



STATE ROUTE-78 IMPERIAL COUNTY TRANSPORTATION CONCEPT SUMMARY

This Transportation Concept Summary (TCS) for the Imperial County portion of State Route 78 in District 11 serves as an analysis tool and conceptual long-range guide for future investment decisions in the transportation corridor.

DISCLAIMER

The information and data contained in this document are for planning purposes only and should not be relied upon for final design of any project. Any information in this TCS is subject to modification as conditions change and new information is obtained. Although planning information is dynamic and ever-changing, the District 11 Planning Division makes every effort to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of the information contained in the TCS. The information in the TCS does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation, nor is it intended to address design policies and procedures. If you encounter information that you deem to be inaccurate or unreliable, please contact Kim.Sturmer@dot.ca.gov or at 619-688-6967.



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING DIVISION
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DISTRICT 11

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SR-78 Imperial County Transportation Concept Summary October 2007

CORRIDOR PURPOSE

This document discusses transportation issues related to the Imperial County portion of State Route (SR) 78. A separate document on the San Diego County portion of SR-78 has been developed. To provide continuity, some transportation aspects of the entire corridor are included in this document.

SR-78 is a principal east-west route which serves interregional, intraregional, commuter and recreational travelers as well as interregional goods movement. In San Diego County, SR-78 traverses the cities of Oceanside, Vista, San Marcos, Escondido and a portion of San Diego. SR-78 also serves the communities of Ramona, Julian and provides a northerly extension to Borrego Springs. The western portion of the route between Oceanside and Ramona is a major commuter route. The remainder of the route in San Diego County serves outlying rural communities and recreational areas, including the Cleveland National Forest, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and Anza-Borrego State Park.

SR-78 serves interregional, goods movement and recreational traffic in Imperial County. It traverses the cities of Westmorland and Brawley and passes through the small rural communities of Alamorio, Glamis and Palo Verde before crossing into Riverside County. It provides access to the Salton Sea Recreational Area and the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area. SR-78 intersects a number of State routes, including I-5, I-15, SR-67, SR-79, SR-86, SR-111 and SR-115, prior to passing the District 11 boundary and terminating at I-10. The closest parallel State routes to SR-78 in San Diego County are SR-76, which varies between two and 15 miles to the north, and SR-56, which is 15 miles to the south. In Imperial County, the closest parallel State Route to SR-78 is I-8, which is approximately 36 miles to the south.

CORRIDOR NEEDS

The SR-78 Corridor needs in Imperial County focus primarily on the development of the SR-78/111 Brawley Bypass. This project will adopt a new alignment and construct a four-lane divided expressway from SR-86, northwest of the City of Brawley, to SR-111, southeast of the City of Brawley. The proposed SR-78/111 expressway will supersede the existing route segments of SR-78 and SR-111 in the city of Brawley. Major project features include structures at the New River and Union Pacific Railroad crossings, an interchange with SR-111, and accommodation for future Brawley Airport expansion. This project has been split into three stages: Stage 1 (Mead Road to SR-78), Stage 2 (SR-78 to Hovley Road), and Stage 3 (Hovley Road to SR-86). Construction of Stage 1 was completed in January 2005. Stage 2 is fully funded and construction is underway and expected to end in April 2010. Construction of Stage 3 is not yet funded and is expected to begin in November 2008 and end in April 2010. A Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) application for Stage 3 funding was completed in January, 2007 but it was not approved by the California Transportation Commission (CTC).

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The Brawley Bypass is needed to reduce accidents, traffic congestion, and time delays on SR-78 and SR-111 within the City of Brawley. The Brawley Bypass would accommodate increased regional and interregional traffic due to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The Brawley Bypass will help to facilitate international and interstate movement of goods by providing continuity between the international border with Mexico and Riverside County. The Brawley Bypass completes the final portion of the 67.8-mile interregional Calexico-Coachella Cargo Corridor (C-4), a major goods movement corridor providing travel for interregional, intra-regional and international trips. The Brawley Bypass will benefit the City of Brawley by moving interregional traffic, especially heavy trucks, off Main Street resulting in improved traffic flow and reduced likelihood of accidents. The Brawley Bypass will improve access to Brawley Beef, the largest private employer in Brawley and will allow the City of Brawley to redevelop the downtown core to encourage economic growth.

