



Chapter 6: Investments in our Transportation Future

This chapter describes the transportation investments proposed for the San Benito region that support the goals and objectives of the Regional Transportation Plan.

INVESTMENTS IN OUR TRANSPORTATION FUTURE

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) recommends advancing projects identified by local jurisdictions, and transit operators as well as by voters through the 2018 Measure G Transportation Projects from the Council of Governments (COG) and Caltrans are also included to fully capture planned improvements throughout the county. Taken together, these projects and programs make significant progress toward achieving the RTP’s goals.

In identifying the list of projects, it is crucial to recognize the multi-modal transportation system, as a whole, that includes a network of highways, local roads, and alternative transportation facilities, such as bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit, to accommodate residents that do not have access, or choose not to use, a private vehicle. Investments to airports, transportation demand management and transportation system management projects are also integral to the overall network.



The RTP Prioritizes Projects and Programs that Address Existing Needs, Support Communities, and Work Toward Plan Goals

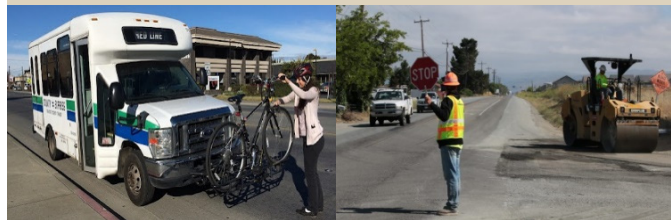


Figure 6-1: Multimodal Transportation System

Source: Council of Governments

HOW IS THE RTP PROJECT LIST DEVELOPED?

San Benito County’s cities, the County, and transit operators submitted projects to COG for inclusion in the RTP, with a total of 125 project submissions and updates. A *Financially Constrained** priority list was refined through collaborative engagement to fully reflect local priorities.

*List of projects that could be funded based on revenues reasonably expected through the year 2045.

HOW WILL THE PRIORITY LIST BE USED?

The RTP is not a funding document, but the priorities identified through this effort will guide region in setting transportation policy in San Benito County and on future funding decisions that have their own processes, as described in Chapter 8 Implementation of this plan. Advancing these projects will also require visionary strategies and partnerships.

The RTP also includes socially equitable investments in the transportation system across the cities of San Juan Bautista and Hollister, and County of San Benito. In this document social equity refers to the equitable distribution of transportation impacts (benefits and disadvantages) regardless of income status, race, and ethnicity. The RTP considers the historical impacts of transportation investments and seeks to proactively address the needs of disadvantaged communities.



Figure 6-2: Measure G of Buena Vista Road
Source: Council of Governments

In planning which program of projects will advance the region’s goals, the RTP must also consider the available funding for the system. This includes the provision of appropriate financial resources, as discussed in the previous chapter, to operate, maintain and expand the multi-modal system. The RTP recommends advancing projects identified by local jurisdictions given projected revenues. The host of transportation investments were identified based on input received from the public, policymakers, federal, state, regional, and local partner agencies. See Chapter 7: Public Participation and Consultation.

As the Regional Transportation Agency for San Benito County, the Council of Governments (COG) and the local Cities and County support a safe and multimodal transportation system of projects.

TRANSPORTATION PROJECT COSTS VS. PROJECTED FINANCIAL ASSUMPTIONS

The cost to implement the entire transportation project list is \$1.8 billion; however only a portion (\$1.5 billion) is estimated to be available to the region through the year 2045. As illustrated in Figure 6-3, the RTP identifies **139 projects** of investment across all modes of travel through the year 2045 (Appendix A).

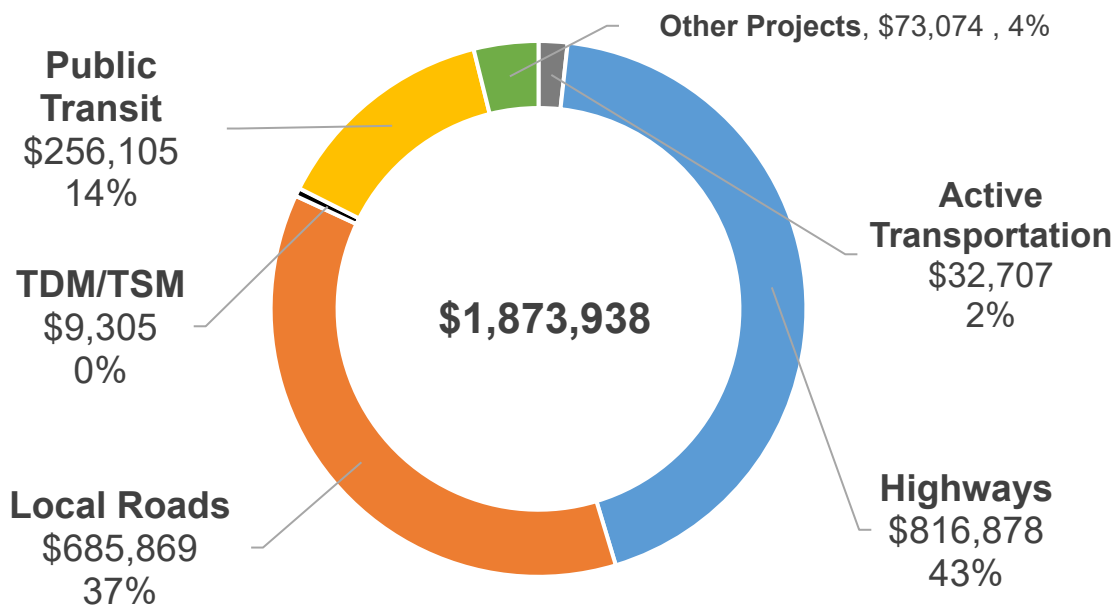


Figure 6-3: 25-Year Transportation Project Costs by Mode (000s)
Source: Council of County Governments

As previously noted, the San Benito region is projected to receive approximately \$1.5 billion (Appendix B) in funding through the year 2045, which is less than what would be needed to fully fund \$1.8 billion in transportation project costs (Appendix A). As illustrated in Figure 6-4, there is a \$333 million funding shortfall over the next 25 years that would be needed to meet the entire needs of the San Benito region (Appendix A).

