

**COUNTY OF AMADOR
CIVIL GRAND JURY
2024-2025**



CONSOLIDATED REPORT



Superior Court of the State of California
County of Amador

500 Argonaut Lane • Jackson, California 95642 • (209) 257-2686

May 22, 2025

Connie McKenney
Amador County Civil Grand Jury
P.O. Box 249
Jackson, CA 95642

Re: Civil Grand Jury Report 2024-2025

Dear Foreperson McKenney and members of the 2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury:

The Court has reviewed and approved the following reports:

Parking Enforcement

Amador County Roads

In addition, your compliance with California Penal Code section 919(b) is acknowledged.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Renée C. Day".

Renée C. Day
Presiding Judge, Amador Superior Court

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FUNCTIONS OF THE GRAND JURY

The Grand Jury, as mandated by the California Constitution, is part of the Judicial Branch and is an arm of the court. The Civil Grand Jury has two responsibilities: to act as a civil watchdog conducting investigations and to answer citizen complaints. The Grand Jury investigates city and county government, as well as special districts, to ensure the interests of Amador County citizens are being served. Procedures, methods, and systems are reviewed to determine if more efficient programs might be employed as well as being more economical for the county.

The Grand Jury issues final reports that describe problems they may have encountered and make recommendations for solutions. The affected agencies or districts must comment on these recommendations once published in the reports.

Amador County Citizens Complaints

The Grand Jury is empowered to investigate complaints from citizens, civic groups, government employees, and others about the procedures or conduct of its officers or employees. Our primary function is the examination of all aspects of local government, including cities, special districts, and school districts. This is our primary function and most important reason for our existence. Our goal is to assure honest, efficient government in the best interests of all our citizens in Amador County.

Confidentiality

All of our proceedings and investigations are confidential. We are sworn to maintain secrecy. As a Grand Jury we apply the same objective standard of conduct and responsibility to all persons, and we are charged to avoid being influenced by sympathy, public feelings, passion, or prejudice.

Complaint Process

While the Grand Jury will investigate complaints presented to it in any form, it is preferred this form be used whenever possible. Please identify the specific problem and describe the circumstances. Document our complaint with all available evidence and submit copies of all available documents. The Complaint Form may be downloaded at:

<https://www.amadorcourt.org/divisions/civil/grandjury/complaint-form.pdf>

Mail your complaint to:
AMADOR COUNTY GRAND JURY
P.O. BOX 249
JACKSON, CA 95642

NOTICE TO RESPONDENTS

Pursuant to California Penal Code §§ 933 and 933.05, the Civil Grand Jury requests each entity or individual named below to respond to the enumerated Findings and Recommendations within specific statutory guidelines.

Responding To Findings

The responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:

1. The respondent agrees with the finding.
2. The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore.

Reporting Action In Response To Recommendation

Recommendations by the Grand Jury require action. The responding person or entity must report action on all recommendations in one of four ways:

1. The recommendation has been implemented, including a summary of the implemented action.
2. The recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future. This response should include a timeframe for implementation.
3. The recommendation requires further analysis. The law requires a detailed explanation of the analysis or study and the timeframe not to exceed six months. In this response, the analysis or study must be submitted to the officer, director, or governing body of the agency being investigated.
4. The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted, or is not reasonable, with an explanation.

Final Report Response Format

The following standard format is to be used when responding to the Grand Jury Report and is to be used by all agencies when responding:

Title of the Grand Jury Report
Responding Agency Response by Finding(s)

Finding Number X:

(Governing Body, Department Head)

State the Findings as written in the Grand Jury Report. Include your detailed response to the finding. Attach any supporting documentation.

Recommendation Number X: State the Recommendation as written in the Grand Jury report. Include your detailed response to the Recommendation. Response should include progress on your planned action. Attach any supporting documentation.

Follow the same procedures for each Finding and Recommendation as written in the Grand Jury Report for this agency.

CIVIL GRAND JURORS 2024-2025

Foreperson: Connie McKenney

Foreperson Pro Tem: Neil Robinson

Linda Desedare

Andrew Dodson

Evelyn Goodier

Tamara Hobbick

Robert Ianni

Erik Jones

Rose Langan

Richard Lucas

Robert Mena

Nancy O'Loan

Esaul Robles

Matthew Roe

Heidi Soberanes

James Struhs

Steven Stenberg

PARKING ENFORCEMENT IN JACKSON



Amador County Civil Grand Jury Final Report 2024-2025

SUMMARY

The Grand Jury received a complaint concerning Jackson Police Department's (Police Department's) enforcement and citation of illegal parking in handicap spaces. The Grand Jury chose to investigate the complaint. Following a review of the Police Department's parking enforcement practices, including enforcement of handicapped only parking, the Grand Jury found that parking laws are investigated and enforced in a timely manner.

BACKGROUND

After reviewing the complaint, the Grand Jury assessed the allegations in the complaint to determine whether an investigation should be undertaken. The Grand Jury decided to conduct a full investigation of parking enforcement in the City of Jackson.

METHODOLOGY

During our investigation of parking enforcement in the City of Jackson, the Grand Jury interviewed three witnesses, analyzed one written complaint, and reviewed documentation provided by the Police Department and the City of Jackson.

