



# Board Agenda Item 70

DATE: December 17, 2024

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Steven E. White, Director  
Department of Public Works and Planning

SUBJECT: Fresno County Road Improvement Program

## RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Determine that the approval of the 2024-27 Fresno County Road Improvement Program is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, Public Resources Code 21000, et seq., and direct staff to file a Notice of Exemption with the Office of the Fresno County Clerk; and**
- 2. Consider and approve the 2025-27 Fresno County Road Improvement Program.**

Approval of Recommended Action 1 addresses the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Recommended Action 2 will adopt the Road Improvement Program (RIP) as recommended by Department of Public Works and Planning staff. The RIP continues the Board's policy to prioritize maintenance and preservation of the County's existing road system, as required by the General Plan Transportation and Circulation Implementation Program TR-A.B. This item is countywide.

## ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If your Board rejects Recommended Action 1, the Department would be out of compliance with CEQA. If your Board rejects Recommended Action 2, Department staff would require direction from the Board on what modifications should be made to the RIP, and thereafter staff would make modifications as directed and return to the Board at a later date for consideration and approval.

## FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. The cost of filing a Notice of Exemption is negligible and is included in Org 4510 FY 2024-25 Adopted Budget. The RIP is a programming guide for planning and informational purposes, and represents the implementation of Board policy concerning road expenditures. Revenue, expenditure, and balance projections are shown in the RIP. Future revenues and expenditures will be adopted annually through the budget process, and the Department will base actions and future budgetary recommendations on the RIP as adopted by your Board. Detailed revenue, expenditure, and balance projections are shown in the RIP. The Department plans to return to your Board in FY 2027-28 with an updated RIP.

## DISCUSSION:

### Overview

The County road system is an integral network that connects to the State highway system and supports the

movement of goods produced in the valley, which sustains the local economy and facilitates personal mobility. Some communities are remote with no other connection to the State highway system other than the County roads. Managing the use of road funds by effective preventative maintenance strategies ensures that funds are utilized in a manner which will provide the greatest benefit to the public, as well as minimize reductions in levels of service and reduce liability. Roads allowed to deteriorate beyond recovery will either require much more costly reconstruction, or risk reversion to dirt or gravel. A managed system to prevent such deterioration requires a reliable and stable funding stream. The revenues provided by SB 1 increase the funding available for maintenance of the County's network of roads and bridges, and it is anticipated that some of that revenue will continue to be used in future years to offset matching funds required to construct the bridge replacement projects listed in the RIP. Still, it is anticipated that the revenues available for pavement maintenance will not be sufficient to offset the expected gradual decline in the overall condition of the County's paved roads.

The County maintains approximately 3,488 miles of road, which is the largest County road system in the State. The County road system includes 570 bridges in various conditions.

### Funding

Funding for the road and bridge program is comprised of several Federal, State and local sources. The majority of County road funds are derived from State sources and include fuel excise taxes and the Local Transportation Fund (LTF). Fuel excise taxes are on a cost per unit basis, rather than a percentage of sale, and do not vary directly based on the price of fuel, but there are programmed increases in the excise taxes.

The State imposes per-gallon excise taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel, sales taxes on diesel fuel, and registration taxes on motor vehicles, dedicating these revenues to transportation purposes. Portions of the revenues are distributed to cities and counties through the Highway Users Tax Account (HUTA) and Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account (RMRA), which was created by SB 1. The Local Streets and Roads Funding Program, administered by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) in partnership with the State Controller, is supported by RMRA funding which includes portions of revenues pursuant to Streets and Highways Code, section 2031.

The County's share of fuel excise tax is calculated using a formula which considers the number of registered vehicles and the number of maintained miles of roadway. The formula assigns greater significance to the number of registered vehicles by assigning weighting factors of 75% and 25%, to the number of registered vehicles and to the number of maintained miles, respectively. The Excise Gas Tax is distributed on a monthly basis, based on projected gasoline sales. Because the Excise Gas Tax is paid in advance, the actual amount distributed may be greater than or less than the actual collection. If the actual sale of gasoline is greater than the original estimate, the State will distribute any owed additional Excise Gas Tax collected in the following year. If the Excise Gas Tax comes in below the original estimate, the following year, the State will reduce the amount of overpaid Excise Gas Tax from that year's estimate.

SB 1 emphasizes the importance of accountability and transparency in the delivery of California's transportation programs. Therefore, in order to be eligible for RMRA funding, statute requires cities and counties to provide basic RMRA project reporting to the California Transportation Commission.

The LTF is derived from a portion of the State general sales tax dedicated to transportation purposes by the Transportation Development Act. The primary purpose of the LTF program is to fund transit services throughout the State, but a portion of the LTF may also be utilized for non-transit needs such as road system maintenance.

