

**SUBJECT:** PROJECTS TO BE SUBMITTED IN THE SAFETEA-LU REAUTHORIZATION BILL

**RECOMMENDATION:** Adopt Project List

*Recommendation*

Authorization for the transportation funding bill (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, or "SAFETEA-LU") expires on September 30, 2009. A new bill would provide a significant funding opportunity for local transportation projects. Similar to the County's annual appropriations requests, the Legislative Committee is asked to approve the attached list of County projects that will be submitted for funding. This list was developed by the Roads Department, with input from Intergovernmental Relations staff, based on a number of factors including need, funding criteria (ability to provide a local match, appropriate request level), and location within the county and by Congressional District.

*Background and Analysis*

Following the success of the infrastructure funding included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the expiration of SAFETEA-LU provides transportation advocates the opportunity to put forward a transportation funding bill that is comprehensive in scope. While it is unclear whether a bill would actually pass Congress this year, it is anticipated to at least clear the House of Representatives. The House expects to have a bill on the floor by early summer. The other positive Reauthorization rumor is that the Chair and Ranking Member are considering a \$450 billion bill, double the amount included in SAFETEA-LU.

Funding and financing the bill, particularly with the structural deficit in the Highway Trust Fund, will be a major sticking point in Reauthorization negotiations. Several new concepts, such as, tolling and Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), are being discussed along with the traditional suggestions to increase or index the Federal gas tax, which currently stands at 18.4 cent per gallon on gasoline and 24.4 cent per gallon on diesel fuel. Another major issue that will be discussed is how much of the bill will end up being earmarked for Members' specific projects. The Administration may insist on some type of percentage or volume cap on earmarks in the reauthorization bill.

The Committee will be kept apprised of negotiations to reauthorize SAFETEA-LU as well as the fate of the County's specific earmark requests.