The Grand Jury reviewed the following documents provided by the Police Department and the City of Jackson:

- Computer Automated Database (CAD) Incident reports related to alleged parking violations, occurring in 2024
- Summary of parking related citations issued by the Police Department between February 7, 2024 – February 6, 2025. This summary was provided by the Police department who obtained this data from a query from Data Ticket, Inc.'s¹ (Data Ticket's) online portal.
- Documents from the City of Jackson regarding the removal of parking meters.
- City of Jackson Municipal Code.
- California Vehicle Code.
- A copy of a parking citation form.
- The contract between Data Ticket and the Police Department.
- The Data Ticket fee schedule.

DISCUSSION

1. Jackson Police Department Procedures

The city of Jackson has a population of just over 5000 citizens. The Police Department consists of the Chief of Police, a Captain, a Sergeant, a Detective, and six patrol officers. Additionally, the Police Department employs one non-officer records clerk. These officers and the record's clerk are full time employees. To assist their fulltime workforce, reserve officers are employed to perform enforcement of parking laws. Reserve officers are retired peace officers or other

¹ According to promotional material, "Data Ticket is a California Corporation that provides parking citation processing and collections services, administrative review and hearing coordination, permit sales and processing, accounting services, customer service and a web-based solution that manages the entire process. Data Ticket has been providing these services for Cities and Counties, Universities, Districts and other public entities nationwide for over 30 years. Data Ticket was incorporated in California in 1989. We provide expertise to ensure that citations get processed and collected in a timely manner for over 400 Agencies nationwide."

qualified officers who are not full-time. Reserve officers have the same credentials as full-time officers. They are enabled to write citations, make arrests and use force when required. The City of Jackson pays reserve officers by the hour at the same rate paid to new, full-time peace officers. Depending on their availability, the Police Department endeavors to have reserve officers conduct parking enforcement duties two times per week. The Police Department also utilizes approximately ten Community Service Volunteers that are used for parking related duties, usually during special events. They sometimes accompany full-time officers on patrol. They do not have special training or peace officer credentials, and they are unpaid. Community Service Volunteers do not issue parking citations.

Laws governing parking in the City of Jackson are found in the Municipal Code, these are ordinances enacted by the Jackson City Council. Municipal parking ordinances are local laws specific to a municipality. For example, Jackson Municipal Code sec. 10.08.100 specifies time limits for parking on public streets: “It is unlawful to park any vehicle for longer than the designated period between nine a.m. and six p.m., Sundays and holidays excluded.” Other portions of the Municipal Code specify the signage necessary to inform motorists of the timeframes parking is legally permissible. The overarching law regarding motor vehicles is found in the California Vehicle Code (Vehicle Code), state laws that apply to all communities in California and the corresponding regulations promulgated by the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Parking citations may include violations of the Vehicle Code or the Jackson Municipal Code and sometimes both. The Vehicle Code² requires all local governments to determine what fines will be imposed on motorists who violate parking laws within their jurisdiction. Municipal Code sec. 10.14.040 addresses parking fines by stating that “[f]ines and charges ...shall be set from time to time by resolution.”

Parking enforcement activities are diverse and may include; issuing citations to motorists for illegal parking resulting in monetary fines, arranging to tow vehicles that violate parking laws, and giving verbal warnings to motorists who violate parking laws but are able to remedy their indiscretion by moving their vehicle. As indicated above, reserve officers are dedicated to parking enforcement, however, full-time patrol officers also engage in parking enforcement depending upon their availability. These officers patrol public parking areas, including public parks, to ensure that vehicle operators are adhering to the Municipal Code and the Vehicle Code. Whether reserve officers or patrol officers, enforcement resources are primarily dedicated to the downtown historic Main Street where parking availability is limited. Officers do not patrol parking areas located on private property, such as privately maintained parking lots that service commercial businesses, but they may investigate parking violations after receiving a complaint from a member of the public. Officers may write citations for violations of handicapped parking laws on private property pursuant to Vehicle Code sec. 22507.8, subd. (d).

The Jackson Police Department receives and documents complaints regarding parking violations. Complaints made as a call for service can be made by email or phone. Email may be sent to the City of Jackson’s public email address or to individual officers who maintain public email addresses printed on their peace officer business cards. If an email complaint is received by

² Vehicle Code sec. 40203.5 specifies that “The schedule of parking penalties for parking violations ...shall be established by the governing body of the jurisdiction where the notice of violation is issued.” Subdivision (c) however, creates an exception for handicapped parking where the state sets a minimum fine of \$250 and a maximum fine of \$1000.

either the city or individual officers, those complaints are forwarded to the records clerk who creates an entry in the CAD. These documents are also known as incident reports. CAD entries are then transmitted to patrol cars alerting officers that a parking related complaint needs to be investigated.

Reporting parking violations by telephone requires calling the Police Department's non-emergency telephone number. Members of the public can locate this well-publicized number in a variety of locations to include phone books, on City and Police Department Internet sites, a Google search, or public outreach advertisements. When calling the Police Department, the caller will receive an automated phone tree that gives the caller the option to contact the Amador County Sheriff's office, individual members of the Police Department or the records clerk. If the caller chooses the Sheriff's office, the dispatcher will enter the complaint into the CAD system and thus, distribute the complaint to patrol officers. If an individual officer is chosen from the automated answering system, the caller will leave a message about the complaint. The recipient forwards the complaint to the records clerk who then enters the complaint into the CAD system the same way that occurs when an emailed complaint is received. Similarly, if the records clerk receives the telephoned complaint directly, that complaint will be entered into the CAD system directly.

