

Thomas Roads Improvement Program

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRIP ANNOUNCES RESULTS OF PRELIMINARY SCREENING FOR CENTENNIAL CORRIDOR CONCEPTUAL ALTERNATIVES

*Six alternatives and the no-build option will be studied further.
Four alternatives will undergo additional screening for reasonableness.*

Bakersfield—Following months of public meetings, input from citizens and a preliminary screening process that compared 18 conceptual alternatives against eight different criteria, Caltrans, in cooperation with The Thomas Roads Improvement Program (TRIP) Centennial Corridor Project Development Team, has determined that six of the conceptual alternatives are “reasonable” to carry forward for full environmental review. These include four alternatives on new alignments, mass transit and traffic management system alternatives, as well as a no-build alternative.

The alternatives that passed the test for reasonableness and remain for further study are Alternatives A and B, located west of SR99; Alternative C, which parallels SR99; and Alternative D, the Union Avenue alignment.

Further cost analysis or traffic studies will be conducted on alternatives G (Hageman Road, taken from Tier 1 EIR); H (Rosedale Highway elevated alignment, submitted by public); I (Widen SR 58—taken from Tier 1 EIR); and L (Stockdale Highway alignment, submitted by public) to determine whether they meet the test of reasonableness. Those studies are expected to occur in the next few weeks.

In conducting the preliminary screening, the team used specific environmental and engineering criteria to determine which alternatives were reasonable. Reasonable alternatives include those that are practical or feasible from a technical and economic standpoint. Alternatives that exceeded \$800 million in estimated construction costs were considered cost prohibitive and therefore not economically feasible.

Alternatives which failed the test for purpose and need; cost; or operations and safety

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were considered “not reasonable” and eliminated from further consideration.

“We compared each alternative to specific objectives of the project’s purpose and need statement,” said Ahron Hakimi, Caltrans’ program manager for the Centennial Corridor project. “We are mandated to ensure that the project provides regional and interregional connectivity for east-west traffic travelling within Metropolitan Bakersfield and Kern County. In addition, we looked at avoiding operational and safety problems; avoiding unacceptable adverse social, economic or environmental impacts; and whether an alternative could be completed with available funding. Only those alternatives that fulfilled these major objectives were determined to have passed this test of reasonableness and will be studied further as part of the environmental process.”

The following alternatives were eliminated during the preliminary screening process as having not met the test of reasonableness for the reasons noted:

- ? **Alternative E**—(Washington Avenue alignment)—exceeds cost threshold, redundant to Alternative D
- ? **Alternative F**—(South Beltway—previously identified as a segment of Alternative C in Kern COG’s Tier 1 Environmental Impact Report [Tier 1 EIR] for the South Beltway Transportation Corridor)—does not meet purpose and need, exceeds cost threshold
- ? **Alternative J**—(Southern alignment connection between SR 99 and I-5, just north of SR 119, submitted by public)—does not meet purpose and need, exceeds cost threshold
- ? **Alternative K**—(Brimhall alignment—from Tier 1 EIR)—does not meet purpose and need, exceeds cost threshold
- ? **Alternative 15**—(from Bakersfield System Study)—exceeds cost threshold
- ? **Alternative PA-1**—(submitted by public and located between alternatives B and C)—does not meet operational and safety standards
- ? **Alternative PA-2**—(submitted by public and located along southern limits of Bakersfield)—does not meet purpose and need, exceeds cost threshold
- ? **Alternative PA-3**—(submitted by public, located just north of and parallel to SR 223)—does not meet purpose and need, exceeds cost threshold

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“It is important to note that this is only the preliminary review and elimination of alternatives that are not reasonable to consider further,” said Hakimi. “At this point potential impacts are only evaluated in general terms. Later in the environmental study process, each individual resource, such as air quality and noise, and potential impacts the project could cause will be evaluated.”

Caltrans and TRIP will present the alternatives and details of the preliminary screening process to the public at a meeting scheduled for October 2.

The Centennial Corridor is one of a dozen transportation projects moving forward under TRIP, which is a unique collaboration between Caltrans, the City of Bakersfield, County of Kern, and Kern Council of Governments. The organization was created to manage the freeway-type projects designated for funding in the 2005 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). It is named in honor of former Congressman William M. Thomas, who successfully earmarked \$630 million in federal funds for Metropolitan Bakersfield.

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