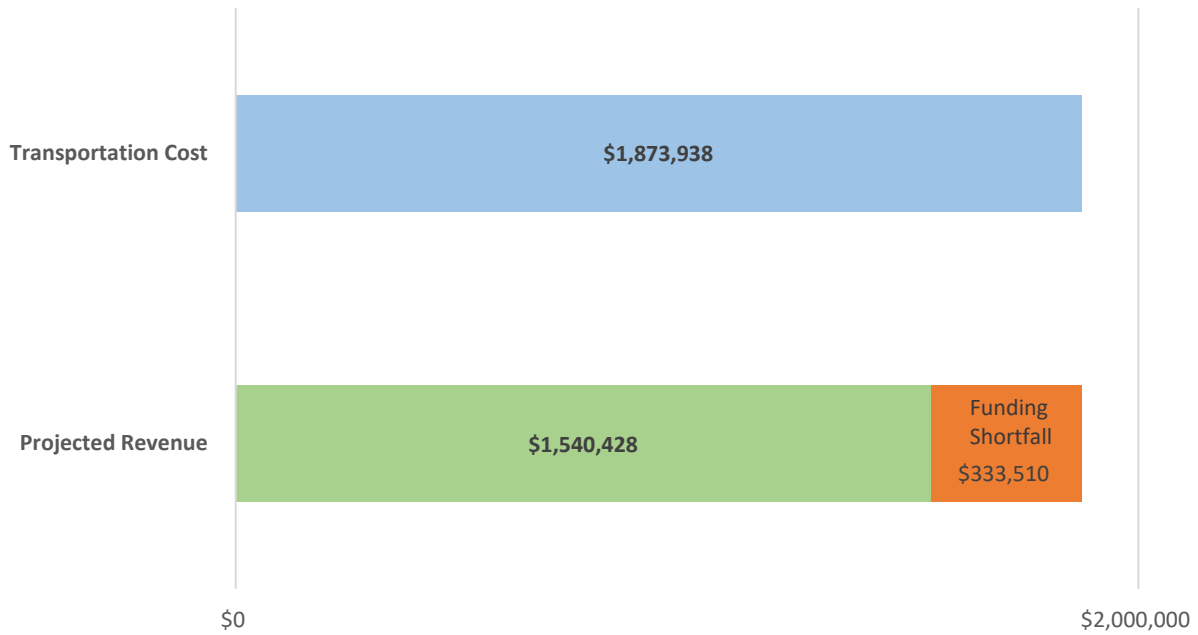


Figure 6-4: Transportation Project Costs vs. Projected Revenues Assumptions (000s)
 Source: Council of San Benito County Governments

Given the disproportion between project costs and projected revenue assumptions, the Regional Transportation Plan categorizes projects in one of two categories, including:

1. **Financially Constrained** refers to those projects that could be funded based on revenues reasonably expected over the next 25-years (or through the year 2045); or
2. **Financially Unconstrained** refers to candidate projects that would be funded, only if additional monies become available beyond what is projected over the next 25-years. *Financially Unconstrained* projects are solely listed in the project list for illustrative purposes.

Figure 6-5 illustrates the *Financially Constrained* Transportation Project List, by project category (Appendix A).

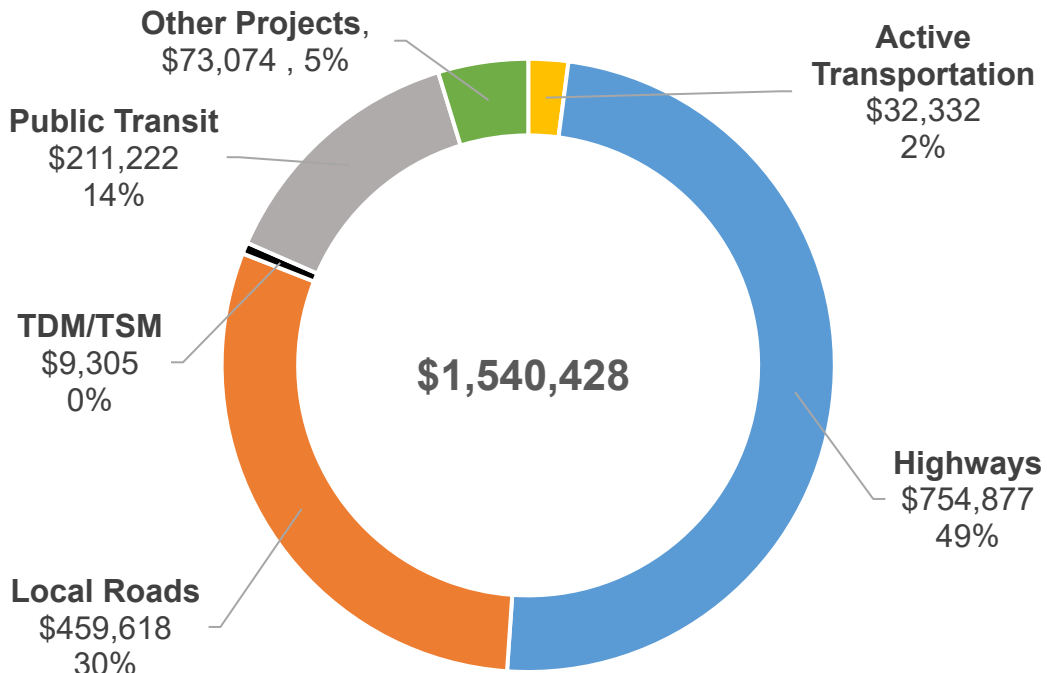


Figure 6-5: 25-Year Financially Constrained Project List Summary (000s)

Source: Council of Governments

The Regional Transportation Plan also includes inflated revenues (Appendix B) and escalated project cost estimates (Appendix A1) in year of expenditure.

