

Thomas Roads Improvement Program

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City Commits Funds to Thomas Roads Improvement Program

As the designated lead agency for Thomas Roads Improvement Program (TRIP), the City of Bakersfield has agreed to assume the largest portion of financial costs, above the federal share, to complete the TRIP projects. At their Wednesday night meeting, the Bakersfield City Council directed staff to continue moving forward with the necessary steps to commit City funds to advance the completion of TRIP projects.

TRIP is a multi-agency organization with representation from the City of Bakersfield, County of Kern, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG). The primary funding source for TRIP comes from the 2005 Federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), in the form of \$630 million. These funds, which were secured by former Congressman William M. Thomas, were identified for projects of regional significance in the Bakersfield area.

The City's contributions will include coverage of the statutory match of \$84 million. Other City contributions include: a major bond issue anticipated in about four years that will generate an estimated \$246 million; cash flow from Transportation Impact Fees and gas tax revenues, not dedicated to debt service; traffic mitigation requirements; and miscellaneous grants. The total commitment is expected to exceed \$400 million and will be paid over the life of the program.

In addition, the Kern County Board of Supervisors recently took action to secure \$106.3 million for TRIP by authorizing county staff to develop a financing plan for county capital improvement projects. This plan utilizes a combination of available cash and bonding capacity and includes \$72 million identified for the county's match to TRIP and \$34.3 million identified for the 7th Standard Road Corridor, from Highway 99 to Santa Fe Way.

Though not technically a TRIP project, the Westside Parkway is a core part of the transportation system. Current funding for the Westside Parkway includes \$152 million in State Transportation Improvement (STIP) funds and another \$31 million is expected to be added every two years until completion. The first phase of the Westside Parkway is scheduled to begin in early 2009.

For more information, please contact Janet Wheeler, TRIP Public Outreach, at (661) 326-3491 or visit the website at www.bakersfieldfreeways.us.

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