Revenue from local funds includes the Measure C Extension. In November 2006, voters approved the extension of the ½-cent Measure C Sales Tax. The extension includes pass-through revenues distributed to various local agencies via a formula for maintenance and flexible spending. The Measure also includes funding for non-motorized trail facilities, bike lanes, and Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliance

projects within the urban and rural areas of the County.

Measure C is currently scheduled to expire after FY 2026-27. If that occurs, the County road fund will receive less direct funding as a result, and will likely be required to redirect the portions of the LTF that are currently going to the road fund to regional transit agencies to help address funding shortfalls for transit needs that are currently being met by Measure C funding. The net impact would likely result in future year annual road fund revenue reductions of approximately \$17 million dollars.

#### Road Improvement Plan

The RIP is a multi-year maintenance and construction programming plan. It reflects the County's efforts to protect and improve the public investment in the County road system, and to provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and commodities. The RIP identifies maintenance funding levels and projects expected to be delivered within a defined timeframe. The funding in the RIP reflects current and projected budgets, but does not reflect potential project specific revenues, which have not been programmed.

#### Bridge Replacement/Repair

The need for bridge replacements is based on their individual structural deficiency ratings as identified in the bi-annual Caltrans Bridge Inspection report. Prioritization of bridge retrofit or replacement projects first considers safety, and takes into account the impact to the public if a bridge were to require weight limit posting or closure.

The proposed bridge program, as shown in the RIP, lists numerous bridges for which Federal funding for replacement has been requested and programmed into the Federal Transportation Improvement Program. The Department currently has 28 bridge replacement and scour repair bridge projects in various phases of design and pre-construction. In total, current projected revenues from FY 2024-25 through FY 2026-27 associated with bridge projects amount to approximately \$65 million.

#### Pavement Repair

Effective maintenance and operation of the County road system is partially achieved through the utilization of our comprehensive Pavement Management System (PMS) and the Street Management Plan. The PMS identifies maintenance strategies to preserve mobility and prevent deterioration for the various types, conditions, and uses of each road. The Department, considering the PMS in conjunction with projected funding for maintenance, continually evaluates current and projected roadway conditions and traffic data in order to allocate available funds to best serve mobility and preservation needs.

Currently the County has approximately \$17.5 million dollars planned for road preservation treatments from FY 2024-25 through FY 2026-27. Even considering these substantial overlay expenditures over the period covered by the RIP, it is anticipated that the overall pavement condition of the County road system will continue to decline.

#### Road Reconstruction Projects

Reconstruction to bring roads to current design standards alleviates deficiencies and improves air quality by reducing the generation of particulate matter. Major roads are evaluated to ascertain the need for reconstruction or widening in order to improve safety and mobility for the most heavily traveled routes. Recommendations for, and prioritization of, future road projects for full reconstruction are based on a wide variety of factors. These factors include the condition of the roads, the amount of traffic carried, the ability of the road configuration to carry that traffic while maintaining an appropriate level of service, and the potential availability of Federal, State, or local funding to accomplish reconstruction. These factors are considered in conjunction with the anticipated overall cost of the prospective projects and projects are selected that will make the most effective use of limited funds.

### Traffic Signals

The need for new traffic signals is based on traffic counts, accident history, and analysis to determine if the traffic meets accepted signal warrants. The installation or improvement of signals is generally performed pursuant to various Federal funding programs, such as the Active Transportation Program and the Highway Safety Improvement Program.

### Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Projects

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program funds projects that reduce fine particle pollution and provide congestion relief. This may be accomplished by the installation of traffic signals which reduces air pollution emitted by vehicles idling while waiting to progress through an intersection. CMAQ projects may also include shoulder improvement projects, which add paved shoulders or increase the width of existing paved shoulders to reduce the amount of particulate matter introduced by vehicles traveling at highway speeds close to unpaved dirt shoulders. The addition of paved shoulders also enhances safety.

### The Road Improvement Plan Summary

The RIP is a document that is intended to be a guide to your Board's road priorities and the Department's road program development, as well as for the Administrative Office, businesses, economic development community, utility companies, and the public at large. It should be viewed as a living document that will be adjusted over time to match revenues to system demands, and to allow your Board to respond to unforeseen needs or revenues.

### **California Environmental Quality Act**

The proposed RIP is exempt under Section 15262 of CEQA as it represents a planning study for possible future actions which your Board is not approving, awarding a contract for funding or construction. In addition, under CEQA Guidelines section 15378, subdivisions (b)(2) and (b)(5), the activity does not meet the definition of a "project." Future initiation of any road improvement or bridge project will be subject CEQA review and compliance.

### REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #9, June 22, 2021

### ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Road Improvement Program

### CAO ANALYST:

Salvador Espino