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The Valley **Chronicle**
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Hemet, California

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News

San Jacinto gets \$12M boost

By CHARLES HAND/The Valley Chronicle

San Jacinto has gotten a \$12.4 million boost from the Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fund - or TUMF - for improvements to two major traffic arteries.

The biggest allocation is \$7.7 million for widening of Sanderson Avenue from Ramona Expressway to Esplanade Avenue.

An additional \$4.7 million was allocated for the widening of Esplanade between State Street and Sanderson Avenue, a joint project of San Jacinto and Hemet.

San Jacinto City Engineer Habib Motlagh said the Sanderson work will include widening it to four lanes and adding left-turn pockets at intersections.

When work will start no one quite knows, but Motlagh said, at the current state of planning and engineering, it could come in early 2009.

With much of the engineering, including acquisition of right-of-way, ahead of schedule, Motlagh said there is one factor that is beyond the city's control that has the potential for delaying the work. That is the relocation of utility poles owned by Southern California Edison.

The same issue has created delays on past projects, including widening San Jacinto Avenue in front of the Wal-Mart Supercenter. Opening of the store was delayed in part by the pace at which Edison moved its poles out of the way.

Work on Esplanade will start later because right-of-way acquisition is not done, which is holding up engineering, Motlagh said.

Esplanade will be expanded to two lanes in each direction.

The street is the boundary line between the cities, putting the northern half of the project in San Jacinto and the southern half in Hemet. Though San Jacinto is the lead agency, Hemet is contributing engineering and some other costs.

Once the Sanderson work is started, Motlagh estimated it will take four months to finish it. Whether the road will be closed entirely or in segments has not been decided, he said, but his department will recommend shutting down one section at a time so parts of the road can be used during construction.

The two projects are the second and third for which San Jacinto has

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received TUMF allocations. The first was the widening of Ramona Expressway between Sanderson and Warren Road and the installation of a traffic light at the expressway and Warren.

That was also the first allocation of TUMF money to local government by the Riverside County Transportation Commission. The second allocation went to Riverside.

TUMF money comes from a levy on every housing unit and commercial development built in western Riverside County. The assessments are intended to provide enough money to build and improve roads and streets to accommodate the additional traffic the developments will generate.

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