Community Focus Statement B: Improve the visibility and access to Helendale from Route 66 and Interstate 15

Action Statement B.4: Advocate for the County to re-evaluate an access strategy from Helendale to Interstate 15.

B4

Benchmark: Decision made if proposed project is feasible. If yes, project is funded, designed, and constructed.
Champion: Volunteer group or person or can be identified by the community
Estimated Cost: $300,000–$500,000 for feasibility study; $8,000,000–$12,000,000 for connecting roadway; $50,000,000 for interchange (costs exclude right-of-way)

Freeway interchange construction in Seattle, Washington. Photo source: Joe Mabel

Interstate 15 (I-15) is a north–south roadway that currently does not provide direct access to Helendale. Access between Helendale and Interstate 15 currently involves travel to either Barstow or Victorville. In order to access I-15 to the north, individuals travel northeast along Route 66 and then along either Lenwood Road or Route 58 in order to access I-15, a distance of approximately 20 miles. In order to access I-15 to the south, individuals travel along Route 66/North D Street to Victorville, a distance of approximately 15 miles. At its nearest point, Helendale is approximately 7.5 miles from I-15. However, this distance does not account for significant changes in terrain; thus, an access connection between Helendale and I-15 would likely require more travel distance.

Establishing a new interstate access point is a local, regional, state, and federal issue. As a result, significant coordination and study is required in order to construct new interchange access. The construction of a new interstate interchange can be a relatively long and involved study and design process, particularly in cases where the local roadway currently does not exist and potential roadway, bridge, and environmental issues may be present. Coordination among multiple agencies and divisions within each agency would be required. Additional access between Helendale would likely include a bridge or grade separation at the Mojave River and the railroad tracks.

A feasibility study would be required to determine various access strategies, including the viability of a connecting roadway and a potential I-15 interchange. Such a study would likely cost between $300,000 and $500,000. If the project moves forward and includes a new interchange, significant coordination, analysis, and study would be required including the involvement of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through an Interchange Justification Report. Construction of a new roadway would likely cost $1,000,000 per mile per lane, and construction

of a new interchange would likely cost $50 million, in addition to right-of-way costs. Additional costs would likely be incurred if the project includes a complex crossing of the Mojave River and a railroad crossing.

Given the similarities between Action Statements B.3, B.4, and B.5, it is recommended that the initial feasibility study consider all of the issues associated with those statements under one study. Study cost savings could be achieved if all actions are studied together.

Action	Action Leader	Timeline	Resources
1. Discuss the potential impacts on the community, and organize community support for a new interstate access point. Involve local residents and business leaders to achieve strong support for the project. This action item may be closely tied to Action Statements B.3 and B.5, as the alternative access would likely be ideal to connect to Interstate 15.	Champion with local community leaders, Helendale Community Services District and Silver Lakes Association	Months 1–6	Helendale Community Services District http://www.helendalecsd.org/ Federal Highway Administration, Interstate Access Policy https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/programadmin/fraccess.cfm San Bernardino County, County Standard Plans http://cms.sbcounty.gov/lus/LandDevelopment/CountyStandards.aspx Caltrans Highway Design Manual http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/oppd/hdm/hdmtoc.htm
2. Approach Caltrans, the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority, and the County of San Bernardino to discuss the project. Confirm whether this type of project has been studied or discussed in the past.	Champion and Local community leaders	Months 7–8	
3. Obtain support from the County Board of Supervisors.	Champion and Local community leaders	Month 9	
4. Obtain funding for a feasibility study.	Local community leaders, CSD	Year 1–2	
5. Conduct the feasibility study to determine the potential corridors and interchange locations. The study should include a traffic analysis, conceptual design, environmental red flag analysis, and conceptual costs estimates.	County of San Bernardino	Year 2–3	
6. Obtain project funding for right-of-way purchase and project construction.	Local community leaders, CSD	Year 3–4	
7. Conduct the appropriate environmental study, interchange justification study, and preliminary design documents required for the project to proceed.	County of San Bernardino	Year 4–9	
8. Conduct public outreach and required public meetings to obtain support for the project.	County of San Bernardino	Year 6–9	
9. Obtain right-of-way.	County of San Bernardino	Year 6–9	
10. Procure final design plans for proposed improvements.	County of San Bernardino	Year 9–11	
11. Construct/implement corridor improvements.	County of San Bernardino	Year 11–13	