

Street maintenance on the map

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While the condition of city roads may be beyond question to some, what may not be as apparent is the city's crack at fixing the issue.

According to Porterville City Engineer Mike Reed, the city has and is taking a number of measures to improve roads through pre-planning, budgeting and pursuing various funding sources, all while managing what appears to be a dismal budget.

Funding for Porterville's streets comes from a number of sources, including Measure R, Gas Tax, Proposition 42 and State (STP) and Local Transportation (LTF) dollars that amount to roughly \$2.4 million annually.

The largest share of road maintenance money, according to City Manager John Lollis, comes from Measure R – the half-cent transportation sales tax passed by Tulare County voters in 2006.

According to Ted Smalley, executive director of the Tulare County Association of Governments (the county's local transportation authority), 50 percent of Measure R money goes to regional road improvements, 35 percent to cities and the county, 14 percent to [clean-air projects](#) and 1 percent is used for administrative costs. The money, he said, is typically advanced at the city's request, which also chooses how to use the funds.

In Porterville, Measure R dollars are "used exclusively for road repairs," Lollis said.

As stated in the 2010-2011 Measure R quarterly report for the City of Porterville, last year, the city received about \$960,000 in Measure R funds, which was used for a 2.3 mile microsurfacing project that was completed in late fall of 2010. The project included the treatment of the following streets:

- .56 miles of Main Street, between Morton Avenue and Henderson Avenue;
- .38 miles of Orange Avenue between D Street and Jaye Street;
- .48 miles of Jaye Street between Date Avenue to Olive Avenue;
- .44 miles of Henderson Avenue between Prospect Street and Indiana Street;
- and .48 miles of Prospect Street from Henderson Avenue to Westfield Avenue.

The total cost for the project was around \$1.2 million, which means the city had to tap into money reserved for other projects and pay the remaining balance, Lollis said.

The exclusive investment of Measure R monies on projects like these are just one part of the city's ongoing efforts in addressing road conditions.

Road Management

A year and a half ago the city's public works department invested \$40,000 in Pavement Management (PMP) software — a computer-assisted and decision-making program designed to help the city prevent pavement problems through judicious maintenance and to diagnose and repair those that exist in a timely, cost-effective manner.

Prior to obtaining the program, the selection process was based on complaints, city engineer priority (based on data) and city council priority, Lollis explained.

It costs the city \$10,000 to \$15,000 annually to maintain the program, which is also paid for by the State Transportation Program, Reed said.

Through the evaluation of 47 miles of paved city streets, a process that typically begins in the summer and ends in the fall, the program determines the condition of the city's arterial and collector streets and forks out a score (Pavement Condition Index) ranging from zero for failed to 100 for perfect condition.

Depending on the PCI, areas where resurfacing could go the furthest in extending the life of the street are identified by city staff and considered for repair and a final project list is developed.

On the city's capital improvement budget for fiscal year 2010-2011, are the following projects:

- Jaye Street Extension, El Rancho Avenue to Gibbons Avenue, a \$1.7 million project funded by the special gas tax, LTF and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds, expected to go out to bid in February
- Scranton Avenue and Indiana Street widening, a \$3 million project funded by Measure R that is expected to break ground in late summer or early fall,
- and the reconstruction of Olive Avenue, with \$300,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) monies already allocated for the project. Already completed.

Although collector and arterial streets are priority, the city assigns between \$100,000 to \$150,000 annually for an overlay program to address the maintenance of almost 140 miles of smaller, residential streets.

Funding Shortfall

In the meantime, the current PCI weighted average for Porterville's arterial and collector road network is 63, or in "fair condition."

Should the city rely on the same \$2.4 million allocated to road maintenance for the next two decades, city streets could see dire consequences.

Take the same \$2.4 million budget, and in 20 years, all of the city roads will either be in "very poor" or "serious" condition. According to City Public Works Director Baldo Rodriguez, to avoid potential deterioration and keep city streets between "fair" and "satisfactory" condition within that time frame it would cost the city approximately \$4.2 million annually.

The city is looking at other funding sources to address the problem.

Among those sources, according to Reed, is a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant for shoulder stabilization, hazardous elimination type grants (based on specifics such as traffic accidents), federal government money such as the ARRA and "anything and everything that is available."

"We are pursuing all the street grants we can get our hands on. If we sniff out a grant, we're applying for it — but then again, so is every agency in the state," Rodriguez said.

To view the City of Porterville's Capital Projects Fund, visit <http://www.ci.porterville.ca.us/depts/Finance/> and click on 2010-2011 under Annual Budget Reports.