The person who ultimately speaks to the complainant will gather as much information from that person as possible including but not limited to the make and model of the vehicle, license plate, and length of time the vehicle was illegally parked, or any other information relating to the alleged violation. Once a CAD record is created, these requests for service are immediately placed in a queue of incidents to investigate. The next available officer will investigate the incident; however, incidents may not be investigated in the order in which they were reported. Parking violations are handled as soon as possible with higher priority calls taking precedence. In general, any incidents that potentially threaten public safety are prioritized over parking violations. Sometimes, by the time an officer investigates a parking violation, the vehicle has been moved, and the officer is unable to find any evidence that a violation occurred or the identity of the violator. However, all calls for service and resulting incident reports are saved for reference later, even if a violation was not identified. All parking-related complaints are investigated.

The Grand Jury received from the Police Department 71 incident reports representing all parking related complaints in calendar year 2024 received by telephone, in-person or by email. All 71 parking-related incident reports were investigated by an officer who documented how the incident was concluded. Of these 71 incident reports, 18 of them concluded with a parking citation being issued. On 28 occasions, incident reports show that information was shared with the vehicle owner, but no citations were issued. The respondent was contacted and aided by the responding officer without the issuance of a citation on 15 occasions. The balance of incident reports showed that an officer responded to a complaint and issued a warning or merely reported what the officer discovered. In interviews, the Grand Jury learned that police officers investigate complaints and act based on various facts and circumstances discovered, including whether the person requesting police intervention has previously reported incidents.

The grand jury recognizes that parking enforcement officers and patrol officers are required to investigate parking violations and issue citations when appropriate. After investigating, officers don't necessarily have to write citations. For example, before issuing a citation, an officer

investigating if someone is parking illegally in a handicapped parking space, will determine whether the proper signage and pavement markings are present. Citations will not be issued where the pavement markings and signage are not legally sufficient. They will also seek to determine if the person parking in that handicapped space has the proper credentials to park there. Often, properly credentialed vehicle operators will forget to display their placards indicating that they are entitled to park in handicapped parking areas. When the investigating officer can establish proper credentialing, a citation may not be issued; however, the officer may instead give a vehicle operator a warning to be more vigilant in the future.

The Police Department issued citations for 331 parking related violations between February 7, 2024, and February 6, 2025. Most citations were issued for unregistered vehicles being parked on public streets or in public parking facilities pursuant to Vehicle Code sec. 4000. Nineteen citations were issued for illegally parking in a designated handicapped parking space in violation of Vehicle Code sec. 22507.8 subd. (a). The Grand Jury observed that on 28 occasions, more than one violation was cited. For example, an officer may write a citation for exceeding the time a vehicle may be legally parked and in the process of documenting the citation, the officer determines that the vehicle does not have a current registration tag. The resultant citation includes both violations of law. There were also citations issued for other parking violations, including exceeding allowed parking timeframes, parking in no parking zones or restricted parking zones. The following table summarizes the number and types of violations ticketed during the one-year period.

SEE TABLE ON NEXT PAGE

TABLE OF CITATIONS³

JACKSON PARKING ORDINANCE CITED	VIOLATION DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF TIMES CITED
10.08.010	Parking on streets where parking is prohibited. There is a long list of streets listed in the ordinance.	12
10.08.100	Exceeded designated parking time.	16
10.08.110	Parking on a street designated with red paint and the designation "no parking."	2
10.08.140	Parking by appropriate signs, markings or traffic devices indicate that no parking is permitted.	9
CALIFORNIA VEHICLE CODE CITED	VIOLATION DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF TIMES CITED
4000	Unregistered vehicle parked on public streets.	173
4000(a)(1)	Driving, moving, or leaving standing on a street or off-street parking structure an unregistered vehicle.	3
4462(b)	Presenting to a peace officer a registration or license plate not issued for a vehicle.	1
5200	When two license plates are issued, they must both be displayed on the vehicle, front and back.	19
5202	Failure to display a license plate on a vehicle.	1
5204(a)	Failure to display registration tags.	15
21113(a)	Parking on a driveway or path of a public school, college or public park.	1
22500(b)	Parking in a crosswalk.	4
22500(e)	Parking in front of a driveway unless directed by a peace officer or traffic device.	4
22500(f)	Parking on or a portion of a sidewalk.	2
22500(h)	Parking on the roadway side of another parked vehicle.	3
22502(a)	Parallel parking more than 18 inches from the curb.	18
22504(a)	Blocking a traffic lane <u>preventing</u> passage of traffic.	4
22505(b)	Parking where signs or markings prohibit parking.	1
22507.8(a)	Parking in handicapped locations without credentials to park there.	19
22514	Parking within 15 feet of a fire hydrant.	24
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARKING VIOLATIONS		331

2. Data Ticket

On March 23, 2015, the City Council of the City of Jackson repealed Chapter 10.12 of the Jackson Municipal Code eliminating the use of parking meters in the City of Jackson. This new policy went into effect 30 days following the March 23, 2015, vote. By eliminating the revenue generated by parking meters, the City of Jackson could no longer employ a full-time officer to enforce parking laws, and this paid position was eliminated soon after parking meters were

³ Table of Citations: This table summarizes parking related violations that resulted in citations. On 28 occasions more than one violation was cited; however, each violation is listed separately in this table to accurately capture all violations cited.

removed. Instead of having a meter to inform police officers when a parking violation occurred, officers were now required to manually chalk tires to determine how long a vehicle was parked and whether the posted time-limit had been exceeded before a violation could be ticketed. This exercise became difficult without an officer dedicated to parking enforcement since patrol officers may chalk a vehicle's tire and then get called away on a more urgent matter and not be able to return to the vehicle to determine whether the legal parking time was exceeded.

