

## Public input sought on High Desert Corridor

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VICTORVILLE • Though it'll likely be a decade or so before residents can drive on the proposed High Desert Corridor, now's the time to weigh in on exactly which route the road will take.

The High Desert Corridor — also called the E-220 — is planned as a 50-mile, four- to six-lane expressway connecting the Victor Valley with Interstate 14 in Palmdale.

The local portion will begin with an interchange at Highway 395 in Adelanto, head east through Victorville south of the Southern California Logistics Airport and intersect Interstate 15 north of the Stoddard Wells Road interchange.

Caltrans is looking for public input on two alternatives for where the project will go once it crosses the I-15 and heads into Apple Valley.

Alternative 1, or the north realignment, would parallel Falchion Road, curve south just below Apple Valley Airport and continue down to Highway 18, just east of Joshua Road. This option is projected to cost roughly \$800 million.

Alternative 2, or the south realignment, quickly swings south and intersects Highway 18 near Rimrock Road, then travels along Highway 18 until it intersects with Bear Valley Cutoff. This option is projected at \$900 million.

Preliminary engineering and environmental studies are underway for the phase between Highway 395 and the I-15.

The High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Authority went out to bid for a design/build team, but ended up rejecting those that came in. Now, with some public money in place, the authority is getting ready to go out for bids again.

Laurie Hunter, special assistant to JPA Chairman Brad Mitzelfelt, said they hope to start a financial feasibility study by New Year and the Environmental Impact Report around March or so.

"If everything goes perfectly," Hunter said the earliest she'd expect the HDC to be open for traffic would be 2018.

Though the upcoming feasibility study will nail down the details, the \$4.5 billion project will likely be funded through a combination of local, state, federal and private sources.

Victorville has budgeted \$2.5 million toward environmental studies and preliminary engineering this year and each year through 2013, while Apple Valley has budgeted to use \$100,000 of Measure I money by June.

A public comment and informational meeting on the project is scheduled from 4 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday in conference room D at Victorville City Hall, at 14343 Civic Drive.

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