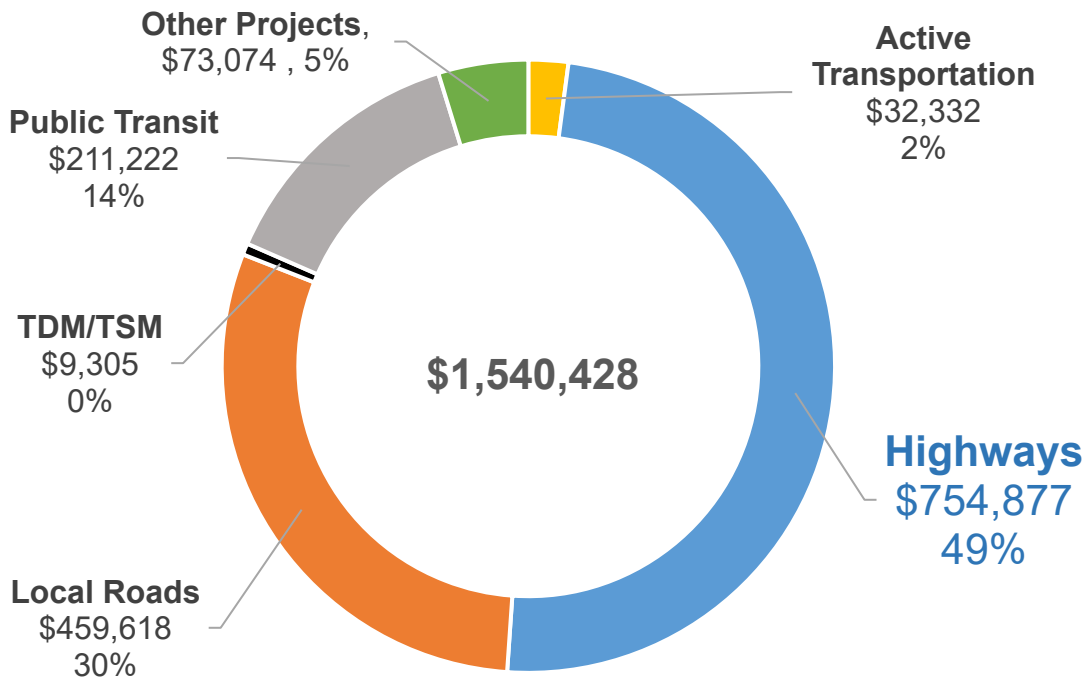
The following section highlights some of the major “Financially Constrained” projects by transportation mode. This section also briefly highlights some of the “Financially Unconstrained” projects.

HIGHWAY SYSTEM

In the San Benito region, the operation and maintenance of the highway system is a significant priority for transportation investment decisions. The highway system is owned and maintained by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and improvements are funded through various local, state, and federal revenue sources.

Financially Constrained Highway Projects

The Regional Transportation Plan’s Financially Constrained Transportation Project List identifies highway investments needed to maintain, operate, and expand the highway system. Within the 25-year RTP period, the combined operations, maintenance, and investment projects to the highway system total over \$754 million, Figure 6-6. Highway infrastructure projects represent 49% of all transportation investments on the Financially Constrained” list of projects (Appendix A).



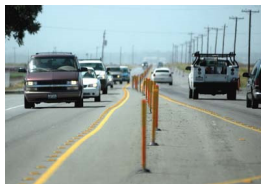
Highlighted Financially **Constrained** Projects

Financially Constrained refers to those projects that could be funded based on revenues reasonably expected over the next 25-years (or through the year 2045).



Highway 25 Expressway Conversion Project, Phase I (Project No. SB-CT-A44)

Phase I of the Highway 25 Conversion Project proposes to construct the southern segment of the project – from the SR-25/SR-156 interchange to San Felipe Rd and would convert the highway into a four-lane expressway.



Highway 25 Expressway Conversion Project, Phase II (Project No. SB-CT-A45)

proposed to construct the SR-25/SR-156 interchange as well as the northern segment of the project (Hudner Lanen to Bloomfield Road with integration with the SR-25/US-101 interchange project).



State Route 156 Improvement Project (Project No. SB-CT-A01)

The San Benito State Route 156 Improvement Project proposes improvements to State Route 156 between the cities of San Juan Bautista and Hollister in San Benito County. The purpose of the project is to improve route continuity, reduce congestion, and increase safety. The State Route 156 Project is fully funded, and construction is slated for the Spring of 2022.



State Highway Operation and Protection (Project No. SB-CT-A43)

Caltrans' State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) funds the repair and preservation of the State Highway System, safety improvements, and some highway operational improvements. Funds are allocated to projects based upon ranking criteria, and the projects are prioritized and process through a "programming" process. The project fund estimate includes work to be performed within the San Benito region State Highway System.

HIGHLIGHTED FINANCIALLY UNCONSTRAINED PROJECTS

Financially Unconstrained refers to candidate projects that would be funded, only if additional monies become available beyond what is projected over the next 25-years. *Financially Unconstrained* projects are solely listed in the project list for illustrative purposes.

There only one highway project identified on the “Financially Unconstrained” list.



U.S. 101: Las Aromitas: Monterey/San Benito County Line to State Route 156 (SB-CT-A55)

Convert to 6 lanes from Monterey/San Benito County line to SR 156 in San Benito County.

LOCAL STREET AND ROAD PROJECTS

Local streets and roads are vital to the strength of the region’s entire transportation system. They connect our communities and carry traffic in our region whether by automobile, bus, by foot or bicycle.

Financially Constrained Local Street and Road Projects

The Regional Transportation Plan’s “Financially Constrained” local street and road projects are those investments needed to maintain, operate, and expand the local roadway system. Within the 25-year RTP period, the combined operations, maintenance, and investment to the local roadway system exceeds \$459 million, Figure 6-7. Local Street and Road infrastructure projects represent 30% of all transportation investments on the “Financially Constrained” list of projects (Appendix A).

