

**TWENTY-NINE PALMS BAND OF MISSION INDIANS
IMPROVING SURFACE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE
DTOS59-25-RA-RAISE
FY 2025 National Infrastructure Investments
CFDA 20.933**

Project Description

Name: Improving Surface Transportation Infrastructure

Project Purpose

The purpose of the project is to improve and rehabilitate the access road to the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport and all associated service roads within the project area that are located on tribal lands. This work will enable the Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians to create an intermodal transportation hub for commerce, customs processing, agricultural quarantine, and workforce development at the airport. Activities include improving and rehabilitating the access road and all service roads within the project site.

Detailed Statement of Work

Technical and Engineering Aspects of the Project

The geotechnical investigation, archaeological survey, and hazmat assessments have been completed. The site has access to electricity. Water infrastructure improvements have been completed. The Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians is conducting preliminary work with the firm that completed the airport master plan to benefit from existing resources. All 611 acres of the project site are under the jurisdiction of the Tribe.

Current Design Status of the Project

The project is in the preliminary design phase. The development roll plot below identifies the location of the primary access road to the airport. The Tribe is exercising due diligence to ensure that the design provides sufficient detail for construction and procurement. The goal is a feasible, efficient, and cost-effective project that will mitigate environmental impacts. The Tribe's Development and Airport Operations team is working closely with the Tribal Environmental Protection Agency to protect cultural, historic, and natural resources at the project site.



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Transportation Challenges and How Project Addresses those Challenges

Planned land uses in the local area and region are generating a need for expanded surface transportation infrastructure that incorporates opportunities for commerce and workforce development. Tribal leadership is addressing this challenge by strategically locating the project in Thermal, California, a hub for the logistics industry with 1,965 logistics establishments. The County has the 4th largest number of logistics establishments among California's 58 counties. With a 67% increase in transportation and warehousing industries since 2021, Riverside County has the third fastest growing workforce in California and the twelfth largest workforce in the United States.

Project History

Completed Components

The Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians acquired 611 acres immediately adjacent to the Jacqueline Cochran Airport in Thermal, California. The acquisition came through the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process and is now under the jurisdiction of the Tribe. The Tribe is working in partnership with the Riverside County Airport management team to apply to the United States Customs and Border Control agency to become a U.S. Customs and Border Protection General Aviation Facility for the clearance of aircraft arriving from international destinations. The Tribe worked closely with leaders of local Tribal Nations and the County of Riverside to apply for a Foreign Trade Zone designation on Indian Reservations and on County property. When approved, this designation will include support staff from U.S. Customs and Border Protection Services. The Tribe's surface transportation infrastructure activities on tribal lands include improving and rehabilitating the access road to the airport and associated service roads to facilitate commerce, trade, and employment opportunities.

The geotechnical investigation, archaeological survey, and hazmat assessments are complete. The site has access to electricity and the Tribe has established water infrastructure. The Tribe has engaged the authors of the airport master plan to benefit from existing data and resources.

Context of Other Transportation Infrastructure Investments

This project is part of a comprehensive set of investments led by the Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians. The Tribe is leading improvements of the Dillon Road corridor in Coachella, California that involves widening the roadway from two to six lanes from Cabazon Road/Avenue 48 to the SR-86 Southbound interchange and reconstructing the structurally deficient Dillon Road Bridge with twin parallel bridges that span over the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel (CVSC). The Dillon Road corridor and Dillon Bridge projects complement improving surface transportation infrastructure near the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport by addressing traffic congestion associated with a forecasted increase in travel and industrial demand. Several agencies are involved in these comprehensive transportation projects, including the Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, Federal Transportation Highway Administration, Caltrans, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the City of Coachella, and the County of Riverside.

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Geographic Description of the Proposed Project

The site is directly adjacent to Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport in Thermal, California. It is five miles from I-10, the busiest East-West corridor in Eastern Riverside County, which provides access to the entire Southwest region. The site is five miles from California State Highway 111. The site consists of 7 legal parcels totaling approximately 611.69 acres located at the northeast corner of Avenue 60 and Harrison Street, in Thermal, Riverside County, California. The site is in the southwest quarter of Section 20, the west half of Section 28, and the majority of Section 29, Township 6 South, Range 8 East, San Bernardino Baseline and Meridian. The property boundaries are defined by Harrison Street to the west; a dirt road to the north; chain link fencing along much of the northeast and east boundaries (shared with airport); and Avenue 60 to the south.