The SR-78 Northeast Corridor Feasibility Study was completed in April 2005 by a consultant for the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the Imperial Valley Association of Governments (IVAG). The purpose of the study is to provide an assessment of the potential need to improve SR-78 from SR-111 near Brawley eastward to the Riverside County Line due to increased future travel demand. The study concluded that there will be a modest increase in traffic by the year 2020, but the existing two lane highway has adequate capacity to carry the projected traffic volumes. However, recommended improvements should address specific safety, maintenance, and operational deficiencies. These recommended projects are shown in a table in the Recommended Corridor Improvements section of this TCS.

CORRIDOR ANALYSIS

Most of SR-78 in Imperial County is a two lane conventional highway except for the 4 lane portion that traverses the City of Brawley, also known as Main Street. This is the principal east-west arterial through downtown Brawley, and is characterized by signalized and non-signalized intersections, reduced speed zones, and developed property adjacent to the state right-of-way (R/W). Few streets traverse the city in an east-west direction, forcing local and interregional traffic to concentrate on Main Street. Most of the traffic on Main Street is destined for locations outside of the city. In addition, 20% of the traffic on Main Street is truck traffic, which is unusually high for an urban arterial.

Heavy congestion and time delays are experienced daily on SR-78, SR-86, and SR-111 within Brawley. According to the 2003 Project Report (PR), traffic projections indicate that demands on these routes will greatly increase, creating crucial operational and safety concerns for the region if no improvements are made. A comparison of the existing vs. projected 20-Year No-Build traffic conditions shows that traffic volumes (including truck traffic) and travel times through Brawley will roughly double. Without the Bypass, the additional traffic will cause extreme congestion in downtown Brawley. This would cause through traffic to establish alternate routes, overloading sections of the local street system and creating potential safety concerns between trucks, slow-moving agricultural vehicles, local residential, and other through traffic.

The Brawley Bypass will substantially reduce traffic congestion and time delays on the state routes within Brawley. According to the 2003 PR, a comparison of the 20-Year Build vs. No-Build alternatives shows that nearly half of the future traffic will be diverted from Main Street to the Brawley Bypass. In addition, up to 70% of the total future truck traffic will utilize the Bypass,

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reducing accidents and impacts to the community character by reducing the quantity of trucks passing through the downtown area. It is projected that construction of the Brawley Bypass will result in travel times that are 3.5 times faster than those that would result if the Bypass is not built.

SR-78, SR-86, and SR-111 are all transportation corridors of regional, statewide, and national significance serving international, interregional, regional, and local business as well as recreational traffic. These state routes and have been designated as follows:

ROADWAY DESIGNATION	SR-78	SR-86	SR-111
NAFTA Network (NAFTA NET)	X	X	X
International Border Trade Corridor (IBTC)	X	X	X
Intermodal Corridor of Economic Significance (ICES)	X	X	X
Terminal Access Route for Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) trucks	X	X	X
Interregional Road System (IRRS)	X	X	X
National Highway System (NHS)	X	X	X
Subsystem of Highways for the Movement of Extralegal Permit Loads (SHELL)			X

SR-78, SR-86, and SR-111 connect agricultural producers and packers of the Imperial and Coachella Valleys to distribution centers and consumers throughout the United States. This corridor services traffic from the winter growing regions in Imperial County and Arizona to the greater Los Angeles area as well as other interregional traffic. The Brawley Bypass completes the final link in a four-lane expressway system connecting these two farm-to-market routes as well as the IBTC and the ICES. The Brawley Bypass is included in the Freeway and Expressway (F&E) System as well as the IRRS, and is expected to be designated as part of the national network for STAA trucks and the NHS. The project is essential in providing transportation continuity between the international border with Mexico and Riverside County.

From a corridor perspective, these issues and improvements work together to improve traffic flow throughout the entire corridor.

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CORRIDOR TRAFFIC

SR-78 in Imperial County will be experiencing an increase in traffic in the future. . The following table and map show existing and future traffic volumes for various portions of SR-78.

