adding sidewalk through the developed commercial and residential areas, and by adding marked on-street bike lanes for a full 2 miles. Transit stops would be added later along the corridor as the need for transit increased.

The location of Temescal Canyon Road was historically recognized as a portion of the Butterfield Overland Mail route that carried mail by stagecoach from Missouri westward to California and up the California coast to San Francisco in the mid-1800s. The route also had historical significance to the Luiseño and Gabrieleno native peoples who walked the route between villages.

Goals

The County of Riverside's Transportation Department plans for the mobility and safety needs of emergency responders and the traveling public, and places importance on multimodal needs for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit. Furthermore, the County strives to meet statewide climate change goals by reducing congestion and drive times, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and motorist fuel costs.

Ultimately, it is a goal for the County of Riverside to provide a safe, well-maintained, and environmentally friendly local transportation system that will save the County and taxpayers money in the long-term.

Outstanding Local Street and Road Project

Evaluating the project in the following categories reveals the lengths to which the Temescal Canyon Road Widening Project merits the title an "**Outstanding Local Street and Road Project.**"



Direct Improvements to the Safety, Access, and Overall Quality of the Local Roadway System (5 points)

- Improved traffic circulation and relieving congestion by widening a two-lane road to a 4-lane major highway.
- Fulfilled complete street goals by adding sidewalks and marked on-street bike lanes where none had existed before.
- Rebuilt the entire front property area of an affected restaurant with ADA accessibility.

Innovative and Unique Project (5 points)

- Incorporating historical themes into a mural on a 10-foot high, 400-foot long retaining wall for the Butterfield Stage Coach line that ran during the mid-1800s.
- 34 properties fronting the road required right-of-way acquisitions. Community outreach and support by elected allowed the properties to go through eminent domain to gain possession of the properties sooner.

Model for Other Agencies to Follow (5 points)

- Oak tree evaluation and inventory program
- Incorporating historical features into retaining walls

Continuing and Sustainable Positive Outcomes (5 points)

- Congestion relief provides ongoing air quality and cost benefits.
- Complete streets that include active modes of transportation for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Oak tree removal and replacement program at a new offsite mitigation site.

Cost Effectiveness (5 points)

- Reducing the General Plan typical street section median width from 14' to 12', and reducing the parkway from 12' to 10', to minimize construction, maintenance right-of-way acquisition costs



- Modified the roadway alignment to curve around two restaurants that were located across the road from each other in order to eliminated the need to remove one of the restaurants
- Although the speed that the project went through for design and right-of-way acquisition may have had higher short term costs, the project achieved long term reduction in traffic congestion and its corresponding cost of fuel consumption by the highway's users.

Positive Effects on the Environment (5 points)

- Oak trees, that were planted generations earlier along the historic corridor that served as the Butterfield Stage Line during the mid-1800s, needed to be preserved and/or mitigated for their loss
 - Established an inventory of the location and condition oak trees along 11 miles, with each tree tagged and evaluated by a licensed arborist
 - Save oak trees when possible, such as blue oak
 - Institute a new program to mitigate for oak tree loss by planting new saplings in a nearby canyon on conservancy lands.
- Utilized rubberized hot mix asphalt to reduce noise in residential locations

Effective Collaboration and Partnerships (1 point)

- Several major storm drain culverts crossing the road caused the need for major utility relocations within a street section that typically included 9 different underground utility lines. In an effective collaboration, the County partnered with the 4 agencies that needed to design and construct water and sewer line facilities. Since waiting 18 months for each of the 4 agencies to design and relocate their facilities would have been too long to meet the public's needs, the County designed and bid the relocation of the facilities under reimbursement agreements with the 4 agencies.
 - City of Corona – Department of Water and Power
 - Temescal Valley Water District
 - Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District
 - Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority



Results and Benefits are Useful to Other Cities and Counties (1 point)

- Oak tree evaluation and inventory program
- Incorporating historical features into retaining walls

Technology Utilized in Innovative Ways (1 point)

- Construction alerts by several regional projects to keep the public and stakeholders updated as far as road closures
- Collaboration with other regional transportation improvement projects

Advances the League and CSAC's Priorities and Goals for Local Street and Road System Preservation (1 point)

The County of Riverside's Transportation Department plans for the mobility and safety needs of emergency responders and the traveling public, and places importance on multimodal needs for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit. Furthermore, the County strives to meet statewide climate change goals by reducing congestion and drive times, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and motorist fuel costs. The County strived to accomplish all of these goals in the Temescal Canyon Road Widening Project.

Funding Programs, including RMRA

The project's \$27 million total project cost was funded by the following programs.

\$7.3 million SB1 Local Partnership Program

*Appropriation from the state's 2017 SB1 gas tax **Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account (RMRA)**, administered by the California Transportation Commission (CTC)*

\$12.3 million Measure A

Riverside County's 2002 half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements, administered by the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC)



- \$3.0 million **Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF)**
Riverside County's 2002 development impact fees for regional transportation facilities in western Riverside County, administered by the Western Riverside Council of Government (WRCOG)
- \$1.6 million **Gas Tax/Highway Users Tax Account (HUTA)**
State gas taxes allocated for administration by the County of Riverside • Transportation Department
- \$1.4 million **Ash Fees**
Fees collected at El Sobrante Landfill for incinerator ash, administered by the County of Riverside
- \$1.2 million **Water/Sewer Agency Reimbursement Agreements**
Direct cost reimbursements from 4 local water/sewer agencies for relocation of facilities by the County of Riverside
- \$0.5 million **Developer Impact Fee (DIF) – Temescal Canyon Area**
County development impact fees for major traffic improvements, administered by the County of Riverside • Transportation Department

Supplemental Documentation

See the attached document for exhibits and photos.