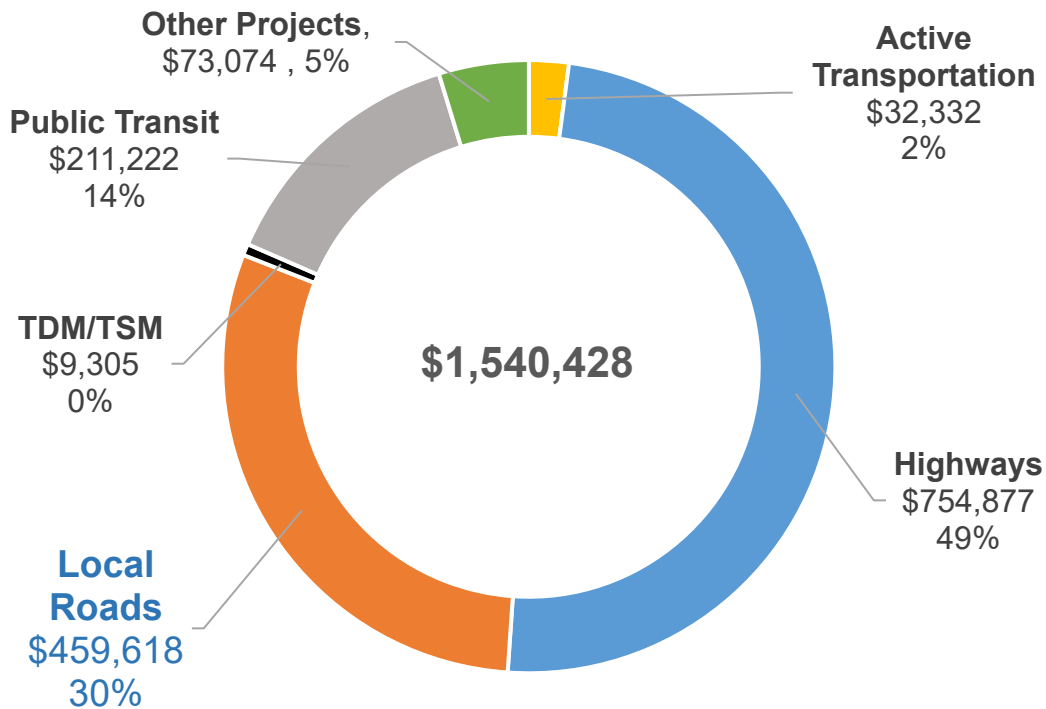


Figure 6-7: 25-Year Financially Constrained Local Roads Projects (000s)

Source: Council of Governments

Highlighted Financially Constrained Local Street and Road Projects

Financially Constrained refers to those local roadway projects that could be funded based on revenues reasonably expected over the next 25-years (or through the year 2045).



New Local Roads (Regional Transportation Impact Mitigation Fee Program)

The Transportation Impact Mitigation Fee Program consists of the construction of transportation improvements intended to meet the needs generated by growth in the San Benito region totaling \$239,044,798. As growth in housing and commercial services occurs, the Program requires that these new developments adequately mitigate their traffic impacts. The projects listed in the Fee Program include arterial and collector road widening and extensions, bicycle lanes and pedestrian facilities, bridge replacements and widening, and intersection upgrades, Figure 6-8. New roadways will include bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

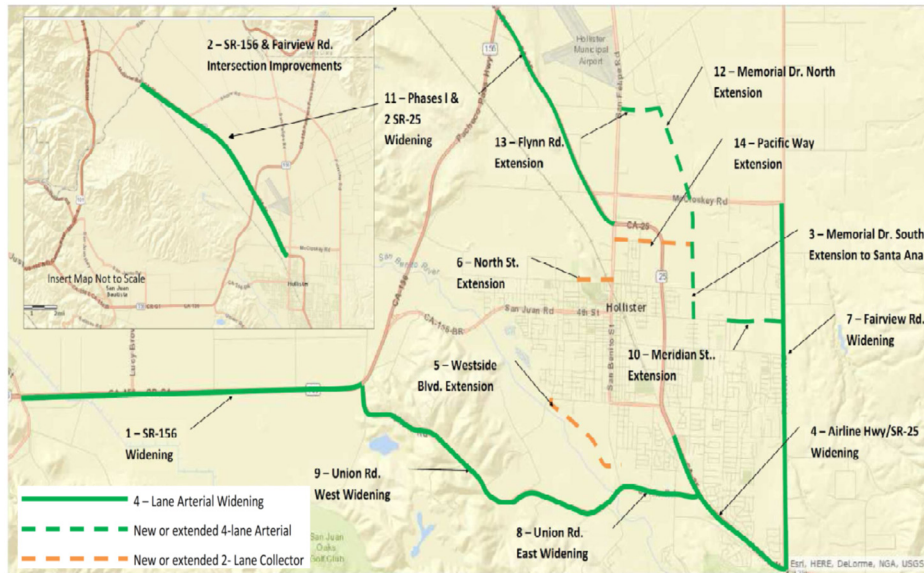


Figure 6-8: Financially Constrained Local Street and Road Projects

Source: Transportation Impact Mitigation Fee Program, 2016

Local Street and Roadway Maintenance



The maintenance of existing roadways are priorities for local government agencies. However, inadequate funding levels for local road maintenance has been the greatest obstacle for the Cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista, and County of San Benito. Local roadway rehabilitation and maintenance are the responsibilities of each local jurisdiction within the region.

In 2017, Senate Bill 1, Road Repair and Accountability Act was approved, bringing over \$51 million to the San Benito County region through the 2045-year period. The approximate distribution includes \$38 million for the County of San Benito, \$13 million for the City of Hollister and \$680,000 for the City of San Juan Bautista, as illustrated in Figure 6-13.

