



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Jefferson Interchange Breaks Ground Friday

INDIO – A modernized Jefferson Street freeway interchange that will improve mobility and ease traffic issues in and around Indio will begin construction with a groundbreaking ceremony scheduled for 10 a.m. Friday.

The event will be held on the north side of the interchange. General parking will be available along Varner Road.

“With the phenomenal growth in north Indio, reconstructing this interchange has been a significant regional need for decades,” said Supervisor John J. Benoit. “This project will improve traffic flow at one of our valley’s most important arteries and the gateway to Indio, Bermuda Dunes, La Quinta and the eastern Coachella Valley.”

The Riverside County Transportation Department is the lead agency for the project and is working in partnership with the City of Indio, the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), the Riverside County Transportation Commission and the California Department of Transportation. Representatives from these agencies, local officials and state legislators will attend the groundbreaking.

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The Jefferson Street/Interstate 10 interchange was originally built in 1958 as part of the construction of Interstate 10 through Riverside County. The freeway overcrossing was aligned at its present location due to design constraints of that time associated with the presence of the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way. In 1972, the westbound Indio Boulevard on-ramp overcrossing was constructed.

The current configuration can be confusing and constricting to traffic flow. Drivers heading east on the freeway have to cross two bridges, wait at stop signs and cross traffic to get on the freeway. Additionally, the interchange was designed before the growth in north Indio. By 2036, the Riverside County Transportation Department expects 53,000 vehicles per day at the location.

Replacing the outdated interchange has been a significant regional need for many years, and the highest ranked regional project in CVAG's 2010 Transportation Project Prioritization Study. It is the sixth and final interchange project in the last five years to be improved as part of the Coachella Valley Interstate 10 Corridor Improvement Plan.

The project will replace the existing Jefferson Street bridge and northbound Indio Boulevard overcrossing with a single bridge designed for traffic entering and exiting the freeway from both directions. The new eight-lane bridge includes two turning pockets in the middle, shoulders wide enough to accommodate bicycles and sidewalk on the northbound side of Jefferson Street.

The bridge will also incorporate desert oasis aesthetic features and landscaping, providing a signature entrance to Indio.

The total project cost, including environmental analysis, right of way acquisition, design and construction management, is \$71.4 million. In February, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors awarded the \$42.3 million construction contract to Riverside Construction Company, Inc. of Riverside. The competitive bid came in nearly \$13 million, or 23 percent, below the engineer's estimate, translating into substantial savings for local governments and taxpayers.

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The project is complex and construction will take approximately two years to complete. The agencies are coordinating together to minimize the impact to motorists and the community during the roadwork. Drivers will start to see detours by late spring or early summer. Freeway closures, when bridges will be demolished, will occur at night.

Please visit www.i10cvcprojects.com or call the project hotline 877-672-7765 for project information, commuter alerts and to view construction camera footage.

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Supervisor John J. Benoit represents the eastern two-thirds of Riverside County on the Riverside County Board of Supervisors. Stretching from Palm Springs and Desert Hot Springs, south to the Salton Sea and east to Blythe and the Colorado River, the 4th District is the largest geographical district in the county.

Supervisor Benoit's office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.