



# CITY OF PALM DESERT

73-510 FRED WARING DRIVE  
PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA 92260-2578  
TEL: 760-346-0611  
INFO@PALMDESERT.GOV

December 27, 2024

Office of the Secretary of Transportation  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

## Re: CVAG's ACCESS Indian Canyon Drive Project – Support

Dear Office of the Secretary of Transportation:

The City of Palm Desert is pleased to express strong support for the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) and its application for the Fiscal Year 2025 RAISE Discretionary Grant from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT). The grant will fund the Addressing Climate Change, Emergencies, and Sandstorms (ACCESS) Indian Canyon Drive project, which will enhance safety, climate resilience, and sustainability while protecting critical transportation infrastructure from the impacts of extreme weather events.


The ACCESS project is a vital step toward building a resilient transportation network in the desert region. Indian Canyon Drive, a major arterial road in the City of Palm Springs, connects residents and visitors to essential goods, services, and employment opportunities. However, this road crosses the Whitewater River and a sand dune conservation area, leaving it highly vulnerable to flooding and blowsand. In 2023 and 2024 alone, Indian Canyon Drive was closed for a cumulative 162 days due to these weather-related challenges.

These closures disrupt the region's transportation system, hindering access to jobs, schools, medical facilities, and critical resources. Of particular concern, closures sever direct access to Desert Regional Medical Center—the region's only Level I Trauma Center—compromising public safety. Additionally, prolonged road closures worsen air quality, increase economic burdens, and disproportionately affect disadvantaged communities.

CVAG's ACCESS project addresses these urgent challenges by implementing climate-resilient infrastructure solutions. The proposed improvements include bridges that will keep Indian Canyon Drive open during extreme weather events while providing habitat linkages for threatened species. The project also advances sustainability goals by supporting multi-modal transportation options and renewable energy generation. Together, these measures will mitigate social, economic, and environmental impacts while improving the quality of life for residents and visitors across the region.

This project is essential for enhancing regional resilience, sustainability, and safety. For these reasons, the City of Palm Desert strongly supports CVAG's application for the RAISE Grant and urges your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Jan C. Harnik, Mayor  
City of Palm Desert



# CITY OF PALM DESERT

73-510 FRED WARING DRIVE  
PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA 92260-2578  
TEL: 760-346-0611  
INFO@PALMDESERT.GOV

December 27, 2024

Kristin White, Acting Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

## **Re: CVAG's ACCESS Indian Canyon Drive Project - Support**

Dear Acting Administrator White:

The City of Palm Desert enthusiastically supports the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) application to the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) PROTECT Grant Opportunity for Fiscal Year 2025. This application seeks funding for the Addressing Climate Change, Emergencies, and Sandstorms (ACCESS) Indian Canyon Drive project—a critical initiative to enhance the resilience of Indian Canyon Drive, a major arterial road, against natural hazards.

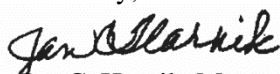
The ACCESS project aligns with USDOT's priorities of advancing safety, equity, climate resilience, environmental protection, and job quality. By addressing the frequent and prolonged closures of Indian Canyon Drive caused by flooding and blowsand, the project will safeguard the communities that rely on this vital roadway. Enhancing the road's resilience will directly improve access to essential services, reduce emissions caused by congestion, and strengthen regional connectivity.

Indian Canyon Drive serves as a crucial transportation artery in the City of Palm Springs, linking the Whitewater River area with a sand dune conservation zone. This roadway provides indispensable access to goods, services, and employment opportunities. However, in 2023 and 2024, closures due to flooding and blowsand totaled 162 days, causing significant disruptions. These closures ripple through the region's transportation network, increasing congestion, travel times, and emissions while limiting access to schools, medical facilities, and workplaces. Notably, road closures sever direct access to Desert Regional Medical Center, the region's only Level I Trauma Center, jeopardizing public safety. Such impacts disproportionately affect disadvantaged communities and are expected to worsen as extreme weather events become more frequent and severe.

The ACCESS project will incorporate critical climate resilience measures to mitigate these challenges. Elevated bridges will ensure the road remains open while preserving habitat linkages for threatened species. The project also prioritizes sustainability by promoting multi-modal transportation options and incorporating renewable energy solutions. These features will generate substantial benefits for disadvantaged communities, enhancing the overall quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

For these reasons, the City of Palm Desert strongly supports CVAG's application for the PROTECT Grant. We urge USDOT to recognize the transformative potential of the ACCESS Indian Canyon Drive project and grant it favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Jan C. Harnik, Mayor  
City of Palm Desert



# CITY OF PALM DESERT

73-510 FRED WARING DRIVE  
PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA 92260-2578  
TEL: 760-346-0611  
INFO@PALMDESERT.GOV

December 27, 2024

Tony Tavares, Director  
California Department of Transportation  
Division of Transportation Planning  
1120 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant – Sustainable Communities Program (Fiscal Year 2025/26) – Coachella Valley Multimodal Corridor Plan (CV MCP)**

Dear Director Tavares,

On behalf of the City of Palm Desert, I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the Coachella Valley Association of Governments' (CVAG) application for funding under the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program. Palm Desert will be directly involved in providing relevant community-based input during the planning process and assisting with the implementation of key recommendations through active participation in the Multimodal Corridor Plan's Community and Stakeholder Meeting Groups.

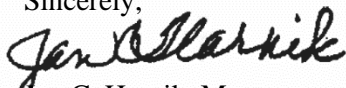
The CVAG Multimodal Corridor Plan for Coachella Valley is designed to identify and prioritize transportation network improvements that promote sustainable and equitable growth. By evaluating traffic operations and mobility along the region's key transportation corridors, the Plan will address existing challenges while expanding mobility options beyond dependence on personal vehicles.

As a rapidly growing region, the Coachella Valley faces significant transportation challenges due to limited multimodal options relative to its population and geographic size. While corridors such as Interstate 10, State Route 62, and State Route 86 are vital to the region, the heavy reliance on automobile travel highlights the pressing need for improved connectivity across these critical routes. The CV MCP will leverage the Valley's unique layout and transit-supportive density to advance corridor-level improvements, including expanded public transportation options such as bus rapid transit and enhanced multimodal accessibility.

By fostering improved connectivity among the region's nine municipalities, unincorporated areas, and tribal jurisdictions, the Plan aims to bridge economic and social divides between the western and eastern valleys. These enhancements will provide transportation solutions that support sustainable growth and strengthen regional ties. For these reasons, the City of Palm Desert strongly supports this project and respectfully urges Caltrans to approve funding through the Sustainable Communities Grant Program. This initiative will not only enhance transportation infrastructure but also help create a robust housing supply that is well-integrated with sustainable and efficient mobility options.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project. We look forward to its implementation and the positive impacts it will bring to the Coachella Valley.

Sincerely,

  
Jan C. Harnik, Mayor  
City of Palm Desert