

County of Santa Clara
Board of Supervisors
Supervisorial District Three
Supervisor Dave Cortese




BOSD302-1-27-09

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DATE: January 27, 2009

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: 
Dave Cortese
Supervisor, District 3

SUBJECT: Economic Recovery and Investment Act of 2009 (Economic Stimulus Package)

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve the County Executive's proposed list of infrastructure projects for submission to the federal government with the following addition:

- Capitol Expressway infrastructure improvements consistent with LRT, BRT and other improvements outlined in the Comprehensive County Expressway Planning Study (2003) and the 2008 Draft Update.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

This project has zero impact to the General Fund.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Economic Stimulus Package proposed by President Obama provides a unique opportunity to advance the County's longtime goal of rehabilitating the County Expressway System.

BACKGROUND

In 2003, the Board of Supervisors approved the Comprehensive County Expressway Planning Study for Santa Clara County. This study outlined the 30-year timeframe for the improvement and maintenance of the County Expressway System, identifying projects ranging from sidewalk additions to interchange reconfigurations. This study has recently been updated and a draft version is currently in circulation.

Capitol Expressway is one of eight county owned expressways, stretching along San Jose's east side, nestled between residential neighborhoods and commercial centers. It is the highest used expressway in the system with nearly 300,000 daily users, and tragically has been the site of several pedestrian/auto and auto/auto fatalities over the last five years.

Concurrent to the county expressway planning process, the Valley Transportation Authority has continued to pursue the construction of light rail along Capitol Expressway, from Alum Rock Avenue to the Eastridge Transit Center. This project is fully funded through the 2000 Measure A program and intends to provide congestion relief at key interchanges through mass transit while also modernizing the entire corridor through enhancements to pedestrian mobility.

Both the 2003 and 2008 studies acknowledge the implementation of light rail as a significant means for advancing any level of improvements to Capitol Expressway. Specific to sidewalks, the 2008 update states, "[Regarding improvements to Capitol Expressway] These improvements are listed as a contingency should the planned light rail extension be significantly delayed and there is a desire to provide sidewalks for current pedestrian use."

Unfortunately, many projects in the Measure A program, including light rail, have become vulnerable to deferred funding. To mitigate this, at a recent VTA BOD study session, VTA staff said they would be seeking federal economic stimulus dollars for part or all of the light rail improvements, to ensure the project can move forward. While not conceding that Measure A dollars will not be available, the County and VTA should coordinate the expressway improvements and transit improvements requests for federal dollars.