SONOMA COUNTY LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

FACT SHEET

HOW BIG IS THE COUNTY ROAD NETWORK?

The county is responsible for maintaining and fixing roads outside cities. Sonoma County has 1,383 miles of road. In comparison, Orange County is responsible for maintaining 309 miles of road.

WHY ARE OUR ROADS IN SUCH POOR SHAPE?

There are many reasons. We have all lived through the worst recession since the Great Depression; this has limited our ability to use county general fund dollars. State and federal funding for roads have not kept up with costs and the funding formulas unfairly penalize rural counties with lots of road miles to maintain.

At the same time, roads are expensive to maintain. It's more cost effective to quickly repair roads rather than letting them deteriorate. Rebuilding a road can cost five to ten times as much as maintaining it.

HOW MUCH IS IT GOING TO COST TO GET OUR COUNTY ROAD NETWORK BACK IN SHAPE?

Almost $1 billion. Over the last three years, the county has been able to invest approximately $100 million dollars in roads, bridges, drainage and safety features—just over $78 million was for road maintenance and improvements. However, we have a long way to go and have a 20 year plan. We need to look for additional, consistent dollars to fix the problem.

WHAT IS THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN?

This plan was developed to provide decision makers and citizens with a strategy and focus to fix this long-term systemic problem. The plan's initial goal covers half of our road network using funds that we can currently identify; but we know that we must find additional funds and resources to meet our goal of investing $47.7 million dollars annually for roads.

DIDN'T I READ SOMEWHERE THAT YOU SPENT OVER $50 MILLION LAST YEAR ON INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS? AREN'T WE SPENDING ENOUGH RIGHT NOW TO FIX THE PROBLEM? WHY DO WE NEED MORE ROAD FUNDS?

This figure included all roadway infrastructure improvements in the county. About $19 million of this total was used for road maintenance, repair and reconstruction. This is significantly less that the needed $47.7 million dollars annually each year to keep our roads in good to very good condition.

IF WE SPEND $47 MILLION A YEAR FOR 20 YEARS, WILL IT FIX THE PROBLEM?

YES, If we consistently spend at least $47 million every year on roads, EVERY road in the county area will see improvements. Further, we will have funds to maintain the roads that we improve.

DON'T WE RECEIVE STATE AND FEDERAL GAS TAX FUNDS FOR ROADS? ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?

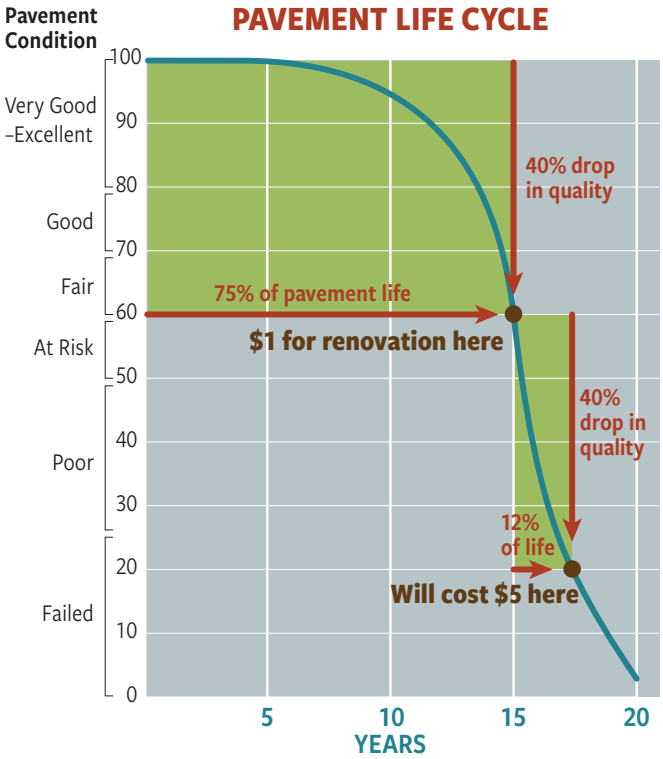
NO. Federal gas tax funds can only be used on federally eligible roads such as Santa Rosa Avenue and Stony Point Road. The state gas tax formula does not benefit suburban and rural counties like Sonoma County that have a large number of road miles to maintain. Last year, we received $12.7 million from the state gas tax and $1.65 million from the federal gas tax for a total of $14.35 million. This is nowhere near the $47 million we need each year to start address this issue.

SHOULDN'T WE JUST RAISE THE STATE AND FEDERAL GAS TAX? AREN'T USER TAXES A BETTER FIX?

We can't count on either of these initiatives occurring or meeting our funding needs; the state and federal gas tax haven't been raised in over 30 years. Recently, members of Congress have proposed raising the federal gas tax and the Governor has proposed a vehicle miles-traveled tax. However, with both the state and federal gas tax, we have no guarantee that the funding would come to counties. If these taxes were raised for local roads, they would be great supplemental improvements that help us fill the full long-term need.

I SUSPECT THAT MY NEIGHBORHOOD ROAD IS LOW ON THE PRIORITY LIST. WILL IT EVER BE UPGRADED?

The Board of Supervisors has committed $1 million in road funding annually to target those roads that are not prioritized through the annual road evaluation process.



WHAT HAPPENS IF THE COUNTY IS UNABLE TO ALLOCATE $47.7 MILLION EACH YEAR TO FUND THE IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF OUR ROADS?

Roads will continue to deteriorate. It will take us longer to achieve our ultimate goal of making improvements to every road in this county and it will be much more expensive.

SO WHAT CAN I DO AS A CITIZEN OF SONOMA COUNTY?

- Stay informed about what's happening with roads in Sonoma County.
- Help us find additional funds to fix and maintain our roads, including supporting lobbying efforts to increase federal and state dollars.
- Support the county's current financial commitment to road improvements and maintenance.