

# Kern COG Quarterly

BETTER PLANNING. BETTER TRANSPORTATION.



**Kern Council  
of Governments**

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## State Route 46 widening project gets major boost from outside funding

Continued widening work on State Route 46 from Lost Hills to the Interstate 5 interchange received a major boost in June after Kern COG received nearly \$26 million in unspent state funding from other transportation projects throughout California.

The funding, which originated from Proposition 1B appropriations that are more than a decade old now, was granted to Kern COG by five regional agencies or "sister COGs" that chose to put their unspent resources on Phase 4, Segment 4A of the Highway 46

widening project rather than allow it to be rescinded by the Department of Transportation. Segments 4A and B make up the project's final 6-mile phase.

Highway 46 is the primary route for residents throughout the San Joaquin Valley and beyond who wish to access Paso Robles and the Central Coast, a popular summer destination. With dozens of lives lost over the last several decades – including six in just the last two months -- widening this popular route is imperative on both sides of the

*Please see Regional Transportation Plan workshops, page 4*

## Regional Transportation Plan workshops draw range of Kern County opinions

More than 400 Kern County residents have taken the opportunity to voice their hopes and concerns for the region's transportation network through a series of public workshops that Kern COG sponsored in conjunction with several non-profit organizations.

Partnering with the local non-profit community has helped ensure diverse and extensive public input on Kern COG's long-range transportation planning efforts, according to Administrative Services Director Becky Napier, who oversees the agency's "mini-grants" program.

Offering its partners as much as \$4,000

*Please See SR 46 Widening Update, page 6*



*Credit: Cara Jackson/Tehachapi News*

Kern COG Planning Director Rob Ball discusses community growth principles during a Regional Transportation Plan workshop in Tehachapi on May 30.

# Trump Administration to local governments: "Stop waiting for Washington to help you with your roads"

In May, the Trump administration unveiled its infrastructure plan that proposed four key principles for federal investment as part of 2018 budget.

One of the four is to “Encourage Self-Help” funding for local transportation needs. The Administration notes that many local communities are no longer waiting for Washington to fund their transportation needs but are instead raising their own dedicated revenues for infrastructure. Local agencies are closer and more accountable for proper investment needed for their communities. The principle states that the federal government should support more communities moving toward a model of independence.

About 88 percent of California citizens live in a county with a local self-help transportation measure. Kern is the largest county in California without one, even though back in 2006, 56 percent of voters approved Measure I, a ½ cent sales tax for transportation, but still failed to garner the 2/3rds vote required.

## 2018 FEDERAL BUDGET INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVE: Key Principles

As the Administration develops policy and regulatory changes, and seeks statutory proposals working with Congress, we will focus on proposals that fall under the following key principles:

1. **Make Targeted Federal Investments.** Focusing federal dollars on the most transformative projects and processes stretches the use and benefit of taxpayer funds. When Federal funds are provided, they should be awarded to projects that address problems that are a high priority from the perspective of a region or the nation, or projects that lead to long-term changes in how infrastructure is designed, built, and maintained.
2. **Encourage Self-Help.** Many states, tribes and localities have stopped waiting for Washington to come to the rescue and have raised their own dedicated revenues for infrastructure. Localities are better equipped to understand the right level – and type – of infrastructure investments needed for their communities, and the federal government should support more communities moving toward a model of independence.
3. **Align Infrastructure Investment with Entities Best Suited to Provide Sustained and Efficient Investment.** The federal government provides services that non-federal entities, including the private sector, could deliver more efficiently. The Administration will look for opportunities to appropriately divest from certain functions, which will provide better services for citizens, and potentially generate budgetary savings. The federal government can also be more efficient about disposing underused capital assets, ensuring those assets are put to their highest and best use.
4. **Leverage the Private Sector.** The private sector can provide valuable benefits for the delivery of infrastructure, through better procurement methods, market discipline, and a long-term focus on maintaining assets. While public-private partnerships will not be the solution to all infrastructure needs, they can help advance the nation's most important, regionally significant projects.

