Western Riverside County
Traffic Relief: Western Riverside County

Better Roads  Easier Highway Access  Faster Highways  Frequent Bus Service  Help with My Commute  Longer Trails  More Train Service  New Technology
Western Riverside County traffic relief funds will be allocated to transportation projects and services as shown in the chart above. RCTC will establish criteria to prioritize projects and services based upon the recommendation of civil engineers and public works professionals serving on the Technical Advisory Committee. Prioritization must be consistent with the vision, goals, objectives, principles, policies, and desired outcomes described in the Traffic Relief Plan. For any local jurisdiction to receive funds through the Traffic Relief Plan, the jurisdiction must be a participant in good standing in the Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF) program, which ensures that new development pays for its fair share of impacts on the transportation system, and the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Program (MSHCP), which protects locally endangered and threatened plants and animals and ensures that transportation projects can receive streamlined environmental approvals.

The following pages describe the projects and services envisioned to be implemented. These projects and services were identified by RCTC Commissioners, members of the public, local transportation experts, and civic leaders in Riverside County through extensive public outreach and engagement. RCTC may add projects and services not mentioned in the Plan if those projects and services are consistent with the Plan or achieve the same result as a project or service mentioned in the Plan.
The Traffic Relief Plan makes substantial investments in improving the flow of local highways and residents’ abilities to get on and off them more easily. Many of these improvements have already been identified in local plans and are awaiting funding to be constructed. The Traffic Relief Plan devotes 31% of funding in Western Riverside County toward faster highways and 13% toward easier highway access. Combined, these investments can achieve the following on the county’s major highway corridors:

**I-15 Corridor**
- Add at least one lane in each direction to I-15 between Cajalco Road in Corona and the San Diego County line
- Eliminate the “lane drops” on southbound I-15 between Magnolia Avenue and Cajalco Road in Corona
- Construct the final phase of the French Valley Parkway interchange at I-15 in Temecula, which includes:
  - Widening ramps at Winchester Road
  - Constructing on and off ramps to I-15 from French Valley Parkway and a bridge over I-15
  - Constructing the French Valley Parkway from Jefferson Avenue to Ynez Road
- Reconstruct interchanges with:
  - Central Avenue (Route 74) in Lake Elsinore
  - Baxter Road in Wildomar
  - Bundy Canyon Road in Wildomar

**I-215 Corridor**
- Add at least one lane in each direction between Route 60 and Van Buren Boulevard
- Construct new interchanges (on and off ramps) to I-215 at Keller Road in Murrieta and Garbani Road in Menifee
- Reconstruct interchange at Harley Knox Boulevard in Moreno Valley

**91 Corridor**
- Accelerate construction of at least one new lane in each direction on Route 91 between I-15 in Corona and Pierce Street in Riverside
- Reconstruct interchanges on the 91 at:
  - Adams Street in Riverside
  - Tyler Street in Riverside

**60 Corridor**
- Add at least one lane in each direction on Route 60 in Moreno Valley
- Reconstruct interchanges on Route 60 at:
  - Etiwanda Avenue in Jurupa Valley
  - Rubidoux Boulevard in Jurupa Valley
  - Redlands Boulevard in Moreno Valley
  - Potrero Boulevard in Beaumont

**I-10 Corridor**
- Reconstruct interchanges on I-10 at:
  - Route 79 in Beaumont
  - Highland Springs Avenue in Beaumont and Banning
  - Pennsylvania Avenue in Beaumont
  - Morongo Parkway in Cabazon
  - County Line Road in Calimesa
  - Cherry Valley Boulevard in Calimesa

In addition to assisting automobile drivers, many of the above investments will alleviate bottlenecks and safety concerns related to growing truck traffic.
Maintaining Local Roads and Repairing Potholes

In Western Riverside County, 19% of funds will be invested in keeping local roads in good condition and repairing potholes. Cities and the County of Riverside will receive road maintenance funds based on objective factors recommended by local city and county public works directors serving on the Technical Advisory Committee, consisting of representatives of every city and the County of Riverside, and adopted by RCTC. The Technical Advisory Committee shall take into consideration equity for smaller cities and unincorporated communities.

Separating Local Roads from Railroad Tracks

The large number and length of freight trains operating in Riverside County causes rail crossings to be blocked, creates traffic delays, and restricts first responder access to emergencies. The Plan calls for construction of under- or overpasses at rail crossings, such as:

- Bellegrave Avenue
- Hargrave Street
- Jackson Street
- Mary Street
- Pennsylvania Avenue
- San Gorgonio Avenue
- Spruce Street
- Tyler Street

Projects will be prioritized based on factors including, but not limited to, readiness for construction, accident and fatality rates, hours of vehicle delay at the crossing, noise and air pollution, and availability of matching funds. Funding may be used to make projects more competitive to receive state or federal grants.