Following the removal of parking meters, the Police Department began utilizing the services of reserve officers for parking enforcement. When citations for monetary fines were issued, tracking the citations, sending statutorily required notices mandated by the Vehicle Code and collecting the fines became challenging. Personnel resources within the police department were needed to conduct the myriad of other public safety responsibilities required by municipal police departments, such as investigation of serious crime, traffic control and enforcement, ongoing training, and immediate responses to emergencies.⁴

On October 30, 2023, the Police Department's Christopher Mynderup, Chief of Police, on behalf of the City of Jackson signed a contract with Data Ticket to process parking citations and collect parking penalties. Vehicle Code sec. 40200.5 authorizes an issuing agency, such as the Police Department, to contract with a private vendor for parking fine collection services. Data Ticket is a processing agency defined by Vehicle Code sec. 40200.6 subd. (a) as "... the contracting party responsible for the processing of the notices of parking violations and notices of delinquent parking violations." Vehicle Code sec. 40202, subd. (a) specifies what information must be included on a notice of parking violation, what is commonly called a citation,⁵ issued by the Police Department. Among other specific information, the notice of parking violation must specify what law has been violated, the date and time of the citation and the date payment is required to be made not more than 21 calendar days from the date of the issuance of the citation and the process for making that payment. The notice of violation must also specify how the citation can be contested.⁶ Service of the notice of parking violation is accomplished by affixing the notice of violation to the vehicle by placing it under the windshield wiper or other conspicuous place pursuant to Vehicle Code sec. 40202, subd. (b) if the vehicle is unattended.

When a notice of parking violation is issued, that citation is uploaded into the Data Ticket computer system by the reserve officer assigned to process information in the Data Ticket computer system. Instructions on the citation inform motorists how to pay or contest the citation. Citations may be paid directly to the Police Department or through the Data Ticket Internet portal.⁷ The address for the Data Ticket Internet portal is printed on the reverse side of the citation. If the citation recipient pays the fine to the police department, the assigned officer will inform Data Ticket of the payment through the computer system. When the parking penalty is paid, further proceedings terminate pursuant to Vehicle Code sec. 40204 subd. (a). Funds collected for parking penalties are deposited in the City of Jackson's general fund.

⁴ A more comprehensive list of activities conducted by the Police Department may be found in the Jackson Police Policy Manual located on the City of Jackson's Internet site and navigating to the Police Department under the "Departments" drop down menu. The City of Jackson's Internet portal is located at <https://www.ci.jackson.ca.us>.

⁵ The terms "notice of parking violation" and "citation" interchangeably.

⁶ Vehicle Code sec. 40202 subd. (a) lists all the information that must be included on the notice of parking violation.

⁷ Data Ticket's Internet portal is located at: citationprocessingcenter.com. At this location, a motorist can input citation related information and receive instructions on how to remit payment. Additionally, the citation recipient is given an option to pay by telephone. A customer service number is available for people seeking assistance.

If the registered owner of the vehicle cited does not remit payment by the date fixed on the notice of parking violation, Vehicle Code sec. 40206 subd. (a) requires Data Ticket to, “deliver to the registered owner a notice of delinquent parking violation.” Subdivision (b) requires service of this notice to be by first-class mail to the address on file at the DMV or by personal service. Vehicle Code sec. 40207 subd. (a) specifies what information the notice of delinquent parking violation must include. Aside from the same information on the citation, the notice must inform the registered owner that they must pay the parking penalty within 21 calendar days from the date of issuance or 14 calendar days after the mailing of the notice of delinquent parking violation or file an affidavit of nonliability.⁸ An affidavit of nonliability may be submitted, for example, when the cited registered owner has made a sale or transfer of the vehicle prior to the issuance of the citation. A notice of delinquent parking violation must also inform the vehicle owner that if payment is not timely made or an affidavit of nonliability is not provided, “the renewal of the vehicle registration shall be contingent upon compliance with the notice of delinquent parking violation.” If payment is made within the timeframes indicated in the notice of delinquent parking violation, there will be no “[a]dditional fees, assessments, or other charges...”

Vehicle Code sec. 40215 subd. (a) specifies that within 21 calendar days of the issuance of the parking citation or within 14 calendar days of the notice of delinquent parking violation, a person may request an initial review of the citation by the issuing agency, such as the Police Department. This request may be made by telephone, in writing, or in person. After the initial review, if the Police Department, “is satisfied that the violation did not occur, that the registered owner was not responsible for the violation, or that extenuating circumstances make dismissal of the citation appropriate in the interest of justice...,” the notice of violation can be canceled and Data Ticket notified of the cancelation. Either the Police Department or Data ticket must mail the outcome of the initial review decision to the person contesting the citation. If the citation is not canceled, this notification must include the reason for the denial of the requested relief and, among other things, a notification on how to request an administrative hearing.

The person dissatisfied with the reason for denial of the initial review may seek an administrative hearing within 21 calendar days from the date the result of the initial review is mailed. When requesting an administrative hearing by telephone, in writing, or in person, the aggrieved person requesting the administrative hearing must post the amount of the parking penalty with Data Ticket. The administrative hearing must occur within 90 calendar days following the date an administrative hearing is requested.⁹ The administrative hearing is held by an examiner demonstrating “those qualifications, training, and objectivity necessary to conduct a fair and impartial review.”¹⁰ For a fee, Data Ticket may provide qualified examiners to conduct administrative hearings. Interviewees have informed the Grand Jury that the Police Department has not engaged the services of an examiner to conduct an administrative hearing because they have not received requests for administrative hearings. The Police Department’s experience is

⁸ Vehicle Code sec. 40208 states: “The notice of delinquent parking violation shall contain, or be accompanied with, an affidavit of nonliability and information of what constitutes nonliability, information as to the effect of executing the affidavit, and instructions for returning the affidavit to the issuing agency.”