Existing and Future Average Annual Daily Traffic

LOCATION	2006 AADT ¹	2006 LOS ²	2025 AADT ³	2025 LOS ²
San Diego County Line to north junction SR-86	900	A	1 700	B
South Jct. SR-86 to SR-111 (Main Street)	28,000	C	23,000 ⁴	B
SR-86 to SR-111 (Brawley Bypass)	N/A	N/A	22,000	B
SR-86 to SR-111 (Brawley Bypass)	N/A	N/A	22,000	B
SR-111 to west junction SR-115	3,900	B	9,500	C
West junction SR-115 to east junction SR-115	3,200	B	13,000	C
East junction SR-115 to Glamis Road	1,800	B	6,000	B
Glamis Road to Ogilby Road	1,700	B	4,500	B
Ogilby Road to Fourth Street	1,900	B	4,900	B
Fourth Street to Riverside County Line	1,800	B	5,300	B

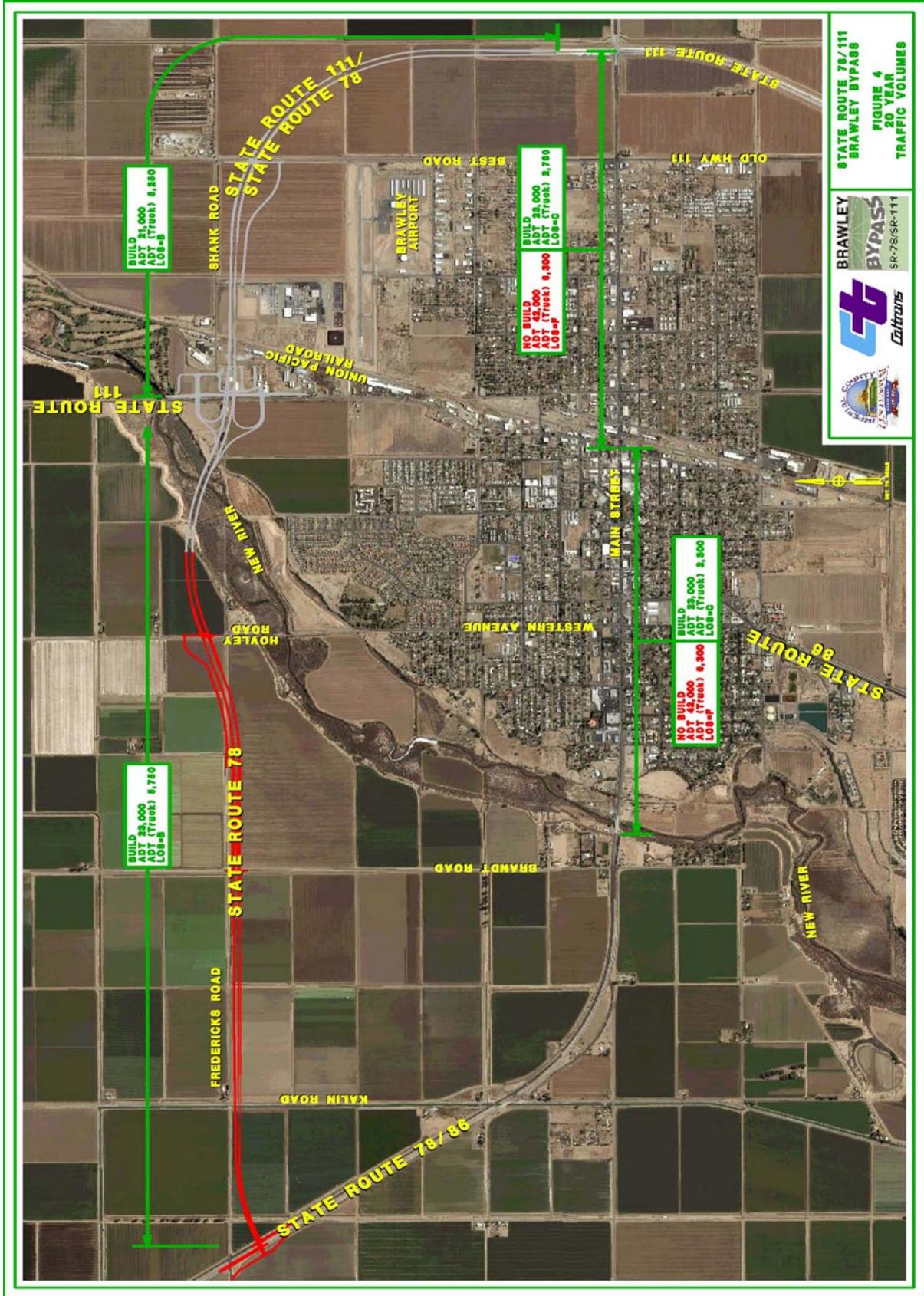
¹ Source: Caltrans Traffic Operations Traffic and Vehicle Data Systems Unit website (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/saferesr/trafdata/index.htm>)

