



The TUMF Whisperer – Infrastructure versus Revenue

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Some see a glass half empty while others see it half full. Is this pessimism, optimism or simply perspective. Often, impact fee program reporting is based upon revenue generated and funds spent. Rarely is the report focused upon traffic capacity, improved mobility (congestion relief) or the public/private partnership that exists between government and development. The reality is that impact fee programs and transportation funding are about infrastructure and quality of life.

Emphasis should be on what we plan to build or improve rather than how much funding a program can generate. This fundamental shift in thinking opens up the opportunity to look at transportation solutions that are efficient and cost effective. Should we build an extra lane, focus on operational improvements like signal coordination or aggressively promote alternative transportation solutions? Really, it's all three.

The Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) is updating their Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF) program. CVAG takes a unique approach toward infrastructure planning. They develop an overall network of prioritized transportation projects and then develop a comprehensive funding approach to delivering the network. Funding is comprised of a combination of impact fee, tax revenues (retail sales and state/federal gas tax) and direct development mitigation assumptions.

The Transportation Project Prioritization Study (TPPS) includes arterial and interchange improvements. In addition, CVAG is considering inclusion of active transportation program (ATP) projects within the TPPS. Which ATP components qualify for funding and how they are prioritized within the TPPS is being evaluated. The role of non-motorized mobility options in the context of a fully functional transportation system is gaining well-earned attention.

Ultimately, the intent of transportation funding is to improve the transportation system. The measure of success is how well the system works - - not how much funding is generated. Focusing on the final goal is key to crafting successful programs.

About the Author

Paul Rodriguez advises public and private clients regarding transportation planning and funding strategies as a Principal at Rodriguez Consulting Group. Mr. Rodriguez brings unique perspective to a variety of issues as a consultant, elected official, and former regional agency staffer. Comments, questions or suggestions for future topics can be sent to Paul@RodConGrp.com.