

June 30, 2020

Mr. Mitch Weiss
Executive Director
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, MS 52
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: 2020 Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP) Funding Application
State Route 86 / Avenue 50 Interchange Project - City of Coachella, Riverside County,
CA

Dear Mr. Weiss:

The Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce and our 1,400 plus members are pleased to provide this letter of support for the City of Coachella's (City) Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP) Funding Application for a new interchange at State Route 86/Avenue 50 (SR 86/Ave 50 IC) located in the City of Coachella, California.

The proposed project provides a new access point on SR-86, which is a Primary Highway Freight System (PHFS) of the National Highway Freight Network. It promotes regional connectivity in rural areas to facilitate freight movements, economic growth and housing development, complemented by other active capital projects that enhance the economic value of the SR-86/Ave 50 IC. These include: the extension of Avenue 50 from its current terminus, across the All-American Canal (a federal facility), to Interstate 10 and the Interstate 10/Avenue 50 interchange. A TCEP fund to the City will significantly improve quality of life with safer, more reliable transportation access, and spur economic growth and investment in the underserved community of Coachella.

It will promote regional connectivity to facilitate economic growth and competitiveness for commuters and freight traffic where it is most needed, thereby relieving congestion, enhancing safety and security, and supporting economic development in the Coachella Valley. The notable project benefits are as follows:

- Improves safety by eliminating conflicts between mainline and cross street traffic;
- Delivers a reliable all-weather bridge crossing **addressing public health and safety by reducing emergency response time**;
- Improves infrastructure condition, hence, improves traffic operations;
- Increases mainline throughput, velocity and reliability with a new overcrossing structure at the interchange, and eliminating traffic signal delays;
- Provides a new access point to promote regional connectivity in rural areas to facilitate economic growth and competitiveness;
- Provides safer and reliable connectivity to Tribal lands;
- Installs broadband conduit to better facilitate productivity and help rural citizens access opportunities and promotes energy independence for local or regional economic benefit;
- Enhances local and regional transportation linkages with CV Link, Union Pacific Railroad, Amtrak, and Sunline Transit Agency;
- Reduces Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) + Vehicle Hours Traveled (VHT) in the eastern Coachella Valley;
- integrates the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) with Coachella Valley-wide (regional efforts) traffic signal interconnect

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- Ensures consistency with Southern California Association of Governments Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) and the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) and Coachella Valley Association of Governments' Transportation Project Prioritization Study.

Another crucial supporting fact is that this new SR-86/Ave 50 Interchange will serve as a critically needed alternative route to relieve traffic circulation from the adjacent interchange located approximately 1.9 miles north at SR-86 and Dillon Road. The existing Dillon Road Bridge's latest bridge inspection report shows a sufficiency rating of only 16.6. In addition, a score of 3 for the National Bridge Inventory (NBI) condition ratings for Item 60 (Substructure) classifies this bridge as Structurally Deficient per 23 CFR 490.411 and 490.413. It is further compounded by a low score of 3 for NBI Item 113 (Scour Critical Bridge), which formally lists this as a Scour Critical Bridge. A load rating analysis determined that the bridge no longer has the capacity to carry standard truck loads. For this reason, as a temporary control mitigation measure, it required posting of weight restriction traffic signs to forewarn truckers to use alternate routes. Due to poor bridge condition, there is high probability the Dillon Road Bridge may need to be closed to traffic in the near future. Presently, the preliminary engineering and environmental documentation for a bridge replacement bridge are ongoing, thus, its delivery schedule is lagging behind this SR-86/Avenue 50 intersection project. It would be catastrophic to the community and region if the Dillon Road Bridge closure happened without the completion of this SR-86 and Avenue 50 project. **Thereby, this grant is essential to prevent any potential devastations, which may cause further setbacks to these neglected Qualified Opportunity Zone** and also the encompassing SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities and AB 1550 Low-income Communities.

We urge the CTC to award the funds for construction of an interchange at SR-86 and Avenue 50, which is one of the principal routes used by rural agricultural producers across the Coachella Valley region; it also serves as a connection to distribution channels that cross the U.S./Mexico border, and is part of the NAFTA Farm-to-Market Highway.

Sincerely,



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