

FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF PCTPA@PCTPA.NET

From the Sacramento Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/sacramento/news/2019/08/16/another-voice-placer-county-should-pursue.html>

Another Voice

Another Voice: Placer County should pursue competitive transportation funding program

Aug 16, 2019, 6:29am PDT

Anyone who's driven the congested I-80/65 interchange in the past couple years has seen a ray of hope with the construction progress on northbound Highway 65.

Drivers will get some relief when this first phase is completed this month — but only for northbound traffic. It's an important step, but still a drop in the bucket. The problem remains that there's no viable funding source to fix the \$400 million worth of upgrades still needed to bring transportation infrastructure up to date in South Placer.



COURTESY OF JOHN ALLARD
Roseville Mayor John Allard

What about the gas tax? The state and federal gas taxes together fund about \$4 million per year of roadway improvement projects in Roseville. Senate Bill 1, passed by the California Legislature in 2017, funds an additional \$2.3 million. But in our city alone, we need about \$9 million annually to ensure our maintenance levels don't fall behind. This leaves Roseville short approximately \$2.7 million per year. That doesn't include new infrastructure costs and needs. Even if we did receive more gas tax revenue, Roseville is prohibited from using that restricted funding on regional capacity improvements such as the 80/65 interchange or Highway 65 widening.

These improvements are managed by the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency and Caltrans.

How else can we get funding for transportation projects? One of the ways is through competitive match programs. But some important factors have made this harder. After the match program was initiated, the ratio flipped. Applicants have to bring much higher percentages of funding, "a local match" to the table to get lower percentages of funding from the state and federal government.

Also, Placer County is the largest county in California without a "local match" for transportation infrastructure projects. Since 26 other California counties have a "local match," Placer County is at an incredible disadvantage. This makes it difficult — if not impossible — to receive state and federal funding.

How do we create a local match? Local matches are often funded through specific sales taxes designated for transportation use. At a cost of about \$5 a month for the average south Placer family, a local south Placer County transportation sales tax would generate over \$1.25 billion in much needed funding in the next 30 years. Funds are generated not only by Placer residents but also by anyone who makes a purchase in Placer County — spreading the costs out among more people.

Who would control those transportation funds? The funds would stay in south Placer County for south Placer County projects, not be shared with the state. Most importantly, the funds would be managed by us, here, locally, by a citizen oversight committee and the same elected officials who represent our south Placer County cities, not people in Sacramento or Washington, D.C.

Coupled with builder fees, this presents a viable means to fund local transportation infrastructure. It's another way our region can come together to govern the way we know is best for us and not allow the state or federal governments to mandate what our priorities should be as it relates to our quality of life.

Roseville Mayor John Allard serves on the Sacramento Area Council of Governments and the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency Board of Directors. PCTPA is responsible for planning, managing and funding transportation infrastructure programs in Placer County, as well as public transit, and modernization and mobility efforts.

