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## El Dorado endorses region fees

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El Dorado County became the first jurisdiction to endorse a regional fee program to help fund transportation projects in the Highway 50 corridor.

Members of the Board of Supervisors said last week that their support was contingent on the backing of other participants in the Highway 50 Corridor Mobility Partnership and creation of a governing body to oversee the program.

The partnership was formed about three years ago to develop a coordinated plan to reduce traffic congestion along Highway 50. It consists of El Dorado and Sacramento counties, the cities of Folsom and Rancho Cordova, and four private landowners – GenCorp, Elliott Homes, AKT Development and Carpenter Ranch.

The Rancho Cordova and Folsom city councils and the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors are expected to consider backing the fee program later this summer.

Proposed projects include new and improved interchanges and intersections, addition of auxiliary lanes, development of parallel routes, and light rail and transit improvements.

Tony Harris, a consultant working with the agencies, said that under the proposal, regional fees would generate about \$169 million, or 40 percent of the estimated \$424 million total cost of the initial projects.

Those funds also would be used to attract funding that might not otherwise come to the corridor, he said.

El Dorado County's share would be about \$37 million.

Richard Shepard, county transportation director, said the county would not need to impose additional fees to contribute its share to the regional program.

"We could absorb it into the county fee program without raising fees at all," he said.

The county already is collecting \$26 million through existing fee programs to widen White Rock Road from Latrobe Road to the planned Silva Valley interchange, Shepard said. The additional \$11 million could be paid from other funds, he said.

Art Marinaccio, a Shingle Springs resident and member of the Taxpayers Association of El Dorado County, said El Dorado County should get credit for money it already has put into transportation projects in Sacramento County. He cited funding for carpool lanes on Highway 50 between Sunrise Boulevard and El Dorado Hills Boulevard.

In addition, he said, El Dorado County residents who shop in Sacramento County contribute sales tax revenue that goes toward transportation projects.

"The assumption that El Dorado County taxpayers are going to send more money down to Sacramento is not one I'm willing to accept as part of this process," he said.

Supervisor Jack Sweeney said he favored participating in the regional program.

"It's not 'if,' it's 'how,' " he said.

Governance is the key issue, Sweeney said, stressing that El Dorado County needs to be an important

player.

"The governance structure is going to be critical," he said, "and who will be able to build what when will be even more critical."

Supervisors Helen Baumann and Rusty Dupray also supported the regional effort. Baumann said improvements to the Highway 50 corridor could help reverse the flow of dollars by making it easier for people from Folsom and Rancho Cordova to patronize new businesses in El Dorado Hills.

Although El Dorado County has contributed to Highway 50 projects that serve Sacramento County residents, Dupray noted that El Dorado County residents also benefit from projects funded by the other jurisdictions.

"We didn't pay a dime to build the new bridge in Folsom (below Folsom Dam)," he said, but it will benefit El Dorado County residents who commute to South Placer County.

Supervisor Ron Briggs was the only board member to oppose participating in the regional program. He argued that most of the projects would serve new development in the Rancho Cordova and Mather Field areas.

"I think regionalism is another acquiescence of our local power," he said.

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