Reducing Accidents and Fatalities on Major County Roads

Major upgrades are needed to several county roads where high numbers of fatalities occur, such as Gilman Springs Road and Grand Avenue. The Traffic Relief Plan creates a funding program to specifically address such roads.

Improving Traffic Flow on Major Local Roads

Some of the most frustrating traffic chokepoints in Riverside County are the main roads that connect our neighborhood streets to highways and transit centers. Growing employment and economic activity in Riverside County will continue to add strain on these roads. Therefore, the Traffic Relief Plan will provide comprehensive investments to major roads, including but not limited to:

- Alessandro Boulevard
- Bundy Canyon Road
- Clinton Keith Road
- Heacock Street
- Keller Road
- Limonite Avenue
- Redlands Boulevard
- Sun Lake Boulevard
- Temescal Canyon Road
- Van Buren Boulevard

Safe Routes to School

The Plan will add to work that has done to improve the safety of children going to and from school. The Plan will provide funding to cities, the County of Riverside, school districts, and other governmental and nonprofit entities through an application process to build infrastructure that provides safer routes for children to walk or bike to school and decreases injuries and fatalities. Eligible improvements include sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle lanes. Funding may be used to make projects more competitive to receive state or federal grants.
New East-West Routes

Routes 60 and 91 are congested at most times of the day. Limited east-west connections leave drivers with few options, especially in the southern parts of Riverside County, where people need to travel I-15 and I-215 to get to these east-west routes. Also, when there is an incident or severe traffic on I-10, especially around the holidays and festival seasons, there are no alternative routes between Banning and Cabazon. This creates a safety issue that the Traffic Relief Plan intends to remedy.

The County of Riverside is developing two east-west corridors between I-15 and I-215 and a parallel roadway to I-10 that currently lack funding:

- Cajalco Road
- Ethanac Expressway
- I-10 Bypass between Banning and Cabazon

With the Traffic Relief Plan, these routes can be constructed in the near future, something that cannot be achieved with current funding.
Revitalizing the Hemet-San Jacinto Valley

RCTC has invested nearly two decades into obtaining federal and state environmental clearances and community consensus for two major new transportation facilities. Commitments for environmental mitigation have been made. However, after all this work, the funding needed to construct these routes does not exist and the plans will sit on a shelf until funding is available, which may take several more decades. The state and federal governments are not investing in new highways, meaning that local leadership and action is necessary.

Therefore, the Plan calls for accelerated construction and local operation and maintenance of the following two major projects:

- **A new Highway 79**, which will align the 79 from Gilman Springs Road to Domenigoni Parkway to improve traffic flow and safety and allow regional traffic to bypass local roads.

- **Mid County Parkway**, a new 16-mile transportation corridor designed to relieve east-west traffic congestion between the San Jacinto and Perris areas. The Mid County Parkway will connect to Route 79, I-215, and multimodal bus and rail facilities that support the Metrolink 91/Perris Valley Line.

Additionally, the Plan calls for construction of a rapid transit system between the Hemet-San Jacinto valley and the Perris/Moreno Valley/Riverside area to provide an alternative mode of travel. RCTC owns a rail line that extends from Perris to San Jacinto and could be used to provide this new service. Rapid transit connections could also be considered to the Temecula/Menifee/Murrieta area.

RCTC will collaborate with local cities, the County of Riverside, public transit agencies, tribal governments and the community in constructing these improvements.
The Traffic Relief Plan devotes 20% of revenue to a historic modernization of rail service in Western Riverside County. Increased train frequencies, upgraded, safe, and well-maintained stations, and expansion of service into new areas of Riverside County will increase economic opportunities within the region, reduce traffic congestion, and enhance the passenger experience.

**Increasing Frequency and Reliability of Metrolink**

More frequent and reliable train service to current and future destinations in Riverside County will support Metrolink’s goal to double ridership by 2025 and support local efforts to attract more employers and jobs to Riverside County. Recognizing the benefit of train transportation to commuters, the economy, and the environment, the Traffic Relief Plan makes the largest commitment to rail in the history of Riverside County. Specifically:

- Increasing frequency of Metrolink train service on the 91/Perris Valley Line and Inland Empire-Orange County Line
- Constructing new railroad tracks within existing rights of way to allow more Metrolink trains to operate.