² 2004 and 2025 Levels of Service are based on sketch level planning analysis and are not to be used for design purposes.

³ 2025 AADT's based on the Imperial County Transportation Model.

⁴ Assumes completion of Brawley Bypass.

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PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENT INFORMATION - CORRIDOR AND SYSTEM COORDINATION

SR-78 was added to the State Highway System in five sections:

1. Former Route 196 from Rte. 5 to Rte. 15 in 1933.
2. Former Route 197 from Rte. 15 to Rte. 67 in 1933.
3. Former Route 198 from Rte. 67 to Rte. 86 (Salton Sea) in 1933.
4. Former Route 146 from Rte. 86 (Brawley) to the Imperial/Riverside County Line in 1959.

SR-78 was added to the Freeway and Expressway System in 1959.

SR-78 is 81.8 miles in length in Imperial County, and extends from the San Diego County line (P.M. IMP 0.0) to the north junction of the State Route 86 (SR-86) (P.M. IMP 13.17). At this point, there is a 24 mile route break of SR-78 between the north junction of SR-86 and the south junction of SR-86 (P.M. IMP 13.18E). Between P.M. IMP 13.17 and P.M. IMP 13.18E, the two routes share the roadbed, however, this section is statutorily designated solely as SR-86. At this point, SR-78 again utilizes an independent alignment to the Riverside County line south of Blythe (P.M. IMP 80.7). Outside the District 11 jurisdiction, the route continues an additional 16.2 miles in Riverside County and terminates at Interstate 10 (I-10) in Blythe.

The federal functional classification for SR-78 in Imperial County is Minor Arterial, except for the portion from the south junction of SR-86 (P.M. IMP 13.18E) to the east junction of SR-111 (P.M. IMP 15.0), which is functionally classified as Urban-Other Principal Arterial.

California Senate Bill 300, enacted in 1989, created an Interregional Road System. Subsequently, Section 164.3 of the California Streets and Highways Code directed Caltrans to develop and submit to the Legislature an Interregional Road System (IRRS) Plan by February 1, 1990. In accordance with this plan, the IRRS is a series of interregional state highway routes outside the urbanized areas that provides access to, and links between, the state's economic centers, major recreational areas, and urban and rural regions. The entire Imperial County portion of SR-78 is included in the IRRS.

The National Highway System (NHS) Designation Act of 1995 was enacted by Congress in November, 1995. The purpose of the NHS is to provide an integrated national highway system that serves both urban and rural America; to connect major population centers, international border crossings, ports, airports, public transportation facilities, and other major travel destinations; to meet national defense requirements; and to serve interstate and interregional travel. The NHS includes the Interstate System routes. The portion of SR-78 in Imperial County from the south junction of SR-86 (P.M. IMP 13.18E) to the east junction of SR-111 (P.M. IMP 15.0) is included in the NHS.

The portions of for The Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) of 1982 provides for a route system federally designated for use by larger trucks. In Imperial county, SR-78 is designated as an STAA State Highway Terminal Access Route between the San Diego/Imperial County Line (P.M. IMP 0.0) and the North Junction of SR-86 (P.M. IMP 13.2), and between the South Junction of SR-86 (P.M. IMP 13.18E) and the Riverside County Line (P.M. IMP 80.7).