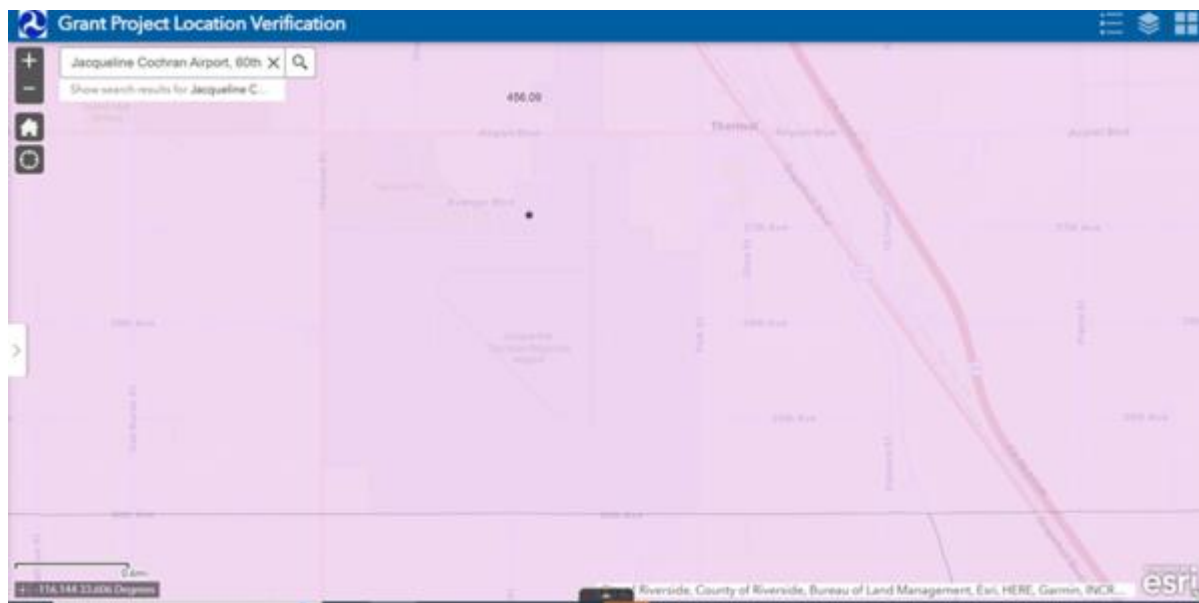
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Project Location

The project is located on Highway 86, between 60th Avenue and Airport Blvd in Thermal, California.

The project is in a Historically Disadvantaged Community based on the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)

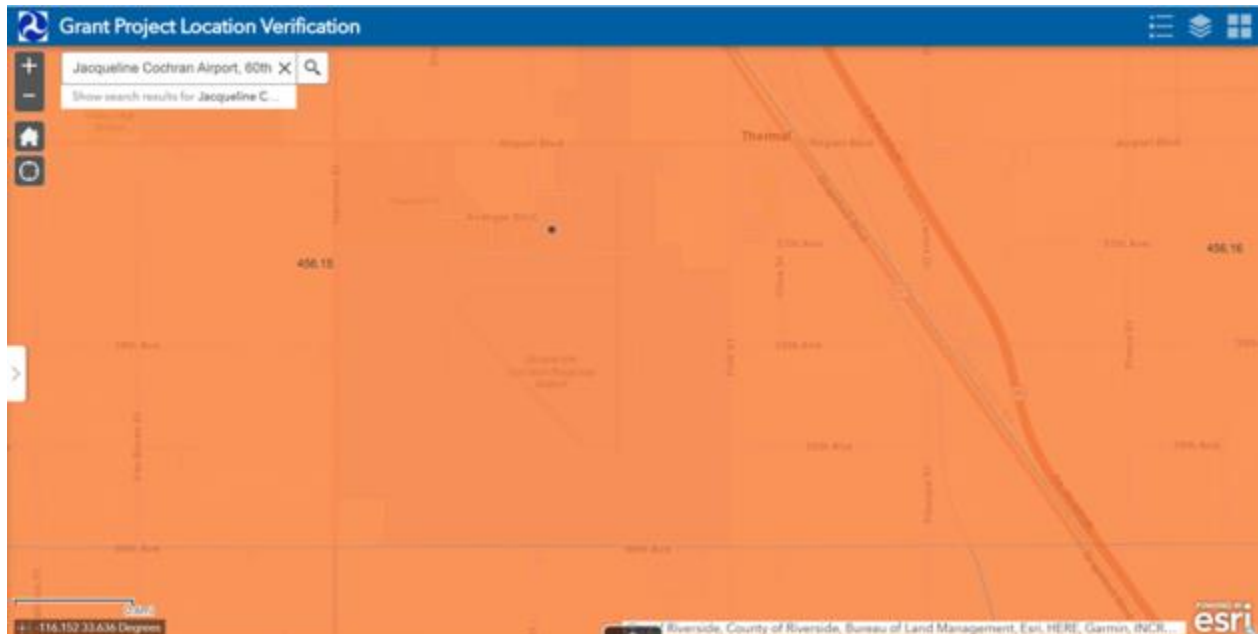
The location is in Historically Disadvantaged Census Tract 456.09. These are tribal lands of the Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians. Tribal communities are historically disadvantaged according to the CEJST at <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#13.14/33.709/-116.17632>.



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The Project is in an Area of Persistent Poverty

The project is in an area of persistent poverty in census tract 456.15. This information was obtained with the Grant Project Location Verification tool at <https://maps.dot.gov/BTS/GrantProjectLocationVerification/>.



The Project is Not in an Urban Area

The project is not located in an urban area with a population greater than 200,000 as designated by the 2020 Census. The project location is in Thermal, California, an unincorporated area with a population of approximately 1,420 (U.S. Census 2023 5-year Estimate, <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US0678456-thermal-ca/>).