Highlighted Financially **Unconstrained** Local Streets and Road Projects

Financially Unconstrained refers to candidate local roadway projects that would be funded, only if additional monies become available beyond what is projected over the next 25-years. *Financially Unconstrained* projects are solely listed in the project list for illustrative purposes.

Local Steet and Road Maintenance



The Regional Transportation Plan identifies the local road rehabilitation and maintenance project need for the City of Hollister and County of San Benito as partially funded or “Financially Unconstrained.”

The City of San Juan Bautista’s local road rehabilitation and maintenance projects is completely “Financially Constrained” over the next 25-years.

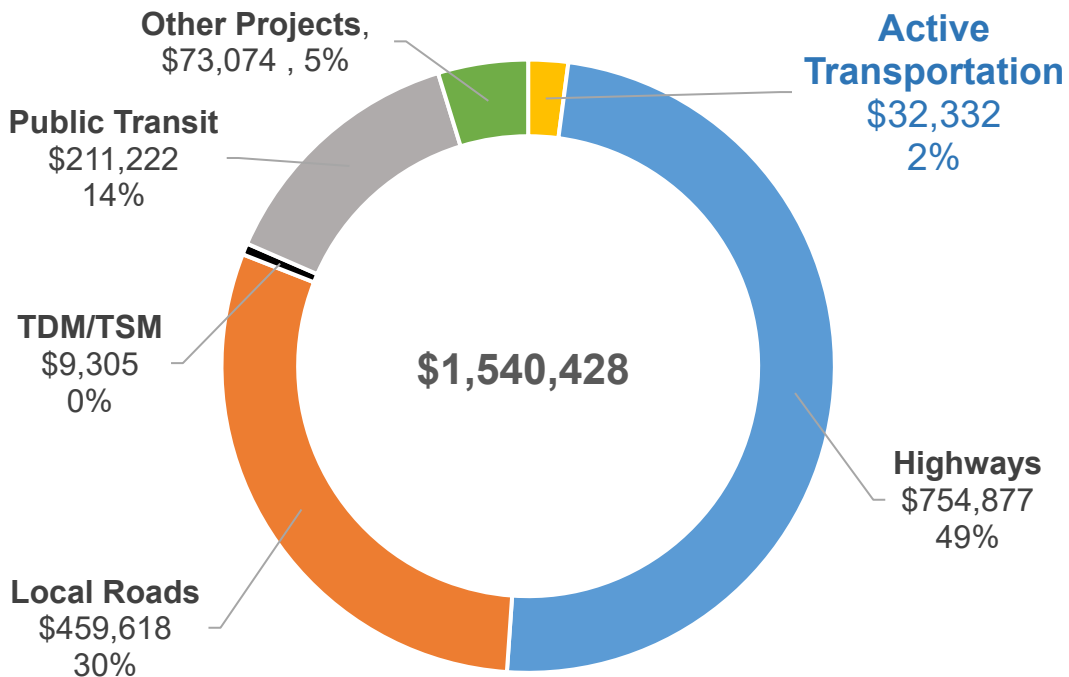
The funding shortfall for local rehabilitation and roads maintenance for the City of Hollister and San Benito County will continue to be an issue beyond the 25-year timeframe of this Regional Transportation Plan. *As a priority, the Council of Governments identified the maximum funding possible, given the type of monies received for local road rehabilitation and maintenance projects.*

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Active transportation projects are those which facilitate walking and bicycling while travelling. These projects can help improve public health by reducing the amount of time spent sedentary in a car while making trips. These projects are also an important element of a well-rounded transportation plan, taking into consideration the needs of more than just vehicular travel.

Financially Constrained Active Transportation Projects

The Regional Transportation Plan’s “Financially Constrained” project list identifies investments needed to promote Active Transportation. Within the 25-year RTP period, the combined bicycle and pedestrian projects included to encourage increased use of active modes, such as biking and walking total over \$32 million, Figure 6-15. Active Transportation infrastructure projects represent 2% of all investments on the “Financially Constrained” list of projects (Appendix A).



Highlighted Financially Constrained Projects



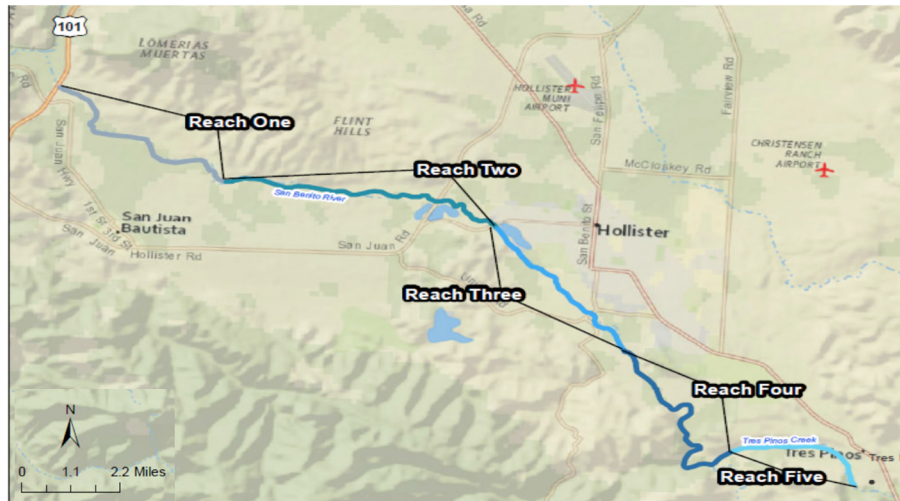
San Benito Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan Implementation

Regional Transportation Plan proposes over 40 bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects within San Benito region. These bicycle and pedestrian investments are listed individually in the Regional Transportation Plan list of projects (Appendix A). Many of the local roadway projects, included in the “Financially Constrained” list, are multi-modal, which means that they include bicycle and pedestrian components. For example, a project on a local roadway may include bicycle lanes.