**Extending Train Service to New Destinations in Riverside County**

To make possible daily train service between the **Coachella Valley** (Palm Springs, Indio, etc.) and Riverside, Orange County, and L.A., the Traffic Relief Plan calls for construction of a new passenger rail station in the San Gorgonio Pass.

Additionally, the Traffic Relief Plan provides funding to extend Metrolink service to **Hemet and San Jacinto** via the existing railroad tracks which must be rehabilitated between Perris and San Jacinto.

The Traffic Relief Plan also envisions a new rail station at **Ramona Expressway** near Perris and the existing rail line.

**Maintaining, Operating, and Upgrading Train Stations, Tracks, and Service**

The Traffic Relief Plan will modernize rail-related infrastructure in Riverside County and ensure that services can continue to operate safely and sustainably. Investments include but are not limited to:

- Constructing new parking capacity at Metrolink stations in Corona, Riverside, and Perris
- Constructing accessibility improvements at the Moreno Valley/March Field station
- Operating and maintaining existing and future Metrolink rail stations. There are currently nine stations in Corona, Riverside, Jurupa Valley, Perris, and near Moreno Valley. Future stations are envisioned for an extension of service to Hemet and San Jacinto
- Operating Metrolink trains through Riverside County at current and future increased frequencies
- Maintaining locally-owned railroad right of way to ensure public safety and proper care of the tracks
- Investing in zero-emission trains
Attracting Jobs to Riverside County through Rail Investment

Rail stations provide an excellent opportunity for economic development and bringing new jobs to our communities and increasing the convenience of public transportation. The Traffic Relief Plan will create an incentive program for public-private partnerships to enhance existing and future rail stations through joint development opportunities.

The Traffic Relief Plan also calls for new “reverse-commute” trains that bring passengers to Riverside County job centers, in addition to the current schedules that focus more on taking local residents to other counties.

Balancing Road Expansion with Alternatives

The Traffic Relief Plan makes significant improvements to the roadway network in Riverside County through adding lanes and improving efficiency through technology. However, because we cannot build our way out of congestion, as the population grows and demand for road use increases, alternatives such as rail service and other public transportation options will be an essential piece of solving the problem. Additionally, the State of California now requires road projects to mitigate any increases in vehicle miles traveled to provide greater balance in the overall transportation system. To ensure that these needed road projects can be built in accordance with state laws and regulations, and to increase the viability of non-automobile alternatives in Riverside County, the Traffic Relief Plan establishes a program for mitigating increases to vehicle miles traveled.
The Traffic Relief Plan dedicates 6% of revenue to enhancing Western Riverside County’s bus transit system to reduce traffic congestion, increase sustainability, and provide more independence to residents who rely on public transit to access medical care, employment, education, and essential services.

**Expanding Rapid/Express Bus**

Rapid/Express buses provide an affordable, comfortable, and reduced-stress travel experience, especially for commuters traveling to other counties or across the county. These buses carry wi-fi and more comfortable seats than traditional buses.

The Traffic Relief Plan expands rapid/commuter bus service along the major freeway corridors in Riverside County to destinations, such as San Diego, Orange, and San Bernardino Counties, downtown Riverside, Temecula, Moreno Valley, Corona, and Perris. Rapid/commuter bus service can also connect to major destinations within Riverside County and the Inland Empire, such as commercial airports, business, retail, and entertainment centers.

**Modernizing and Sustaining Public Transportation**

In changing times, public transportation must adapt. To increase ridership, provide more efficient service, and reduce air pollution, the Traffic Relief Plan invests in new technologies:

- Traffic signals and bus equipment that improve bus travel times.
- Zero-emission buses and related maintenance and operations.

Improving Riverside County’s public transportation system also requires investment in transportation hubs throughout Western Riverside County, where residents can connect to other forms of transportation, employment centers, and services.

The Traffic Relief Plan also ensures the continued operation of bus service in Riverside County.
Increasing Independence and Mobility for Seniors, Veterans, Students, Individuals with Disabilities, and Underserved and Rural Communities

An equitable transit network is complete only when it addresses the needs of seniors, veterans, students, individuals with disabilities, and underserved and rural communities. Approximately 13% of Riverside County residents are age 65 and older; about 11% are individuals with disabilities; 11% are low-income; 6% are veterans; and 25% are under age 18.

A survey of public and human service providers in Riverside County indicates that about 40% of their constituents’ transportation needs are not being met with existing services. For some, it may be the long distance to see a specialty doctor or treatment that is preventing them from achieving improved health outcomes. For others, financial contraints may restrict them from purchasing even discounted bus fares to seek education and employment opportunities. Addressing the needs of these groups requires a multifaceted approach that can be tailored to meet varying degrees of mobility and independence.