[https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/budget/fy2018/fact\\_sheets/2018%20Budget%20Fact%20Sheet\\_Infrastucture%20Initiative.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/budget/fy2018/fact_sheets/2018%20Budget%20Fact%20Sheet_Infrastucture%20Initiative.pdf)

## With TRIP funding nearly gone, transportation spending set to reduce

The state agency that sets transportation funding policy is estimating that the Kern region will be able to budget about \$66 million for transportation projects from 2018 through 2021, down from nearly \$277 million just in 2016-17 – a reflection of Bakersfield's Thomas Roads Improvement Program winding down.

Four major projects dominate the region's short-range transportation program, including:

Project Description	Construction Investment	Delivery Status	Expected Completion
SR 14 Freeman Gulch Widening Segment 1	\$45,000,000	Construction process just started	
SR 46 Widening Segment 4A	\$28,001,000	Construction process just started	
SR 58 & 99 Beltway Operational Improvements	\$118,393,000	under construction	Summer 2017
SR 178 Widening Vineland to Miramonte	\$27,000,000	under construction	Summer 2017

The California Transportation Commission will adopt its estimates for regions statewide by August 2017. A comprehensive status report on Projects of Regional Significance throughout Kern County is located at the bottom of Kern COG's homepage at kerncog.org.

# New apps help EV owners take longer trips

Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations are popping up throughout Kern County with more on the way and two new mobile applications are now available to help EV owners locate those stations.

While new models of electric vehicles like the Chevy Bolt have extended the range of travel on a single charge to more than 230 miles, most of the 22 non-Tesla models available in 2016 and 2017 on the market still get between 62 and 87 miles to the charge.

Two new mobile tools are now available to help EV owners locate places to charge:

- Station Locator app for Android: Android users can now access the Station Locator app through the Google Play store. As with the original iPhone app version, users can access the station locator from their mobile device and find the 20 closest stations within a 30-mile radius. Results display either on a map or in a list with station addresses, phone numbers and hours of operation. Also available for iPhone from the iTunes store.
- Trip Calculator mobile page: FuelEconomy.gov recently launched a mobile web page version of their popular Trip Calculator tool. This page allows users to easily calculate fuel economy for a trip while on the go.

In the past year, EV charging stations have opened at the Delano Walmart and the Bakersfield Walmart near Panama and Hwy 99. In the next year, charging stations will be opening at the Bakersfield AMTRAK station and at the new retail development at the Northeast corner of Stockdale Highway and Gosford Road, with more projects on the way.

Nationally, the ratio of electric vehicles to charging stations is 14:1. For the electric vehicle market to be better integrated into the on-road fleet, the ratio should be 5:1.

Kern Council of Governments is working with its member agencies and others toward a goal of 4,000 charging spaces throughout Kern County by 2025. In February, 70 people attended a Kern COG-sponsored Workplace Charging Workshop at Bakersfield Memorial Hospital.

Kern COG is also working with Project Clean Air, EV Perks and Urner's to host an event in Bakersfield for National Drive Electric Week on Saturday, Sept. 16. Kern COG is partnering with the Tehachapi AppleFest to host an event on Saturday, October 8th.

Businesses and the public are invited to attend and learn about the incentives available for purchasing electric vehicles and the grants available for installing electric charging infrastructure. For more information on these events and resources, please visit [www.projectcleanair.us/sjvevp](http://www.projectcleanair.us/sjvevp).



Clockwise: BMW i8, Center for Sustainable Energy Chevy Volt, BMW i3, electric vehicles on display.

## Federal air quality, road maintenance funding totals \$18 million over 2 years

About \$18 million annually over the next two years is anticipated to be available for new transportation projects that help improve air quality or are aimed at road reconstruction and maintenance.

Kern COG is calling for projects in the Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) program and the Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP), both of which are federally funded. RSTP dollars

finance street and road rehabilitation, as well as reconstruction and maintenance projects that are generally delivered by local agencies.