Highlighted Financially Unconstrained Projects

San Benito River Recreational Trail, Phase 2 (Project No. SB-SBC-A66)

The San Benito County River Parkway is a 20-mile-long trail corridor in northwestern San Benito County. The River Parkway would extend through unincorporated County land, primarily along the winding San Benito River, and through City of Hollister land near the 4th Street Bridge.



- Reach One – San Benito River (Old San Juan Highway to Lucy Brown Lane)
- Reach Two – San Benito River (Lucy Brown Lane to 4th Street bridge)
- Reach Three – San Benito River (4th Street bridge to Hospital Road)
- Reach Four – San Benito River and Tres Pinos Creek (Hospital Road to Southside Road bridge)
- Reach Five – Tres Pinos Creek (Southside Road bridge to the County Historical Park)

Figure 6-10, Financially Unconstrained San Benito River Recreational Trail

Source: River Parkway Master Plan

PUBLIC TRANSIT PROJECTS

The Regional Transportation Plan supports transit as an essential service needed by many community members to maintain a good standard of living; it also recognizes the important role transit plays in improving our region's air quality, reducing traffic congestion and energy consumption, while improving air quality and the general quality of life for commuters. The RTP seeks to coordinate improved public transit services with complementary and supportive land use development—for instance, transit facilities surrounded by residential and commercial developments.

Financially Constrained Public Transit Projects

The Regional Transportation Plan’s “Financially Constrained” project list specifically calls for public transit capital and operational investments. Within the 25-year RTP period, the combined public transit projects total over \$211 million, Figure 6-11. Transit represents 14% of all investments on the “Financially Constrained” list of projects (Appendix A).

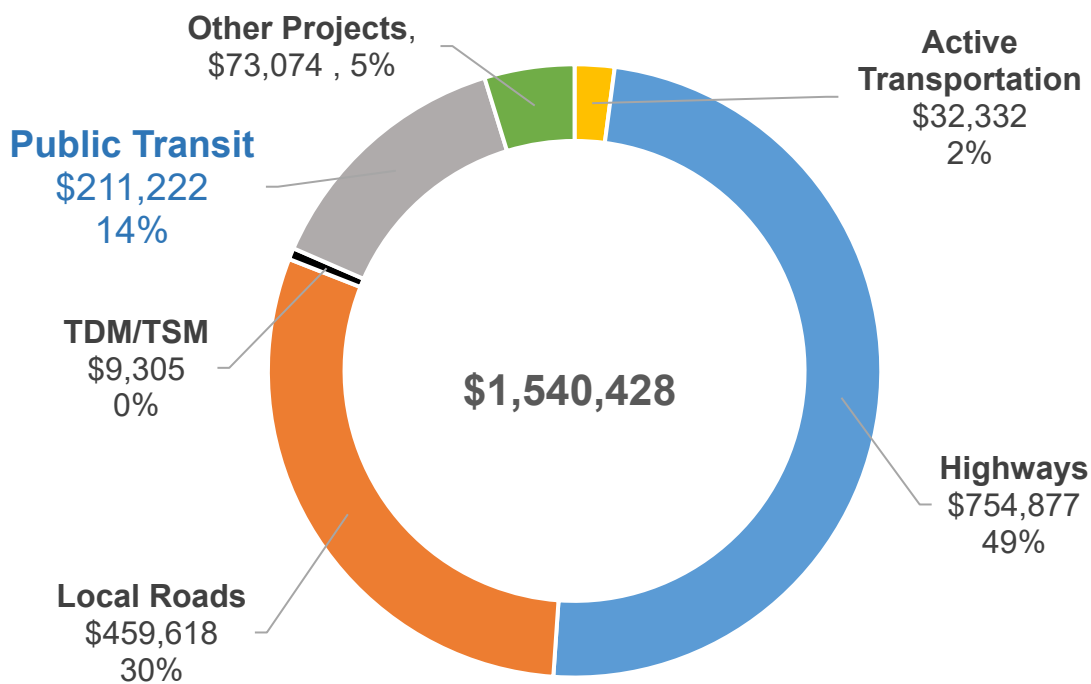


Figure 6-11: 25-Year Financially Constrained Public Transit Projects (000s)

Source: Council of Governments

Highlighted Financially **Constrained** Transit Projects



General Transit Service Operations (Project No. SB-LTA-A37)

The Plan supports transit operations as an essential service needed by many community members to maintain a minimum standard of living; it also recognizes the important role transit plays in improving our region's air quality, reducing traffic congestion, and improving the general quality of life for travelers who now face growing commutes.



Regional Transit Planning (Project No. SB-LTA-A42)

Planning presents a framework for examining the ways in which technical aspects of the regional transit planning process are changing in response to a broadening of goals and strategies. Planning often results in the implementation of transit infrastructure, new service, and operational improvements.

Highlighted Financially **Unconstrained** Projects



Passenger Rail to Santa Clara County (Project No. SB-LTA-A53)

The Regional Transportation Plan identifies commuter rail from Hollister to Santa Clara County as “Financially Unconstrained.”

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) & Transportation System management (TSM) Projects

Transportation Demand Management makes transportation options convenient, accessible, and safe. Strategies to manage demands on the region’s transportation roadway system in ways that reduce or eliminate traffic congestion during peak periods of demand.

Transportation System Management improves the ability of a highway or arterial street to efficiently move traffic without added capacity. This includes fairly low-cost improvements, such as: freeway auxiliary lanes, improved shoulders, individual intersection improvements, synchronized signals, and limiting left turn movements to major street connections.

Financially **Constrained** TDM & TSM Projects

The Regional Transportation Plan’s “Financially Constrained” project list identifies TDM &TMS investments. Within the 25-year RTP period, the combined projects total over \$9.3 million, Figure 6-12. The projects represent 0% of all investments on the “Financially Constrained” list of projects (Appendix A).