⁹ Vehicle Code sec. 40215 subd. (b) also requires there to be a procedure to address indigent people who are unable to post the parking penalty in advance of an administrative hearing.

¹⁰ See Vehicle Code sec. 40215 subd. (C) (4) for the specific requirements and necessary training of an examiner who holds administrative hearings.

that citations are resolved before the necessity of an administrative hearing because the recipient violator either pays the parking penalty or the citation contest is satisfactorily resolved during an initial review.¹¹

Data Ticket is given authority to collect delinquent parking penalties in Vehicle Code sec. 40220. One collection option is found in subdivision (a)(1)(A) that allows Data Ticket to file with the DMV an itemization of unpaid parking penalties and related service fees for “collection with the registration of the vehicle...”. The DMV then collects the delinquent fees and fines from the registered owner when the vehicle is registered and remits the parking penalties and administrative fees collected to the issuing jurisdiction, in this instance the City of Jackson. However, pursuant to Vehicle Code sec. 4763 the DMV assesses a fee for the recording of the notice of delinquent parking violation that is forwarded to the DMV by a processing agency like Data Ticket. This fee is deducted from the parking penalties and fees remitted to the City of Jackson.¹² Vehicle Code sec. 40220 also describes procedures for reducing outstanding parking penalties to civil judgements for the purpose of collecting the penalties and fees.

One purpose of describing the processes for issuing parking citations and the collection of resulting fines is to illustrate the complexity of the systems in place to enforce parking laws in the City of Jackson. Contracting with processing agencies, like Data Ticket, allows the Police Department to dedicate its resources to more critical policing responsibilities for the safety of Jackson’s residents and visitors. The discussion of the collection processes and the right to contest parking violations is an overview and not intended as a comprehensive analysis of the legal processes.

The contract between the City of Jackson and Data Ticket specifies that Data Ticket is responsible for screening citations sent to them from the Police Department to determine whether those citations are processable. Processability means that the citation is not missing critical information that would render the citation unenforceable. Other services conducted by Data Ticket include a monthly accounting of fees and parking penalties received, the direct deposit of funds into a City of Jackson account, identifying registered owners from DMV records and the processing of delinquency notices and vehicle registration holds. Data Ticket also provides notifications to vehicle owners who wish to contest liability for a parking violation. Additional services that are available include out-of-state collections and delinquent collections.

Data Ticket invoices the City of Jackson and the Police Department for their services on a fee-for-service basis. The Grand Jury has obtained a copy of Data Ticket’s fee schedule. For example, the manual processing of parking citations, \$0.65 per citation is charged. Courtesy notices that are sent first class mail with a return envelope in which the responsible person may submit payment are charged at \$0.75 for each notice. This charge may increase if postage increases. Out-of-state collections and Delinquent collections are invoiced at 26 percent of the revenue collected. A delinquent citation is more than 90 days past the citation issue date.

¹¹ The legal process does not end with the administrative hearing. If dissatisfied with the final decision of the examiner, the aggrieved person may appeal the administrative decision to the Superior Court pursuant to Vehicle Code sec. 40230. The possibility of an appeal beyond the administrative hearing is beyond the scope of this investigation and will not be addressed.

¹² See Vehicle Code sec. 4762 which states that the DMV “... shall remit all parking penalties and administrative fees collected, after deducting the administrative fee authorized by Section 4763...”

Registered owners of motor vehicles responsible for paying parking citations may see the citation, and copies of all notifications that have been sent to the owner previously by accessing the Data Ticket Internet portal.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the investigation the Grand Jury concludes that the Jackson Police Department routinely enforces parking laws within their jurisdiction. The operations reviewed by the Grand Jury indicate that the Police Department utilizes their resources effectively. We thank the Police Department for their responsiveness to Grand Jury requests for documents and information.

FINDINGS

F1. After investigating the City of Jackson’s parking enforcement practices, we find that parking laws are investigated and enforced in a timely manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury has no recommendations.

INVITATION TO RESPOND

No response is required.

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.
--

AMADOR COUNTY ROADS

PAVING THE FUTURE



Amador County Civil Grand Jury

Final Report 2024-2025

SUMMARY

The 2024/2025 Amador County Civil Grand Jury's decision to conduct an investigation into county roads was largely prompted by numerous newspaper articles and social media postings where citizens complained about poorly maintained and deteriorating roads.

The Grand Jury conducted multiple interviews and extensive research to better understand why many county roads are in poor condition. During the investigation, we found that Amador County and other rural counties in the state suffer from prolonged funding shortfalls. We acknowledge that the County has made recent efforts to increase funding. Through this investigation the Grand Jury identified additional funding opportunities and operational improvements for road maintenance and improvement.

Surveying and documenting road conditions on an ongoing basis while using existing electronic tools will help prioritize needed repairs. We find that short-term and long-term planning is necessary to guide road management decisions.

The Grand Jury finds that direct communication with the public about road conditions can be improved. The information provided on the county website is difficult to locate and navigate. The public is better served by having easy access to more comprehensive information about county roads and the status of road work. We also find that there are additional inexpensive methods of communication that the county can leverage.

