



County of Santa Cruz

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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PRESS RELEASE

Date: November 1, 2016
Release: Immediately
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COUNTY, LOCAL CITIES HIGHLIGHT ROADS ASSESSMENT

Local cities and the County of Santa Cruz on Tuesday called for new road funding in the wake of a statewide report detailing the poor condition of local roads throughout California.

Published by the California State Association of Counties and League of California Cities, the biennial “California Statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment” showed Santa Cruz County roads are among the poorest in the state, ranking 51st out of 58 counties based on industry-standard pavement condition measurements.

“Residents from the mountains to the sea know the condition of our roads is an issue that needs to be addressed,” Board of Supervisors Chair Bruce McPherson said. “Whether at the state or local level, new funding is needed so that we can get to work fixing our streets and roads. Without it, conditions will continue to deteriorate further.”

The 2016 report confirms pavement conditions continue to decline due to insufficient funding to properly fix and/or maintain streets, roads, bridges, sidewalks, storm drains and traffic signs. Deferring this crucial work will increase the cost of repairs in the future, and impede efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants, according to the report.

“No matter what your mode of transportation, local roads are what our residents depend on every day to get around,” Santa Cruz Councilmember Don Lane said. “They carry pedestrians, bikes, busses and cars alike. Deteriorating roads impacts our quality of life and our neighborhoods, and must be addressed.”



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Over the next decade -- absent a significant new public investment -- local roads statewide face a \$73 billion funding shortfall to bring pavements into good condition, address deficient bridges, and fix essential components such as storm drains, sidewalks, and signage. It is estimated that \$3.5 billion is needed annually just to maintain local streets and roads in their current condition -- however, current funding is just \$1.9 billion per year. To bring local streets and roads to optimal condition would take an estimated \$7 billion investment annually across California.

Several transportation funding proposals have been proposed at the state level, with no action so far. Twenty counties currently have transportation-specific local sales tax measures, which together include more than 83 percent of the state's population. A dozen more have one on the ballot, including Santa Cruz County's Measure D, which would raise \$500 million over thirty years for local roads, public transit, bicycling infrastructure and congestion relief along Highway 1.

With support from local transportation commissions, CSAC and LCC have produce the report every two years, beginning in 2008. When it was first issued, just 16 counties had roads in "good" condition. That number has fallen to six. In addition, 42 counties had roads in "poor" or "at risk" condition in 2008. The number is 52 currently.

"This latest report proves that our poorly maintained roads are deteriorating faster and will cost more to fix in the long run. Fifty-two of 58 counties already have poor pavement condition or are at risk. The time to act is now. We have to increase funding, and make commonsense reforms, to maintain local streets and roads or we risk a collapse of our transportation system," said Matt Cate, executive director of the California State Association of Counties.

"It is alarming to see how the rate of deterioration is increasing. That is not good for our economy or future quality of life," said Dan Carrigg, deputy executive director of the League of California Cities. "We cannot afford to avoid properly repairing and maintaining our transportation system any longer. Legislators understand the problem and have some thoughtful proposals on the table. Now we need to finish the job."

A copy of the report may be viewed here: <http://www.savecaliforniastreet.org/read-the-report>.