

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

June 9, 2026

FROM

NOEL CASTILLO, Director, Department of Public Works –Transportation

SUBJECT

Grant Application to the United States Federal Railroad Administration for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Approve grant application and authorize the electronic submission of the grant application to the United States Federal Railroad Administration, requesting \$37,496,000 under the 2025-2026 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program discretionary grant call-for-projects, to implement a grade separation safety and mobility infrastructure project in the Helendale area.
2. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer or Director of the Department of Public Works to finalize, electronically execute, and submit the grant application and any necessary non-substantive amendments to the United States Federal Railroad Administration under the 2025-2026 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program, subject to review by County Counsel.
3. Direct the Director of the Department of Public Works to transmit the grant application and any non-substantive amendments related to the grant application to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors within 30 days of submission.

(Presenter: Noel Castillo, Director, 387-7906)

COUNTY AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Promote and Fulfill the Countywide Vision.

Operate in a Fiscally Responsible and Business-Like Manner.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Approval of this item will not result in the use of Discretionary General Funding (Net County Cost). Pursuant to the terms of the grant, the County is required to provide a minimum 20 percent non-Federal match. The total estimated cost to construct the grade separation in the Helendale area (Project) is \$46,870,000. If awarded funding, the United States Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) will fund up to \$37,496,000 of the Project cost, while the minimum 20 percent non-Federal match requirement of \$9,374,000 will be funded by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad.

BNSF also provided the services of its grant writing consultant to prepare the grant application at no cost to the County. The County expects to receive a Letter of Commitment from BNSF in connection with the Project and an agreement regarding the \$9,374,000 match funding following FRA award notice anticipated in Fall 2026. If the grant is awarded, the Department of Public Works (Department) will present an item to the Board of Supervisors (Board) to accept the

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award and will work with BNSF Railroad to bring a funding agreement before the Board for the 20 percent non-Federal match requirement of \$9,374,000.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Department is requesting funding from the 2025-26 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program for a proposed grade separation project in the Helendale area. The Project is intended to address traffic and safety concerns at the existing at-grade BNSF rail crossing on Vista Road, where up to 70 trains travel through the corridor each day.

The Project would close the existing Vista Road crossing and redirect traffic approximately one mile south to Jordan Road, where a new bridge would be constructed over the BNSF rail line and connect to National Trails Highway. By separating train and roadway movements, the Project would improve public safety, traffic circulation, and mobility in the area.

Vista Road currently carries a disproportionate volume of east-west traffic because it is the only bridge crossing over the Mojave River between the City of Victorville to the south and Lenwood, near the City of Barstow, to the north. With limited east-west travel options in the area, the proposed grade separation would provide a safer and more reliable connection, reduce vehicle delays, idling, and emissions, and significantly reduce the potential for train-vehicle collisions.

The CRISI Program is a discretionary grant program administered by the FRA. The 2025-2026 CRISI Notice of Funding Opportunity makes up to \$2,039,246,480 available for awards and allows the FRA to fund up to 80 percent of total project costs. The program supports projects that improve railroad safety, efficiency, and reliability; reduce congestion at intercity passenger and freight rail chokepoints; and enhance multimodal connections for people and goods movement.

On April 20, 2026, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced the call for projects. Applications are due June 22, 2026. Because CRISI is highly competitive, submission of an application does not guarantee funding. The application is non-binding and requires a local match.

Approval of this item will delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer or the Director of the Department to finalize, electronically execute, and submit the grant application prior to the application deadline. Following the grant award announcement, FRA will contact the designated point of contact for selected applicants to initiate negotiation of a project-specific grant agreement. FRA requires satisfaction of applicable requirements by the applicant and a formal agreement signed by both the recipient and FRA, including an approved scope, schedule, and budget, before obligating the grant. If selected as a grant recipient, the Department will return to the Board for approval to accept the grant award and approval of all other applicable requirements for the grant.

This action meets the County's and the Chief Executive Officer's goals and objectives in a fiscally responsible and business-like manner by seeking grant funding for projects. Additionally, should grant funds be awarded, the action helps ensure the development of a well-planned, balanced, and sustainable county by constructing facilities that promote safety and mobility.

PROCUREMENT

Not applicable.

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REVIEW BY OTHERS

This item has been reviewed by County Counsel (Aaron Gest, Deputy County Counsel, 387-5455) on May 21, 2026; and County Finance and Administration (Matthew Dalton, Administrative Analyst, 387-5005) on May 29, 2026.

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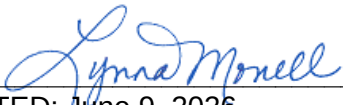
Record of Action of the Board of Supervisors
San Bernardino County

APPROVED (CONSENT CALENDAR)

Moved: Joe Baca, Jr. Seconded: Curt Hagman

Ayes: Col. Paul Cook (Ret.), Jesse Armendarez, Dawn Rowe, Curt Hagman, Joe Baca, Jr.

Lynna Monell, CLERK OF THE BOARD

BY 
DATED: June 9, 2026



cc: File - Transportation w/app
MBA 06/24/2026