Although the Grand Jury largely focused on deteriorating road conditions, we also acknowledge that within the County there are some well-maintained roads.

We extend our gratitude to the many people who contributed to this investigation.

BACKGROUND

Research¹³ has shown that rural counties in particular face challenges in funding road improvements, often resulting in the deterioration of county roads.

During the November 2024 election Amador County voters became acutely aware of road funding shortfalls. As a result, Ballot Measure Q became a central issue that was subject to much public debate. This measure proposed a 3/4-cent (.75%) percent sales tax on retail transactions in the unincorporated area of Amador County for a ten-year period, providing approximately \$3.4 million (M) annually to be used solely for the repair, maintenance and improvement of local county roads. Measure Q failed, with only 42.7% of County citizens voting yes, an insufficient percentage of votes for passage.

The Grand Jury conducted a full investigation focusing on road maintenance operations, the use of available resources, communication to citizens about the status of County roads, planning for current and future road maintenance, and funding road improvements.

¹³California Statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment April 2023

METHODOLOGY

Interviews

During this investigation, the Grand Jury interviewed 16 people, including elected officials, county employees and citizens.

During the Grand Jury's tenure, the jurors also listened to several Amador County Board of Supervisors (Board of Supervisors) meetings via Zoom or session recordings and reviewed several meeting minutes.

Field Observations

The grand jury conducted a random sampling of County road conditions by driving selected roads. Photographs were taken of several damaged or deteriorating road segments and roads that were in good condition. These roads were identified by road name and specific location.

Documents

The Grand Jury reviewed numerous Amador County public records and internal department documents as well as documents from external sources. A selection of information from these sources was extracted for this report. A list of the documents is detailed in Appendix A of this report.

DISCUSSION

Department of Transportation and Public Works Functions

According to the Amador County website (on 1-19-25):

The Department of Transportation and Public Works [Public Works] is responsible for the construction, maintenance and rehabilitation of county road infrastructure along approximately 410 miles of County-maintained roads. This includes maintenance of the roadway pavement, shoulders, ditches, roadside vegetation, signage, culverts and bridges. The Department is responsible for the development and management of improvements to the county road infrastructure. This includes pavement resurfacing, pavement seal coating, culvert replacement and bridge replacement. The Department is responsible for the procurement of vehicles, equipment, materials and services to support its function.

There are other functions performed by Public Works not directly related to road work that are listed on the website and not addressed in this report.

The Grand Jury's investigation focused on Amador County road maintenance functions, and is summarized in the following categories.

Amador County Road Conditions

Amador County maintains 409.662 miles of county roads, while California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is responsible for maintaining approximately 126 miles of state highways within the County.

1. Public Concerns Regarding Road Conditions

During this investigation, the Grand Jury found that a significant number of Amador County residents have communicated dissatisfaction with the condition of county-maintained roads and were dissatisfied with the county's road maintenance and repair efforts.

Amador County residents complain (through local social media postings, newspaper editorials, and public forums) about the condition of county-maintained roads. Some residents also express a lack of understanding of how County budget funds are allocated and spent to maintain County roads. This contributes to some community distrust about how the County is managing their roads.

Below are examples of citizen complaints:

“Our roads are in terrible shape and some are dangerous to drive on.” Editorial in *Ledger Dispatch* newspaper.

“So let's discuss the current road conditions ... [sample roads listed] ...some of these roads haven't seen any kind of repair – and I'm not talking about filling holes and letting the traffic flatten it out – in a long time. Most people I talk to agree...So what is being done? I don't see anything.” Editorial in *Ledger Dispatch* newspaper.

“I'm tired of having to pay for alignments, and rebalancing of the wheels on both our cars because of the roads up here. Where does our tax money go?” *Facebook* social media post.

“There has never been a comprehensive road maintenance program in our county.” *Nextdoor* social media post.

“I want to see a schedule for all the road repairs that are needed and the cost.” *Nextdoor* social media post.

“BOS [Board of Supervisors] should be transparent...show where the money's going currently, and what projects have been completed.” *Nextdoor* social media post.

“The last time county roads ‘seen’ any major improvements was back in '97-'98 when we had the ‘El Ninos.’ FEMA¹⁴ dumped a bunch of money in the county.” *Facebook* Amador County Fire Watch social media post.

“Friday, Jan 10, 2025 at 3:30 pm Traffic Hazard – Large pothole. Multiple vehicles on the roadside with flat tires. Latrobe Rd. cross Old Sacramento Rd.” Within Amador County line. *Facebook - Neighborhood Watch* social media post.

Interviews conducted by the Grand Jury also revealed an overwhelming concern that County roads were in poor condition, with some citing safety concerns. It was also noted that certain roads are on the verge of complete failure, further highlighting the urgent need for more effective

¹⁴ Federal Emergency Management Agency

maintenance and repair strategies.

2. Road Maintenance and Staffing

Public Works currently has 16 road maintenance positions, ranging from public maintenance workers to the public works superintendent.

With only two road maintenance crews, one serving the eastern region (up-country) and one serving the western region (down-country), Public Works has adopted a reactive approach to road repairs. Much of their work consists of filling potholes, ditch cleaning, culvert maintenance, shoulder work, brush and tree removal, trash cleanup, weed spraying, and sign repairs. More complex tasks, such as heavy paving and striping, are typically contracted out to external contractors.

