

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY**

**Subject**

Legislative Policy: Transportation Funding

**Policy  
Number**

M-49

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**Purpose**

To establish the Board of Supervisors' legislative policy regarding the County's interests in transportation funding issues, and to provide guidance to the County's legislative representatives when advocating the County's interests to legislators, other elected officials and policy makers.

**Background**

The County is responsible for maintaining 1,938 miles of roads in the unincorporated area through a variety of tasks including: pavement treatments such as sealants and overlays; culvert repair; curb, gutter and sidewalk repair; guardrail repair or replacement; mowing; tree and brush trimming; safety improvements; capital project design and construction management; and emergency response.

Improving the transportation network throughout San Diego, while maintaining environmental quality, is, and has been, a high priority of the County Board of Supervisors. To enhance this effort the Board of Supervisors (Board) has taken several steps to cope with the ever increasing demand placed on the County's transportation system. For example, the Board implemented transportation impact fee to finance the transportation infrastructure needs of new development.

The people of San Diego County have also shown their support for transportation funding by approving a 40 year, half-cent sales tax extension in 2004 called *TransNet*. The local sales tax extension, which garnered approval from 67 percent of the voting public, will generate approximately \$13 million a year for the unincorporated area for transportation improvement projects and maintenance.

However, even with the efforts of the Board and the additional revenue generated through the increased sales tax, the County is still facing a significant funding shortage to maintain its current system and construct new transportation facilities needed to keep pace with the growing demands on the County's transportation system. This is in part because of a State excise tax that fluctuates in response to high prices, i.e., when gas prices increase, usage decreases, reducing the amount of tax available for maintenance. In addition, as the popularity of fuel efficient cars increases, we also see less gas being consumed on which a tax is charged. Concurrently, the entire County's Pavement Condition Index was downgraded in a statewide report card on roads from good to fair between 2008 and 2010.

The State administration and legislature have also recognized the funding shortage for transportation facilities throughout California and have made transportation funding a high priority. In fact, a change was made in 2010 whereby a portion of the fuel tax received by counties and cities can be indexed as long as the California Board of Equalization approves the increase. Despite that legislative change, there are constant pressures trying to roll back any legislative gains. In addition, as discussions continue to occur at the federal and state levels regarding how to fund aging infrastructure with diminishing resources, it is important that the County adopt a legislative policy on this subject that will provide direction to staff and the County's legislative representatives at both the state and federal level.

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**Policy**

The legislative policy of the Board of Supervisors regarding transportation funding related issues is to:

1. Provide a new revenue source or an increase in existing funding sources on an annual basis at the County level for local roads without affecting existing funding sources for other County programs;
2. Continue to allocate funding based on a formula that provides a share of the funds to the County based on user criteria which maintains the San Diego region's relevant share, such as total number of registered vehicles, maintained system mileage, population or other factors that are measurable and relevant provided that any formula changes do not reduce the relative share of the funding received by the San Diego region out of funds allocated to cities and counties;
3. Allow additional funding for local roads to be spent at the sole discretion of the County for capital improvements or maintenance;
4. Provide additional local transportation program funding flexibility as opposed to rigid categorical spending or other mandated requirements;
5. Reaffirm that the state has sole responsibility for financing all state highway expenses;
6. Assure that the state will continue to allocate funding for state highway projects in the region should local government elect to assist funding any state highway project to advance its construction timing;
7. Assure that the State will continue to approve in a timely manner the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP);
8. Provide state funding for development of non-interstate freeways and other state highways;
9. Assure that the Federal government will continue to make an effort to finance transportation related projects at the local level through such programs as Federal Aid Urban (FAU), Federal Aid Secondary (FAS), and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds;
10. Provide State and Federal incentives (i.e., tax credits) to employers and employees who initiate and/or participate in a peak hour traffic management plan;
11. Make grant funds available to local agencies to set-up and manage regional peak hour traffic management programs;
12. Continue Federal and State funding for transit and other alternative forms of transportation to alleviate peak hour congestion and degradation of existing roadways; and

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13. Eliminate unnecessary Federal review of local activities, including project design and environmental review.

14. It shall also be the policy of the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Diego to oppose federal legislation that seeks to raise or divert transportation related taxes for deficit reduction or other purposes.

**Responsible Departments**

Chief Administrative Office

Office of Strategy and Intergovernmental Affairs

**Sunset Date**

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12-31-20.

**References**

Board Action 8-18-87 (53)

Board Action 5-23-89 (64)

Board Action 10-31-06 (14)

Board Action 12-09-08 (33)

Board Action 11-05-13 (19)