

California Legislature

June 6, 2023

To: Commission Members
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, MS 52
Sacramento, CA 85814

RE: Support for the City of Rancho Cucamonga's Etiwanda Avenue Grade Separation Project and Request to Reallocate \$24.85 Million

Dear Commissioners,

We are writing to express our support for the City of Rancho Cucamonga's Etiwanda Grade Separation Project (Project) and the reallocation of \$24.85 million of the Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP) funds from construction into right-of-way (ROW). The existing Etiwanda Avenue railroad grade crossing is in the heart of a disadvantaged area of the city and on a vital industrial thoroughfare that significantly impact goods and people movement in the Inland Empire. Major benefits include reducing traffic congestion and delays, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing multi-modal safety, and stimulating economic development.

Currently, the Project has received environmental clearance from CEQA and is in the pre-construction, design, and Right-of-Way (ROW) acquisition phase. However, due to unanticipated skyrocketing costs in ROW acquisition and utility relocations, the cost of the Project has increased significantly, creating a funding gap of \$24.85 million to finish ROW. From the TCEP grant, the City has \$28 million allocated to construction and is seeking CTC approval to transfer \$24.85 million from construction to complete project ROW. If funds are unable to be transferred, the Project will not meet the TCEP milestones for 100% PS&E (Plans, Specifications, and Estimate) and ROW certification (deadline is September 30, 2023), which would cause the City to potentially lose the current \$75 million TCEP funding—in essence putting a final stop to the Project. However, if the City can transfer the funds and complete ROW, the Project will be in a strong position to attract state and federal funding to complete construction at a future time.

Prior to the TCEP grant, the City funded all the preparation of initial planning, concept design, and the Project Study Report, and most recently invested approximately \$1.65 million to cover the design phase shortfall to keep PS&E moving forward. Additionally, the City has aggressively

pursued state and federal grants to bridge the funding gap. In October 2022, the City applied to the Federal Railroad Administration for the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program requesting \$55 million. In February 2023, the City applied to the California State Transportation Agency for the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program for \$55 million. Lastly, the City plans to apply to the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Grants Program and other appropriate grant opportunities as funding notices become available.

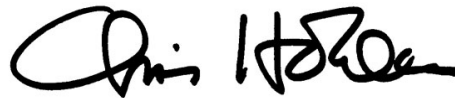
The City of Rancho Cucamonga has made the Project one of their highest infrastructure priorities and we admire their commitment to improving connectivity and safety for all roadway users throughout the region. If the funding gap to complete ROW cannot be closed, the Project will not be realized. In addition to lost time, efforts, and funding that have already been poured into the Project over the last decade, the area will be subjected to severe increased congestion, threats to public safety, and decreased quality of life.

For these reasons, we strongly support the Project and urge your consideration to approve the \$24.85 million budget transfer request so we can continue to enhance the economic growth and development of the Inland Empire together.

Sincerely,



Assembly Majority Leader
Eloise Gómez Reyes
50th Assembly District



Assembly Member Chris Holden
41st Assembly District



Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh
23rd Senate District

CC: Tanisha Taylor, Interim Executive Director, California Transportation Commission
Tony Tavares, Director, Caltrans
Toks Omishakin, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency
Mark Tollefson, Undersecretary, California State Transportation Agency