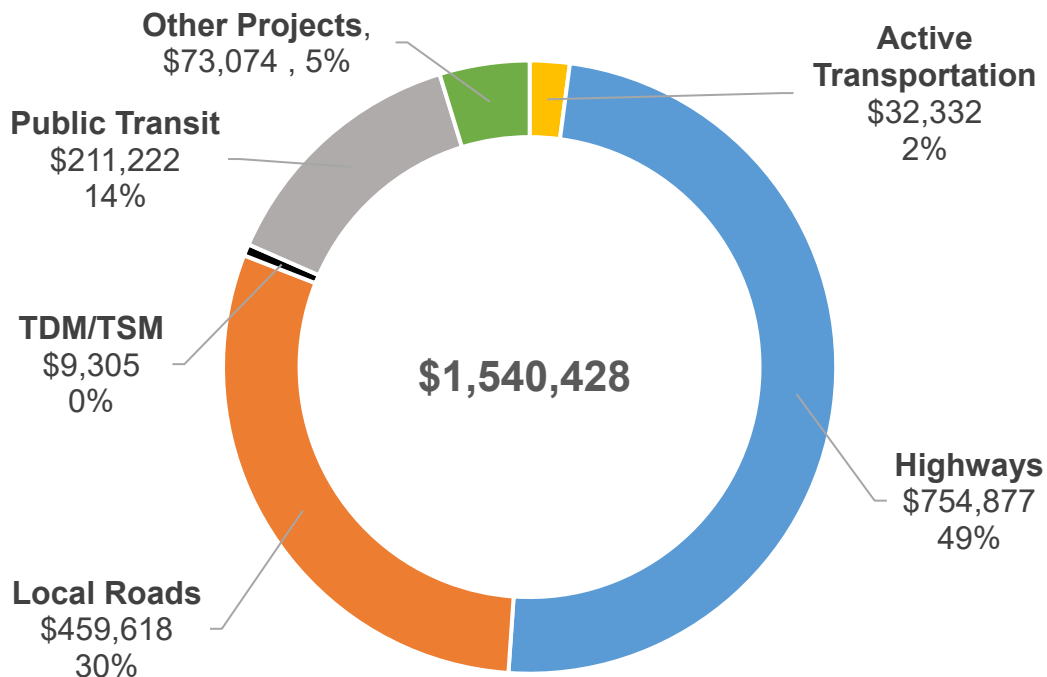


Figure 6-12: 25-Year Financially Constrained TDM & TSM Projects (000s)

Source: Council of San Benito County Governments

HIGHLIGHTED FINANCIALLY CONSTRAINED PROJECTS

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT



Regional Vanpool Program (Project No. SB-COG-A53)

The Council of Governments operates a commuter program aimed at providing commuter transportation options, reducing traffic congestion, and reducing vehicle emissions within the San Benito region.



Regional Rideshare Program (Project No. SB-COG-A08)

The Council of Governments offers services that assist users in defining alternatives to driving alone and encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation.

Transportation System Management



Emergency Call Box Program (Project No. SB-COG-A44)

The San Benito Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways (SAFE) operates emergency call boxes along Highways 25, 146, 101 and 156, as well as some rural County roads. The Emergency Call Box Program helps improve the safety and security of residents and visitors to San Benito County by connecting drivers with roadside assistance.

Highlighted Financially **Unconstrained** Projects

There are no “Financial Unconstrained” projects identified in the Regional Transportation plan.

“OTHER” CATEGORY PROJECTS

The Regional Transportation Plan identifies several projects under this category, including those related to the local airports and administration and planning efforts of the Council of San Benito County Governments.

Financially Constrained “Other” Category Projects

The Regional Transportation Plan’s “Financially Constrained” project list identifies “Other” category investments. Within the 25-year RTP period, the combined projects total over \$73 million, Figure 6-13. The projects represent 5% of all investments on the “Financially Constrained” list of projects (Appendix A).

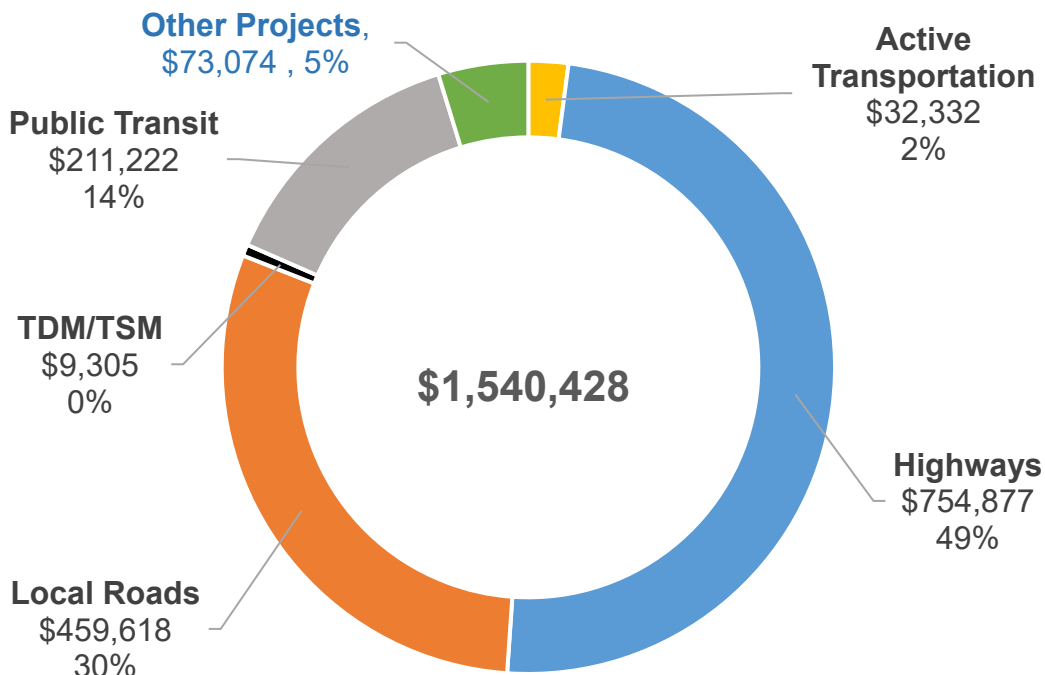


Figure 6-13: 25-Year Financially Constrained “Other” Category Projects (000s)
Source: Council of Governments

Highlighted Financially **Constrained** “Other” Category Projects



COG Planning and Administration (Project No. SB-COG-A58)

The Council of San Benito County Governments and the San Benito Local Transportation Authority perform a variety of short- and long-range transportation planning activities and studies. The work performed under these planning efforts is funded through the Transportation Development Act (TDA) for COG administration, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.



