

# Kern Council of Governments News & Events

June 2019

## Centennial Corridor Mainline Groundbreaking Ceremony

On Wednesday June 12, 2019 the Thomas Roads Improvement Program broke ground on the final phase of the construction of the Centennial Corridor. This phase extends the freeway west of the SR 58/99 Interchange, crossing over Real Road, and running parallel to Stockdale Highway before turning northwest to cross over Stockdale Highway at Stine Road. The freeway then drops below grade as it extends through a residential neighborhood. An undercrossing at Ford Avenue and overcrossings at Marella Way and La Mirada Drive will maintain neighborhood circulation. The new facility crosses over California Avenue and the Carrier Canal and ties into the Westside Parkway. The new facility will bring a completed east-west freeway from Barstow through Bakersfield and eventually to Interstate 5.



## Tune in Tune Up

The Kern County Fairgrounds hosted the Tune In Tune up Event on Saturday, June 15, 2019. Thanks to the Valley Air District, the first 525 drivers who came to the event received emissions testing. If the car didn't pass the test, they received a \$500 voucher for smog repairs at a participating STAR certified smog shop in the area.

## SB2 Planning Grants Program

On June 5, 2019, Kern COG hosted representatives from the Department of Housing and Community Development and consultants to provide information on the SB2 Grant Program. This is a non-competitive program as long as you have a compliant housing element and have submitted either the 2017 or 2018 annual progress report. Ten cities are eligible for \$160,000 with

the City of Bakersfield and the County of Kern receiving \$625,000 each. Approximately 25 employees from the cities and the county participated in the workshop.

## VIP Luncheon with Egon Terplan Governor's Office on Economic Development

On Wednesday, June 19, Kern COG hosted a luncheon for Egon Terplan with the Governor's Office on Economic Development. The Luncheon was attended by 23 representatives from the County of Kern, City of Bakersfield, Kern COG Board, Kern Economic Development Corporation, Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce, the Separation of Grade District and FHWA and FTA. Mr. Terplan announced the Governor's new initiative, Regions Rise Together, to bring together diverse leaders and build a comprehensive plan that lifts every part of California.



## Federal Certification Review

Kern COG is undergoing its four-year certification review June 19, 20 & 21. Representatives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are conducted the Review. Topics included Transit Planning, the Congestion Mitigation Program, Freight Planning, Air Quality Planning, Title VI and Environmental Justice. The public was given the opportunity to speak with representatives from FHWA and FTA during a Public Listening Session held on June 19 from 5 to 7 p.m.

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## Tehachapi New Pedestrian Rail Crossings

The City of Tehachapi recently signed agreements with Union Pacific Railroad to enhance Green Street, Hayes Street and Dennison Road with sidewalks and medians and fencing along the north side of the tracks through downtown to funnel pedestrians to safer crossing locations. The three crossings will be completely reconstructed for better vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle movements. The project will use \$2.2 million in active Transportation Program funding



## Greenfield Walking Group Grant

The Greenfield Walking Group recently received a \$12,000 grant to make improvements to three parks in south Bakersfield. The money will be used to put in bike racks, repave crosswalks and make crosswalks safer to Rexland, Greenfield and Stiern parks in south Bakersfield. This is not the first grant that the group has received. The approximately 50-person organization recently raised \$80,000 to construct a new indoor soccer field at Rexland Acres Park, and in 2016 the group procured around \$6 million to add sidewalks, storm drains and other major improvements to the street leading to Fairview Elementary School. The Greenfield Walking Group is made up of active members that if they see something worth improving, they don't wait for the city to make a change they go out and make it themselves.

## Revitalization Strategy for Downtown Taft

The Taft City Council was recently presented with a conceptual plan for Taft's traditional downtown that focuses on the Center Street corridor. The plan will be incorporated into a future update of the Downtown Specific Plan and calls for adding up to 600 residential units in the downtown area between Front and Kern and Second and Tenth Streets. The plan also includes a proposal for turning the north side of the 300 block of Center Street into a block of three-story apartment buildings with retail on the bottom floor.



## Highway 395 Safety Concerns

Caltrans representatives and officials from Mojave, Barstow, Victorville California Highway Patrol and Assemblyman Vince Fong met on June 7 to address road safety on Highway 395. Caltrans District 9 representative, Brent Green, announced that Caltrans' new motto for Highway 395 is "Toward Zero Deaths" replacing the previous motto "Improving Mobility Across California". Caltrans gave an overview of current projects to address safety, the most significant being additional striping and "channelizers" (tall, slender cones mounted to the road) every 12 feet along most of the Highway from Ridgecrest to Interstate 15. There are also areas where the medians and shoulders will be widened, and about 4.5 miles of passing lanes that were removed in 2014 will be replaced. Caltrans will also add rumble strips and increased signage throughout certain parts of the highway.

## Upcoming Events

- July 18 - COG Board Workshop - Regional Housing Needs Allocation and Housing Element 101
- September 14-22 - National Drive Electric Week
- September 18 - 29 - Kern County Fair (Kern COG booth)
- October 2 - California Clean air Day
- October 7-11 - CommuteKern Rideshare Week
- October 13 - Tehachapi Apple Fest with EV Ride and Drive