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To emphasize corridors that are most essential to the California economy in terms of national and international trade, a transportation network known as the Intermodal Corridors of Economic Significance (ICES) has been developed by Caltrans. To be included in the ICES system, a route should provide access between major freight intermodal facilities and serve freight traffic with the NAFTA countries of Canada and Mexico, as well as the Pacific Rim and other U.S. trade markets. The route should carry high interstate and international freight volumes and value important to the economy of California. The portion of SR-78 from the south junction of SR-86 (PM IMP 13.2E) to the west junction of SR-111 (PM IMP 13.8) is included in the ICES system.

The Imperial County portion of SR-78 from the San Diego/Imperial County Line (P.M. IMP 0.0) to the north junction of SR-86 (P.M. IMP 13.2) is on the Master Plan of State Highways Eligible for Official Scenic Highway Designation.

RECOMMENDED CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS - IMPERIAL COUNTY

Highway Corridor Improvements

POST MILE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION ¹
R9.1 – R11.7	Hovley Road to SR-86	Construct 4 Lane Expressway (SR-78/111 Brawley Bypass Stage 3)
15.0 – R21.0	Brawley Bypass to east junction SR-115	Widen to 4 lane conventional highway

¹ Both of these projects are included in the 2002 Imperial County Transportation Plan and will be included in the new Imperial County Transportation Plan currently under development.

The following table shows 2006 State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP) projects and projects included in the Caltrans District 11 Project Information Reporting System (PIRS).

POST MILE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	SOURCE
13.2 – 41.0	SR-86 to Glamis Road	Apply 20mm Asphalt Rubber Open Graded Overlay	PIRS
41.0 - 80.7	Glamis Road to Riverside County Line	Apply 20mm Asphalt Rubber Open Graded Overlay	2006 SHOPP
50.2 -80.7	2.2 miles west of Ogilby Road to Riverside County Line	Pavement Rehabilitation	PIRS

The following table shows projects included in the District 11 2007 10-Year SHOPP Needs Plan and the five recommended projects listed in the April 2005 SR-78 Northeast Corridor Study.

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POST MILE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	FISCAL YEAR/SOURCE
0.0 -80.7	San Diego County Line to Riverside County Line	Upgrade 114 Signs (Materials and Exit #s)	2017/18
21.0	SR-78/SR-115	Intersection Improvements	Northeast Corridor Study
37.0	Osborne Park Road Overlook	Construct slow vehicle turnouts for safe passing	Northeast Corridor Study
50.5 – 52.3	1.8 miles west of Ogilby Road to Ogilby Road	Roadway profile corrections to improve site distance	Northeast Corridor Study
65.8 -66.8	3 miles west to 2 miles west of Walters Camp Road	Roadway raising and drainage improvements	Northeast Corridor Study
68.5 – 69.2	Milpitas Wash Road to 0.4 mile east of Walters Camp Road	Roadway raising and drainage improvements	Northeast Corridor Study

Transit Improvements

The majority of transit service in Imperial Valley is provided by Imperial Valley Transit (ICT). ICT is an intercity fixed route system subsidized by the Imperial Valley Association of Governments (IVAG), administered by the County Department of Public Works, and operated by Laidlaw Transit Services, Inc., a private-for-profit service. ICT operates six fixed-routes which serve the communities of Brawley, Calexico, Calipatria, El Centro, Holtville, Niland, Seeley, and Westmorland, Monday through Saturday. Additionally, ICT operates limited service to Winterhaven (each Wednesday), Bombay Beach (each Thursday), and two express round-trips to Imperial Valley College (IVC Express), which supplements the regularly scheduled service. The IVC Express offers one round trip from Niland and one round-trip from Calexico on IVC school days only. Passenger ridership currently averages 23,000 passengers a month. ICT routes 50 and 200 utilize portions of SR-78/Main Street in Brawley.

The County also administers Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service known as Areawide Independent Mobility (AIM) Transit. AIM Transit offers a curb-to-curb Dial-A-Ride service for the disabled who are not able to use the traditional fixed-route service. While the Dial-A-Ride service remains available to seniors over the age of 60, priority is given to those certified under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). ADA Paratransit will transport users anywhere within a ¾ mile corridor of Imperial County Transit routes. Additional, individual agency public transit services include demand-responsive Dial-A-Ride services offered by the Cities of Brawley, Calexico, El Centro, and Imperial.