Hollister Airport Operations & Maintenance (Project No. SB-COH-A40)

Recognizing the airport’s role as an economic driver and important asset, the Regional Transportation Plan proposes investments for airport improvements in the future. The Regional Transportation Plan identifies this project as partially “Financially Unconstrained.”



Hollister Airport Capital Improvements (Project No. SB-COH-A41)

Capital improvements grouped project list from the Airport Capital Improvement Program. The Regional Transportation Plan identifies this project as partially “Financially Unconstrained.”

Highlighted Financially **Unconstrained** “Other” Category Projects

There are no “Financial Unconstrained” projects identified in the Regional Transportation plan.

In addition to projects, the Council of Governments finances programs that support long-standing San Benito County commitments that are reinforced in the RTP. These include the Safe Routes to Schools Program, youth and senior discount transit pass program, paratransit and senior mobility programs, and funding commitments for bringing local streets and roads to a state of good repair.

The RTP list of projects provide for seamless implementation of Complete Streets concepts. For example, incorporating bicycle lanes as a matter of course in a roadway expansion will be explored when transportation projects and land use development is implemented in the San Benito region.

Complete Streets

The term “Complete Streets” refers to a transportation network that is planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to provide safe mobility for all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit and rail riders, commercial vehicles and motorists appropriate to the function and context of the facility.

The California Complete Streets Act of 2008 (AB 1358) ensures that the general plans of California cities and counties meet the needs of all users, including pedestrians, transit, bicyclists, the elderly, motorists, movers of commercial goods, and the disabled. AB 1358 requires cities and counties to identify how the jurisdiction will provide accommodation of all users of roadways during the revision of the circulation element of their general plan.



Figure 6-14 Example of Complete Streets
Source: Monterey Bay Complete Streets Guidebook

The COG is committed to planning for complete streets, and that commitment is reflected in the Regional Transportation Plan, with investments in bicycle and pedestrian facilities and other enhancements to the system. COG in partnership with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County developed the Monterey Bay Area Complete Streets Guidebook. The Guidebook builds upon best practices from across the nation and was developed to assist local jurisdictions in planning, designing, and implementing complete streets projects.

Figure 6-28 demonstrates the economic framework for evaluation of Complete Streets:

Categories of Economic Activity	Direct and Non-Direct Transportation Impacts	Effect on Economic Activity				Very
		Possibly Negative	Possibly None	Possibly Positive	Possibly Positive	
Business Activity	Access ^a			●	●	
Business Activity	Trip Volume		●	●		
Business Activity / Investment	Trips Duration ^b	●	●	●		
Fiscal Impact	Construction ^c	●	●	●	●	
Fiscal Impact	Maintenance		●	●		
Property Values / Investment	Amenities		●	●		
Economic Growth	Health ^d			●	●	

Figure 6-15 Economic Framework for Evaluating Complete Streets

Source: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, White Paper on Economic Impacts of Complete Streets

Notes:

- ^a New facilities for non-automobiles are likely to have a larger positive impact on economic activity than improving existing facilities.
- ^b An increase in trip duration for automobiles may negatively impact economic activity while a reduction in trip duration for non-automobiles may result in a positive on economic activity.
- ^c Construction of new facilities may have significant economic impacts, while adding new elements may have no to little impact economic impacts.
- ^d If Complete Streets contribute to healthier people by encouraging regular physical activity. As reflected in Caltrans ‘Main Street, California,’ encouraging walking and bicycling as a frequent mode of travel can reduce health spending at a state and federal level.

Vehicles Miles Traveled

Senate Bill 743 represents a significant shift away from the familiar Level of Service (LOS) analysis where the impact of traffic congestion and the amount of time spent stopped or slowed in traffic is used to measure environmental impacts. Even before July 1, 2020, because of the shift required by SB 743, LOS was no longer the focus in transportation impact analyses—instead, VMT, which is the amount and distance of driving, is utilized to determine potential transportation impacts. The purpose is to optimize the measuring of the actual transportation-related environmental impacts of a given project.##

Specifically, VMT considers whether the project is located close to jobs, businesses and services that enable short trips and travel choices besides driving alone. This law is intended to balance the needs of congestion management more appropriately with statewide goals related to infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and reduction of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions.



Achieving significant reductions in VMT is also more challenging in rural communities as the potential is lower due to land use patterns and density that generally require auto use. Trip lengths in rural communities tend to be also longer. In San Benito County nearly 50 percent of residents commute outside the County for employment and travel more than 30 miles to reach their destination in counties such as Santa Clara, Monterey, and Santa Cruz.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The San Benito Regional Transportation Plan must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires that governmental agencies consider the cumulative regional impact and analyze the environmental consequences of planned transportation projects. As the lead agency, Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments conducts an extensive environmental review process, in partnership with the Council of Governments, which also includes public review and a public hearing.

The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments established a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of San Benito County Governments, Transportation Agency for Monterey County, and Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission to prepare one Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which included each Regional Transportation Plan collectively in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (Appendix F). The Environmental Impact Report presents a regional assessment of the impacts of the proposed 2040 MTP/SCS and the Regional Transportation Plans prepared by the Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz RTPAs.