

## Community-Based Transportation Planning Grants

### Palm Avenue Commercial Corridor Master Plan

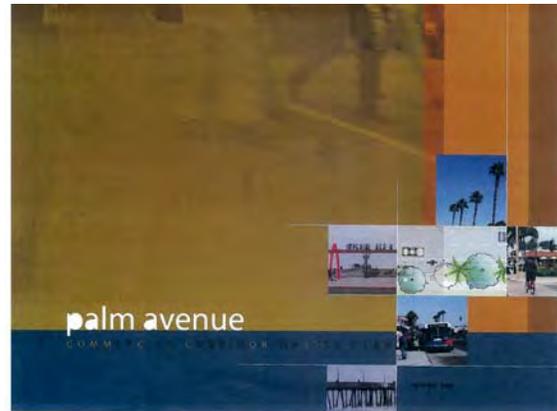
- **Grant Amount:** \$150,000
- **Grant Recipient:** City of Imperial Beach
- **County:** San Diego

**Project Area** – A section of Palm Avenue (State Route 75) between 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Rainbow Drive

**Project Focus** – The project area is characterized by high-speed traffic, poorly marked and designed pedestrian crossings, dilapidated and under-utilized structures and a high concentration of automobile-related uses. In general, it is a “pedestrian unfriendly” environment that is underserved and lacking potential development due to its current configuration. The corridor consists of six traffic lanes, three eastbound and three westbound. As a result, the area is not conducive to a pedestrian environment. The City of Imperial Beach believes that with the development of a Master Plan for this area, redevelopment of the region will follow, with the economic and social benefits supported by sustainable land uses.

**Project Goals** – The City plans to develop and identify specific mixed use, commercial and retail development opportunities through the Master Plan. The Master Plan will involve many objectives including encouraging and providing for more appropriate land uses, traffic calming, pedestrian improvements, possible transit enhancements and design guidelines all

aimed at creating a more dynamic and revitalized core of the city. The plan will promote “walkability”, and may incorporate traffic calming techniques such as widened sidewalks, diagonal parking, additional or enhanced crosswalks, narrowed traffic lanes, bicycle lanes and additional landscaping. The Master Plan will also establish appropriate design guidelines for new development as well as recommendations for development opportunities along and adjacent to the Corridor. The anticipated resulting benefits, to name a few, include traffic speed reduction, increased pedestrian safety and property values, and economic development.



**Community Outreach** – Over the course of the project city staff and consultants have worked with the community, elected officials, and other stakeholders to develop a plan that is both visionary and ready to be implemented. Key events in the planning process have been interviews with key community stakeholders who live and work in and around the study area, three well-attended community workshops and presentations to the city Council and Design Review board.

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**Project Outcome-** The result of the Palm Avenue Master Plan is a planning document that proposes streetscape improvements and urban design strategies that help support the common goal of creating a vibrant, safe and pedestrian and bicycle-friendly commercial hub along Palm Avenue. Key points include transformation of the six-lane highway to a “Main Street”

environment based on Caltrans’ Main Street Guidelines, creation of a new desirable context that promotes new mixed use developments that provide amenities and services to the community, connection to surrounding residential neighborhoods, and reinforcement of the small-scale beach town feel of the area.

### Challenges

- Image and identity – Palm Avenue lacks a sense of cohesion and identity. The significant number of vacant and under-utilized properties is both a challenge and an opportunity for new development.
- Design of the public realm – Palm Avenue’s street edge, where the sidewalk meets property lines, is poorly designed and detracts from the pedestrian environment
- Existing Right-of-Way conditions – the existing right-of-way conditions are varied. Sidewalks need to be improved in several areas and many of the access ramps are not up to current standards

### Successes

- Synergy of recent and planned improvements – Recently the City has embarked on a process of improving the public and private realm within and immediately outside the Palm Avenue corridor study area.