



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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City of Riverside Lands State Grant for “Riverside Reconnects” Streetcar Plan

Caltrans transportation planning grant of \$237,500 will help Riverside identify next steps

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Mayor Rusty Bailey’s effort to bring streetcars back to the city through the “Riverside Reconnects” program received a boost when Caltrans awarded the City a \$237,500 transportation planning grant.

The grant, which the City sought through the Southern California Association of Governments, or SCAG, will enable the City to conduct research and complete feasibility studies examining such questions as how the streetcars would be integrated with existing vehicle traffic and bus service and how they would be funded.

Riverside Reconnects envisions a streetcar corridor from UC Riverside to the western city limits via downtown Riverside, utilizing University Avenue and Magnolia Avenue, two major transportation corridors within the city. The Riverside Reconnects name is a reference to fact that Riverside once was among the cities across Southern California served by the Pacific Electric Railway’s Red Car line.

“This is a real milestone for Riverside Reconnects,” Mayor Bailey said. “This grant from Caltrans, received with the help of SCAG, our major regional planning agency, really validates the streetcar concept and allows us to move forward on a serious examination of important next steps.”

The new streetcar route along University and Magnolia avenues could serve more than 200,000 people who live, work or attend school in Riverside. Possible stops include colleges and universities, hospitals, libraries, the historic Mission Inn in downtown Riverside and the Riverside Plaza and Galleria at Tyler shopping areas.

Riverside Reconnects first phase envisions a four-mile segment between downtown Riverside and UCR.

“Riverside Reconnects will strengthen our local economy, first through the creation of construction jobs and eventually by spurring increased development along the route,” Mayor Bailey said. “This project also will position Riverside as a destination point for people who are embracing the idea of a

car-free lifestyle. Cities like Portland, Seattle, Los Angeles, Tucson and Washington, D.C. all recognize the ability of streetcar lines to attract both people and investment.”

Riverside received word of the grant award late Wednesday (8/7) afternoon. In accepting the grant, Riverside agrees to work with the state to improve mobility and the quality of life in California by integrating land use, housing and transportation planning. Work must be completed by June 30, 2016.

“Riverside Reconnects has the potential to really change the game when it comes to community development in our city and economic competitiveness in the region,” said Al Zelinka, Riverside’s Community Development Director.