3. Pavement Management Program (PMP)

Amador County previously utilized the MicroPaver Pavement Management Program (PMP). A PMP is designed to provide objective information and useful data so that managers can make more consistent, cost effective, and defensible decisions related to the preservation of a pavement network. The County did not maintain the MicroPaver database and decided to convert to the StreetSaver PMP, currently in use.

Amador County commissioned a comprehensive study conducted by Nichols Consulting Engineers (NCE) which resulted in a report called *County of Amador Pavement Management Program Update Report* dated October 2015. NCE followed with a presentation entitled *State of the Roads*.

NCE populated StreetSaver with data from NCE's field condition surveys of the County's entire pavement network, completed in May 2015. The county's maintenance and rehabilitation decision tree and unit cost were also updated in StreetSaver. Further, the pavement funding needs were determined, and nine budgetary scenarios were analyzed for the pavement network. The NCE report cited the following ways that this pavement management update could be utilized:

The purpose of this report is to assist decision makers at the County of Amador in utilizing the results of the StreetSaver Pavement Management Program (PMP). Specifically, this report links the PMP recommended repair program costs to the County's current budget and projected budget alternatives to improve overall maintenance and rehabilitation strategies. This report assesses the adequacy of ideal and projected revenues to meet the maintenance needs recommended by the PMP program. It also maximizes the returns from expenditures by:

- 1) Implementing a multi-year road rehabilitation and maintenance program;
- 2) Developing a preventative maintenance program; and
- 3) Selecting the most cost effective repairs.

This report assists the County with identifying maintenance priorities specific to its needs. It examines the overall condition of the road network and highlights options for improving the current network level pavement condition index (PCI). These options were developed through “what-if” analyses. By varying the budget amounts available for pavement maintenance and repair, one can show how different funding strategies affect the County’s roads over the next twenty years.

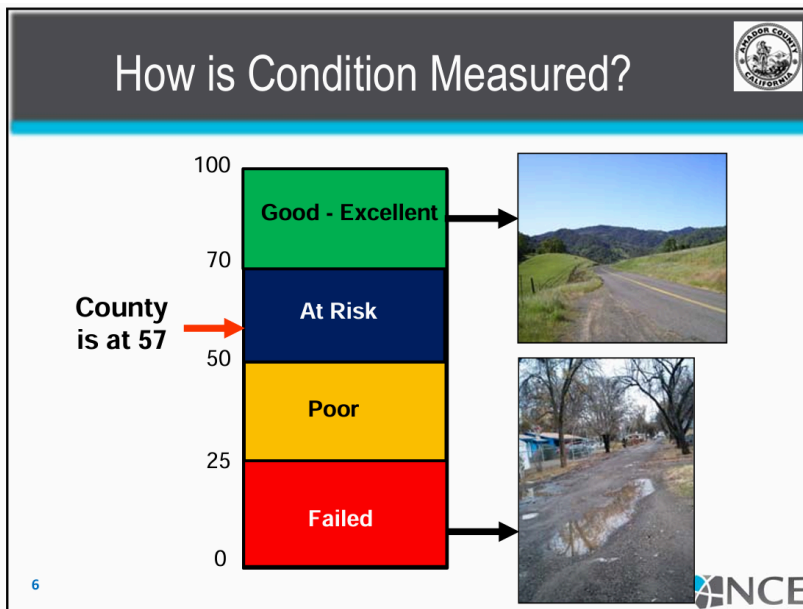
The Grand Jury was unable to determine which recommendations in the NCE report were followed.

4. Pavement Condition Index

The condition of roads is measured using a PCI, which scores road quality on a scale of 0 for failed to 100 for excellent.

The presentation from the 2015 NCE report indicated that Amador County’s roads had a PCI rating of 57 at that time, placing them “At Risk”:

TABLE A



The 2015 report highlighted the following breakdown of road conditions:

- 29.7% of the roads were in good condition.
- 31.5% were in fair condition.
- 31.5% were in poor or very poor condition.
- 7.3% were classified as failed.

Based on the estimates from the 2015 report, Amador County roads were forecast, without

increased funding, to have an estimated PCI rating of 36 by 2025 and 11 by 2034.

A report prepared by NCE in April 2023, based on 2022 data, listed PCI ratings statewide. The report, dated April 2023, is entitled *California Statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment*. This report indicated that when a PCI rating falls below 25, full road reconstruction is typically required.

Below is a table illustrating the statewide 2022 average PCI.

TABLE B

(Table number is from the statewide report.)

Table 2.3 Average 2022 PCI by Type of Road

Type	Average 2022 PCI	
	Major	Local
Urban Streets	68	67
Rural Roads	63	53

The April 2023 report was based on a 2022 survey of California counties, cities and other local agencies and not an actual assessment of current road conditions.

The table below, which illustrates Amador County’s PCI as of the 2022 survey, is a portion of a larger table that includes all California counties.

TABLE C

(Table number is from the statewide report.)

County (Cities Included)	Centerline Miles	Lane Miles	Area (sy)	Average Weighted PCI*								
				2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	
Alameda	3,596	8,150	73,382,886	66	67	68	66	68	68	68	68	67
Alpine	151	302	2,139,517	40	45	45	44	44	41	58	58	58
Amador	477	945	3,598,703	31	34	33	33	56	51	51	51	50
Butte	1,816	3,644	28,691,159	70	67	65	66	65	60	60	60	55
Calaveras	831	1,340	8,201,768	55	53	51	51	51	50	52	52	44
Colusa	761	1,247	13,240,593	61	60	60	62	63	60	61	61	61
Contra Costa	3,348	7,012	65,788,024	72	70	71	68	69	71	70	70	68
Del Norte	323	646	4,418,399	70	68	64	63	63	60	60	60	67

*PCI is weighted by area

Amador County, as shown in Table C, submitted a PCI rating of 50 for county roads as of 2022. However, the Grand Jury is unsure what data was used to calculate the PCI rating of 50.

