



Tab 14

Office of the City Manager

April 15, 2009

California Transportation Commission
1120 N St, Rm 2221 (MS-52)
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 653-2134

Re: Proposition 1B State Local Partnership Program
Applicant: City of Tulare
Project: Tulare Ave/E Street Traffic Signal Project
Funding Request: \$90,000

Dear Commissioner:

On behalf of the City of Tulare's residents, employees, businesses, and visitors, I respectfully ask for your consideration in allocating funding to the City of Tulare's *Tulare Avenue/E Street Traffic Signal Project* under the competitive portion of the Proposition 1B State Local Partnership Program (SLPP) during the Commission's meeting April 15-16, 2009 in Sacramento.

Consistent with the SLPP guidelines, the *Tulare Ave./E Street* project has local matching uniform developer fees (\$90,000) and is able to meet the 50 percent SLPP match requirement of \$90,000, for a total project cost of \$180,000.

While this project did not appear to score as highly as some of the other projects on the list of staff funding recommendations, the City understands that there is still approximately \$180,000 available in this SLPP funding cycle that could be programmed for additional projects. While the City of Tulare understands that the CTC has a difficult job in deciding which projects to fund, we are confident that California and its taxpayers will experience immediate and long-term benefits as a result of the *Tulare Ave./E Street* project for the following reasons:

- California Taxpayers Double Their Investment. The *Tulare Ave./E Street* project is currently a four way intersection, with traffic controlled through the use of stop signs. The intersection is located in the City of Tulare approximately one-half mile west of where State Route 137 becomes Tulare Ave. Hence, Tulare Ave. is the extension of State Route 137, which goes directly through the heart of Tulare's downtown. Approximately 10,000 vehicles a day utilize this intersection, which accommodates traffic flow from State Route 137 as well as local arterial streets. State Local Partnership Program monies would provide much needed funding for a traffic light signalization project that would benefit both the state and local transportation systems, making it a true State-Local partnership.

- Economic Stimulus and Project Readiness. The *Tulare Ave./E Street* project is scheduled to commence construction in November 2009, which will ensure that bond monies fund “projects ready to go,” providing immediate economic benefit to the entire state. Additionally, because this project is located in a Redevelopment area in the City, it will also result in the creation of development opportunities, resulting in significant long-term job creation.
- Improvements to Traffic Circulation, Air Quality, and Safety. The traffic signal project at the Tulare Ave./E Street intersection will significantly improve traffic circulation coming in to, and out of, the City of Tulare. The current four way stop requires each of the daily 10,000 vehicles to wait repeatedly for other vehicles to move forward, resulting in long back ups. This also requires that these vehicles sit idling for extended periods of time, contributing to the detrimental air quality in the Central Valley. Additionally, pedestrians and bicycles must navigate the maze of cars and attempt to cross the intersection with an unprotected right of way, posing serious risk to public health and safety. This is particularly important because students use this intersection as a route to school, as do seniors walking to the Tulare Senior Center located in the complex of City-owned buildings on the northeast corner of the intersection.

As an added benefit, improved safety and air quality at this intersection will encourage more walking and cycling in the surrounding area, a definite health benefit to area residents who suffer disproportionately from asthma and diabetes.

The City of Tulare sincerely appreciates your review of the *Tulare Ave./E Street* project. Again, we are confident that these projects are directly in line with voters’ expectations, and look forward to the opportunity to work together. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or City Manager Darrel Pyle at (559) 684-4200, or dpyle@ci.tulare.ca.us .

Respectfully,



Craig Vejvoda
Mayor



April 16, 2009

California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, Room 2221 (MS-52)
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Proposition 1B State Local Partnership Program
Applicant: City of Tulare
Project: Tulare Ave/E Street Traffic Signal Project

Dear Commissioner:

On behalf of the City of Tulare's residents, employees, businesses, and visitors, I would like to thank you for your time during yesterday's hearing to allow the City to present the merits of the *Tulare Avenue/E Street Traffic Signal Project* under the competitive portion of the Proposition 1B State Local Partnership Program (SLPP).

Following up on the Commission's discussion, the City of Tulare would like to provide some additional information regarding the *Tulare Avenue/E Street Traffic Signal* benefits, particularly in regard to feedback we received from staff. Specifically, we would like to provide further clarification on how the project meets the following rating criteria:

Multi-Modal: In addition to the 10,000 average vehicles per day passing through the intersection, significant pedestrian and bicycle traffic also utilizes this intersection. Because this intersection is located in West Tulare, an economically disadvantaged area of the City, its population is more reliant on pedestrian, bicycle and public transit modes of transportation, which significantly increases the intersection's multi-modal function. In addition, many of these residents walk or bike to the community facilities located at the Northeast corner of the intersection, which includes a library, senior center and city museum.

To accommodate significant bicycle activity in this part of the City, E Street also features Class II bike lanes. E Street also feeds in to the nearby Santa Fe Trail, a Rails to Trails project, that bisects the entire City of Tulare and passes through its downtown district. The City's transit center is located along the Santa Fe Trail in the downtown area.

Safety: In addition to the more obvious safety benefits to pedestrian and bicycles in converting the current four way stop in to a signalized intersection, it is important to note that a fire station is located at the Northeast corner of the intersection as well. This is extremely important to public safety as safety personnel often face difficulty in trying to navigate through traffic queued at the intersection, resulting in emergency response delays.

Of note, all new traffic signals in the City of Tulare feature emergency vehicle preemption timing which transfers right of way to responding vehicles. The proposed project would include this technology to enhance public safety.

Reliability: Though the *Tulare Avenue/E Street* intersection is already controlled through the use of stop signs, level of service would improve significantly by converting it to a signalized intersection that can more easily accommodate the high volume of traffic coming into and out of the City, including via State Highway 137.

Air Quality and Environmental Benefits: California's Central Valley suffers disproportionately from poor air quality compared to other regions of the state. This results in higher than average rates of asthma and other respiratory ailments, particularly among youth. The current four way stop at the *Tulare Avenue/E Street* intersection requires each of the average 10,000 vehicles per day that utilize this intersection to come to a stop resulting in long vehicle queues. Added up over time, this extended idling further contributes to the detrimental air quality in the Central Valley. Reduced vehicle idling times would also represent an increase in energy efficiency.

Leverage: After careful review of the City's budget, the City may be able to contribute additional local funding sources (Measure I, additional Uniform Developer Fees, etc) to reduce the SLPP request from \$90,000 to \$70,000 (i.e. a 39 percent match request vs. a 50 percent match.) if necessary for Commission support. This would also result in stretching SLPP resources while simultaneously delivering a very important project in the City of Tulare.

The City of Tulare sincerely appreciates your review of the *Tulare Ave./E Street* project. Again, we are confident that these projects are directly in line with voters' expectations, and look forward to the opportunity to work together. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or City Manager Darrel Pyle at (559) 684-4200, or dpyle@ci.tulare.ca.us.

Respectfully,



Michael Miller
Senior Civil Engineer