Transportation needs and gaps of services for these groups are documented in local studies, which have found that increased independence and mobility can be achieved through expanded transit service; transportation for long-distance regional medical trips; safe pedestrian and bicyclist pathways; transit affordability; and coordination with human service agencies. There is growing concern in many cities that as the population grows, the available resources to meet these target groups’ needs will not keep pace.

Specialized Transit Grant Program

The Traffic Relief Plan increases investment in specialized transportation providers that serve seniors, veterans, students, individuals with disabilities, and rural and underserved communities. The Citizens and Specialized Transit Advisory Council, with representatives from these important populations, will assist RCTC in administering and providing oversight to the program. The Traffic Relief Plan will make investments such as:

- Expansion of destinations and hours of operation for paratransit service such as Dial-A-Ride;
- Keeping transit fares low for seniors, veterans, students, and individuals with disabilities;
- Improved access to and from schools, colleges and universities, and employment centers for low-income families and rural communities;
- Bus fares for the truly needy who require access to medical appointments, job interviews, or other needed services;
- Bringing infrastructure into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act; and
- Continued operation of the 2-1-1 network, which provides individualized assessments with transportation and social service specialists.

A locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan will improve the lives of thousands of Riverside County residents.
Completing the Regional Trail System

Riverside County is home to world-renowned natural open spaces with active transportation corridors for cycling, hiking, walking, and running. These trails provide alternative transportation options, as well as options for healthier lifestyles for Riverside County residents. These facilities also provide economic opportunities for local businesses and residents and strengthen the tourism economy. The Plan invests in major regional trails identified in the master plan for the Riverside County Parks & Open Space District, to which local cities and the County can connect. These backbone trails include:

- Butterfield Ranch Trail/Southern Emigrant Trail
- Santa Ana River Trail
- California Riding and Hiking Trail
- Juan Bautista de Anza Historical Trail
- Salt Creek Trail

Additionally, the Plan will invest in providing trail access to Riverside County’s many treasured publicly owned and preserved open spaces. All together, 2% of the Traffic Relief Plan in Western Riverside County will invest in these improvements.

Freeway Service Patrol

When accidents occur on highways or when vehicles break down, traffic can build quickly, creating additional safety hazards to motorists and delaying thousands of people. Freeway Service Patrol provides roving tow trucks to quickly assist motorists so that traffic can flow again. This public service is operated with strict performance and accountability measures by the California Highway Patrol, Caltrans, and RCTC, and must achieve a benefit-to-cost ratio of at least 3:1 (meaning for every dollar invested, the service must yield at least $3 in benefits in the form of reduced congestion, increased safety, and decreased air pollution).

The Plan will sustain and increase Freeway Service Patrol levels on Interstates 15 and 215 and Routes 60 and 91, including weekend service. The Plan will also enable new service to begin on Interstate 10.

More Park & Rides

Creating more convenient locations for commuters to meet and travel together reduces the burdens of solo commuting and decreases the number of cars on the road during peak hours. Through the Traffic Relief Plan, RCTC will be able to enter more partnerships with local businesses and governments to create better Park & Ride options.

More Employer Partnerships to Reduce Stressful Commutes

The Traffic Relief Plan recognizes that improving commutes is not just about the commuter, but also about employers stepping up to help. The Plan calls for enhancing current Commuter Assistance Programs with employers in Riverside County with better options and incentives to encourage ridesharing, vanpooling, telecommuting, and public transit use.
Rethinking Transportation

New and innovative thinking is needed to combat traffic congestion as our population increases, technology advances rapidly, and our economy grows. Therefore, 5% of the Traffic Relief Plan in Western Riverside County is devoted to new technologies and innovative public policy.

Creating Smart Roads: deployment of new technologies that better synchronize traffic signals and ramp meters, detect on-road incidents and congestion and proactively manage traffic and improve roadway safety. These technologies lay the foundation for Riverside County’s infrastructure to connect with autonomous and connected vehicles, as well as future innovations in transportation technology. Technologies such as these have begun deployment in other parts of the United States and the world; this program would bring these cutting-edge approaches to Riverside County. This program will also support electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Commuting Alternatives: modernizing and increasing current efforts to help frustrated commuters find alternatives to driving alone over long distances to get to work or school and back home and help save time by using technology to make existing infrastructure operate more efficiently.

Bringing Jobs Home: an incentive program for local governments to develop infrastructure that will secure new permanent living-wage jobs in Riverside County and reduce the demand for residents to commute to other counties for work. These funds can also be used to invest in public transportation services that will assist local residents in accessing employment opportunities more easily.