Eligible Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality Program projects must reduce congestion, pollution and improve safety.

“Both CMAQ and RSTP are vital funding streams for our transportation network, allowing local

governments to finance repairs and improvements to help our residents be more mobile and reduce our carbon footprint,” said Kern COG Executive Director Ahron Hakimi. “These federal dollars allow us to take on projects that might not get completed otherwise.”

Final project development should be completed by early 2018 with an expected programming of about \$38 million or \$18 million annually.



# Arvin/Lamont, Wasco picked for alternative transportation study

The rural communities of Arvin, Lamont and Wasco have been identified as prime testing areas for a new program to leverage shared-use services such as Uber, Lyft and Waze as a supplement to public transportation.

Kern Council of Governments has joined the other seven San Joaquin Valley Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and the National Center for Sustainable Transportation (NCST) at UC Davis to develop pilot projects that leverage ridesourcing (Lyft,

Uber, Waze), ridesplitting (first- and last-mile to and from transit stations), carsharing and bikesharing.

These options may prove to be a more cost-effective method of offering public transportation in rural, disadvantaged communities where bus service is too infrequent to meet passenger demand.

Under California's Senate Bill 375, MPOs are required to prepare a Sustainable Communities Strategy that identifies a plan for reducing passenger

vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) through coordinated land use and transportation strategies. Expanding transit service and locating development around transit stations are two strategies many California MPOs are pursuing.

The California Department of Transportation's Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant is helping to pay for the UC Davis study. Funding is now being sought to develop and test the pilot projects.

## SR 46 Widening update

*(Continued from page 1)*

Kern/San Luis Obispo County border.

The Phase 4 project will reconstruct an aging and heavily used interchange at Interstate 5. The widening spans approximately six miles from roughly the unincorporated Lost Hills area to the new interchange. The investment displaced a total of \$17,003,000 in federal earmark funding from the Segment 4A programming which can now be used on Segment 4B. Kern COG staff will continue to work with Caltrans to ensure that Segment 4B be delivered in the near term as a result of this Commission action.

Fresno Council of Governments	\$7,950,000
Riverside Council of Governments	\$4,326,000
San Diego Association of Governments	\$406,000
Stanislaus Council of Governments	\$11,392,000
Alameda CTC	\$1,000,000
TCRP Project No. 114 in Kern County	\$1,298,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$26,372,000</b>

## Regional Transportation Plan workshops

*(Continued from page 1)*

for up to two meetings, Kern COG has used the workshops as an opportunity to familiarize the public and stakeholders with complex transportation financing issues and to seek opinions on the best ways to use gas tax funding for local streets and roads, highways and freeways, public transportation and other, related services. The comments will be reported and used to craft the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan, a master plan of all transportation projects that use federal funding over the next 22 years.

The non-profit organizations are transportation stakeholders that were chosen based on their membership interests as well as their ability to draw those members to comment on regional planning efforts.

During the workshops, participants were given the opportunity to rank the top three growth principles and transportation spending strategies. Additionally, participants were asked to choose a hypothetical local funding solution to make up the annual funding shortfall for countywide road repairs.

The mini-grant recipients included:

- A Philip Randolph Community Development Corporation;
- Bike Bakersfield;
- California State University, Bakersfield;
- The Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce (2 meetings);
- The Greater Tehachapi Economic Development Council (2 meetings);
- The Kern County Black Chamber of Commerce (2 meetings);
- The Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability (2 meetings); and
- The United Way of Kern County (3 meetings).

In addition to the public input received during the mini-grant process, Kern COG also provided a booth or workshop to receive the same type of information from the public at the following events:

- 2017 Business, Transportation & Rail Expo;
- Ridgcrest Farmer's Market;
- Shafter Rotary Club;
- Ninth Annual Taft Chamber of Commerce Car Show; and
- McFarland Fourth of July celebration.