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Multi-modal hub receives boost from CHSRA

By ALLISON GATLIN Special to the Valley Press

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PALMDALE — The city of Palmdale's efforts to transform its existing transit center on 6th Street East near Sierra Highway into an integrated, multi-modal hub, which accommodates two high-speed rail lines got a boost this week when the California High Speed Rail Authority agreed to partner financially in the planning phase.

The Authority, which is overseeing development of a bullet train linking Los Angeles and San Francisco, agreed to provide matching funds in support of an application for \$1.35 million in federal

grant funds.

The Authority has agreed to \$250,000 in matching funds, along with Palmdale's \$200,000, Deputy City Manager Michael Behen said.

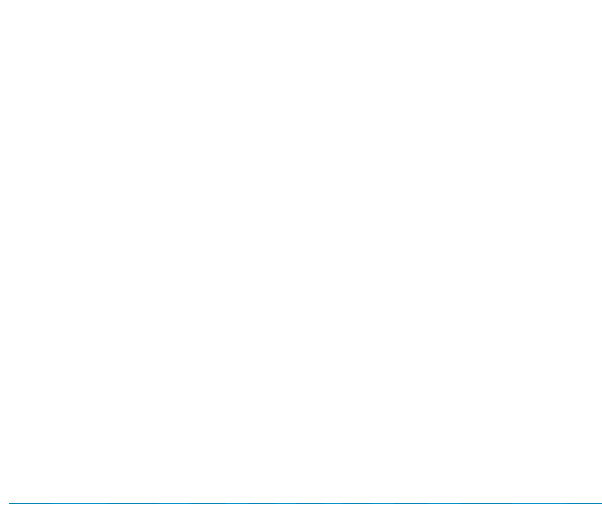
If awarded, the grant would support completing the Station Implementation Master Plan. This is the next step in the design phase for the project, following the Transit Area Specific Plan approved in December.

"This takes it to the next level," Behen said.

The Master Plan will include such details as vertical and horizontal layout, how the various transportation modes will function with each other and the like. It will also serve to coordinate the efforts of the individual partners involved in the station use.

The California High Speed Rail Authority also partnered with Palmdale in developing the Transit Area Specific Plan, contributing \$600,000 to the total cost of about \$1 million, Behen said.

The Palmdale station is one of a dozen in the initial phase of the rail line. It would link not only the California High Speed Rail, but also the planned Brightline West high speed train to Las Vegas, as well as Metrolink, Amtrak, buses and other transportation services.



“This future station will be a transformative development in North Los Angeles County,” Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger, whose Fifth District includes Palmdale, said. “The Master Plan is a key steppingstone toward defining and delivering a world-class rail center. We will significantly boost ridership and provide for viable transit alternative to the current two-hour automobile commute, transforming mobility options for equity-focused communities and future commuters alike.”

Palmdale Mayor Steve Hofbauer said this is a huge step forward in improving transportation connectivity between the Antelope Valley and the Central Valley, which will boost economic vitality both locally and statewide.

“Furthermore, the project will integrate with other modes of transportation, which will mitigate traffic congestion, manage efficient movement of people through and in-between urban centers and protect our environment through reduced carbon emissions and healthier air quality,” he said.

The planning grant being sought is part of the US Department of Transportation’s Rebuilding America’s Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program.

This program will award up to \$1 billion in grants nationwide, \$30 million of which is set aside for planning grants.

“We think it’s a great opportunity,” Behen said.

The city received 24 letters of support for the \$1.8 million planning project from across the community, from public officials to social services organizations, from labor unions and economic development organizations to the transportation agencies that will use the station.

In evaluating RAISE grant applications, the Department will look at criteria including safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, innovation and partnership, according to the program website.

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