Future transit service improvements will include expanding and/or restructuring current transit service to improve efficiency and productivity, adding new services such as the El Centro Circulator Shuttle, and conducting additional Circulator Bus Feasibility studies. In addition, the consultant-prepared South Imperial Valley Corridor Study currently underway will identify potential multimodal improvements south of Interstate 8 from El Centro through the City of Calexico.

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NONMOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

The County of Imperial's bicycle facilities program is designed to enhance environmental and social benefits for the citizens of Imperial County by providing an integrated network system of bicycle and pedestrian facility for the safe and efficient movement in and through the County of Imperial. This includes an integrated bicycle circulation system which includes facilities to promote the environmental and social benefits of commuter and recreational bicycling. Class II bikeways shall be planned into appropriate Prime, Major, and Secondary arterials. The County shall cooperate with other governmental agencies to provide connection and continuation of bicycle corridors.

The County of Imperial Bicycle Master Plan Update (September 2003) recommends implementation of a 252 mile system of bicycle lanes, routes and pathways that will link to schools, shopping, employment and future expanding residential areas. In addition, Bicycle Master Plans were developed in 2002 and 2003 for the Cities of Brawley, Calexico, El Centro, Calipatria, Holtville, Imperial, and Westmorland.

Bicycle riders and pedestrians have a legal right to access most public roads in California. While pedestrians are prohibited from virtually all freeways, bicycles are permitted on the outside shoulders of nearly 25 percent of all freeways located within the state. The legal authority to prohibit bicycle and pedestrian use from freeways and expressways is specified in the California Vehicle Code section 21960.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Caltrans District 11 Development Review staff in the Planning Division review federal, state, and local planning or proposed development activity that has the potential to impact state transportation facilities or other resources under Caltrans' jurisdiction, and to recommend conditions of project approval that eliminate those impacts or reduce them to a level of insignificance. Typically, this involves the review of development proposals in which Caltrans is either a responsible (permitting) or commenting (reviewing) agency, but has no discretionary approval power over the project other than permit authority. Development Review staff work cooperatively with local lead agencies and developers in determining the type and level of mitigation needed to offset project impacts. They are also responsible for identifying other functional areas within District 11 that are affected by the proposal, and coordinating the circulation of appropriate documents with other functional areas for review and comment.

Based on the Caltrans Traffic Impact Study (TIS) guidelines, a 1,000 Average Daily Traffic (ADT) threshold size triggers the need for developers to prepare a traffic study for their project. The following information generally includes projects for which an Environmental Document, a Specific Plan or a Master Plan has been or will be prepared. There are approximately six potential major development projects within and adjacent to the SR-78 corridor in Imperial County that will each generate more than the 1,000 ADT threshold. Total cumulative projected ADT from these developments is expected to be approximately 50,300 ADT. There may be an additional number of smaller development projects that may have additional cumulative impacts on traffic in the corridor. Because of uncertainties associated with future demographic, socioeconomic, and political climates, the scale of development may be subject to change. Changes in land use prompting rapid housing and commercial development growth will need to be monitored closely by all impacted jurisdictions and agencies. Appropriate traffic studies for proposed developments will need to be conducted and reviewed carefully by Caltrans staff. Land development and local capital improvement projects should also be coordinated with Caltrans projects.

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The following table shows proposed projects in the Imperial CountySR-78 corridor currently in the development review process. Construction of some of these developments may either be underway or complete:

POST MILE	PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	ADT
2.07	Blu-In RV Park	R V Park	4,300
14.30	River Drive # 31	Residential	1,000
15.04	C & C Gas Station + Mini-Mart	14 -Pump Gas Station, Mini-Mart	2,200
16.29	Lucky Ranch LLC/SDSU Brawley Campus	Educational Facility For 350 Students (Phase 1)	37,600
41.35	Glamis Sand Dunes R.V. Storage	R.V. Storage	3,000
79.12	Sprawls Island - La Paz County, Arizona	Mixed Use	2,200