

**TOWN OF
APPLE VALLEY, CALIFORNIA**

AGENDA MATTER

Subject Item:

DISCUSSION ON YUCCA LOMA BRIDGE EXPENDITURES

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Yucca Loma Bridge is the Town of Apple Valley's number one Transportation Improvement Priority. While recent improvements on Apple Valley Road have eased congestion for motorists traveling north or south along Apple Valley Road, this relief is only temporary. The time will come when no amount of capacity enhancing improvements can mitigate the traffic volumes that will occur on Apple Valley Road. Only the re-distribution of future traffic along a new east/west corridor will prevent congestion from returning to our community.

Because of this, the proposed Yucca Loma Bridge is an investment in our future, to ensure that congestion does not return to choke Apple Valley Road. However, Bear Valley Road, west of the Mojave River, has already reached a traffic saturation point where few, if any, additional capacity enhancing modifications are available. At a recent presentation by SANBAG Staff, it was pointed out that the I-215 Freeway in San Bernardino currently carries approximately 85,000 vehicles a day, and is badly in need of additional capacity enhancing improvements. Ironically, traffic volume data shows that our own Bear Valley Road, particularly segments west of the Mojave River, presently carry between 60,000 and 70,000 vehicles a day, and Bear Valley Road is, of course, not a freeway. With this in mind, it is easy to understand why there is gridlock today along much of Bear Valley Road. Only the re-distribution of existing traffic along a new east/west corridor will reduce present day congestion on Bear Valley Road, and the **ONLY** project being proposed today that will provide relief for this existing congestion is the Yucca Loma Bridge/ Yates Road/ Green Tree Boulevard/ La Mesa/ Nisqually Interchange corridor.

(Continued on page 2.)

Recommended Action:

That the Town Council receive and file this staff report relating to funding for the Yucca Loma Bridge project and provide any direction to staff it deems appropriate.

Proposed by: Engineering Division

Item Number _____

T. M. Approval: _____

Budgeted Item Yes No N/A

The Yucca Loma Bridge/ Yates Road/ Green Tree Boulevard project is a multi-jurisdictional, cooperative effort including segments in Apple Valley, San Bernardino County, and the City of Victorville, and will create the long awaited additional east/west corridor for the Victor Valley Region.

The Environmental Compliance process and Preliminary Engineering for the proposed project, for all three jurisdictions, is scheduled for completion in late 2009, or early 2010, with Final Engineering on the Apple Valley segment of the project beginning this year. Actual construction of the Apple Valley portion will conceivably commence as early as summer, 2010.

While the entire Project is nearing completion of the Environmental Studies and Preliminary Engineering phase, the challenges ahead are largely related to design decisions in the County and Victorville areas, and funding for all segments. Since project inception, the Town of Apple Valley has been proactively developing funding mechanisms and financial strategies that would allow construction to commence, at least within our jurisdictional portion of the project, as soon as approvals and permits can be obtained. While funding short-falls still persist, Apple Valley is able at this time to provide adequate funding for a phased construction of our portion of the project to begin in spring/ summer of 2010. Our various technical studies have already included the possibility of a phased project, initially extending only as far west as Ridgecrest Road.

Understandably, our partner jurisdictions of Victorville and San Bernardino County face financial challenges and, while the present preliminary work is progressing, at this time it is uncertain if the County of San Bernardino and the City of Victorville will be prepared to begin Final Design work this summer, or commence construction in 2010.

One ray of financial hope is the recent inclusion by Congressman Lewis of the Yucca Loma Bridge/ Yates Road/ Green Tree Blvd. Congestion Relief Project in his list of Priority Projects for the upcoming re-authorization of the Federal Highway Authorization Bill, also known as SAFETEA-LU, (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users). Congressman Lewis, the Town's Congressional Representative, has long been a strong proponent and staunch supporter of key projects important to residents in the Victor Valley, and he has responded to our call for assistance with a recommended allocation of **\$55.1 million dollars** of federal funds for this project! If Congressman Lewis' recommendation for SAFETEA-LU funding is successful, the funding portfolio for ultimate construction of the Apple Valley and San Bernardino County portions of this project will be complete.

There are a few complex design and noise mitigation issues that still need to be considered, but none appear at this time to be irresolvable. Despite the uncertainty of funding, and its related impact on project phasing, there are funding mechanisms that are available to the Town that would allow it to begin phased construction of the Yucca Loma Bridge and Yucca Loma Road improvements. As we approach the end of the study phase of the Project, there presently is sufficient funding in the form of RDA Bond proceeds, (\$13 million), Measure I, Major Local Highway Fund Bond proceeds, (\$15.8 million), plus the potential use of Traffic Impact Fund Reserves, and/ or Regional Measure I Funds, for Apple Valley to begin a phased construction of the Yucca Loma Bridge and the Yucca Loma Road improvements. Based upon the foregoing, staff recommends adoption of the form motion.