To produce accurate PCI measurements in the StreetSaver software, the datasets must be consistently updated to reflect recent repairs and storm damage. The Grand Jury found that these

datasets have not been routinely updated, making it impossible to accurately assess current road conditions. Without updated road condition data in the StreetSaver PMP, the PCI rating of 50 submitted by Amador County for the NCE 2022 statewide survey cannot be corroborated.

During the Grand Jury’s investigation, some county employees have stated that the county roads’ 2025 average PCI rating produced by StreetSaver was now 38. However, some believe that the county roads have not deteriorated to this degree.

Continuous monitoring of road conditions to update StreetSaver is needed to establish a more accurate rate of pavement deterioration which permits early identification of major rehabilitation needs.

5. Consequences of Deteriorating Roads

A. Damage Claims

Between 2022 and 2025, 17 claims totaling over \$25,000 were filed against Amador County for vehicle damage purported to be caused by County road conditions. Of the 17 claims made, all but one for \$1,485 were denied.

B. Complaints and Service Requests.

Residents can submit road complaints and work requests through an online service request form, calling or visiting the public works department in person, or contacting their County Supervisor.

An analysis of 365 complaints or service requests submitted directly to Public Works between July 2023 and December 2024 revealed that complaints fell into the following categories:

- Potholes: 62
- Signage Issues: 36
- Illegal Trash Dumping: 32
- Fallen Trees: 21
- Miscellaneous: 214

The Grand Jury was informed that not all incoming road requests are formally recorded in Department records. It was observed from this review of complaints and service requests that the road maintenance crews are responsible for many miscellaneous tasks beyond routine road repairs.

Many of the above requests were addressed promptly, and citizens sometimes expressed their appreciation for the work completed by the Department.

6. Positive Recognition for Road Improvement

Despite ongoing challenges, Amador County has received recognition for its work on a recent project. Notably, Amador County was awarded the “Project of the Year” by the Sacramento Chapter of the American Public Works Association for its work on Shenandoah Road in June

2023. The award recognized the quality of the project as well as the County’s timeliness and budget management, as reported by the Ledger Dispatch on August 2, 2024.

Funding & Expenses for Amador County Roads

Within the Voter Information Guide impartial analysis for Measure Q, the *Argument in Favor* section, stated that current road funding “... is not going to be enough to get ahead of our rapidly deteriorating roads... We estimate that an annual investment of about \$8 million per year is needed to perform the proper capital maintenance on all of the roads within the unincorporated County.” Since Measure Q failed to pass, Amador County will not receive the additional funds from this proposed tax measure.

The significant budget shortfall for roads was also consistently cited during the interviews conducted by the Grand Jury.

1. Amador County Roads Budget Overview

The Grand Jury requested and received a copy of the 312-page Amador County 2024-2025 adopted budget. The Grand Jury reviewed the Public Works sections of the budget for the purpose of developing a snapshot of income and expenses.

Below are tables of the Public Works 2024-2025 Adopted Budget Revenues, Expenses, and Net Cost, and included for comparison, actual figures for 2023-2024 expenditures and costs.¹⁵ Some budget line items are consolidated in the tables for brevity and clarity.

SEE TABLE ON NEXT PAGE

¹⁵ These tables were extracted and summarized from the County of Amador Public Works section of the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Adopted Budget, Schedule 9 and Schedule 8. Amador County’s Fiscal year begins July 1 of each calendar year and ends June 30 of the following calendar year. Also referenced is the *FY 24-25 Mid-Year Budget Review* presented to the Amador County Board of Supervisors March 11, 2025.

TABLE D
PUBLIC WORKS REVENUES

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC WORKS FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 BUDGET

Figures rounded to nearest dollar

	Actual 2023-2024	Adopted 2024-2025
INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUES		
Gas Tax and Highway Users Tax	\$ 2,320,158	\$ 2,120,825
State Funding (1)	4,828,108	9,261,973
Federal Funding (2)	1,850,684	4,017,212
TOTAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUES	\$ 8,998,950	\$ 15,400,010
OTHER REVENUE		
Operating Transfers (2024/25 from General Funds)	\$ 822,000	\$ 2,970,260
Miscellaneous Other Revenue line items	192,821	311,500
TOTAL OTHER REVENUE	\$ 1,014,821	\$ 3,281,760
INTERFUND REVENUE (Road Charges)	\$ 1,948,344	\$ 10,900
FUND BALANCE (ROAD CASH FUND)		\$ 3,281,014
TOTAL REVENUE (forced total due to rounding)	\$ 11,962,135	\$ 21,973,684

(1) State Funding: Includes Senate Bill 1 (SB1) funds. SB1 is a legislative package that invests to fix roads, freeways and bridges in communities across California and puts more dollars toward transit and safety; State Funding also includes \$2.3M for a Ridge Road grant in Actual 2023-2024, \$6.8M in the 2024-2025 Adopted Budget for the State Road 88 Corridor Improvement Project and \$104 thousand (K) for Road Improvement Projects.

(2) Federal Funding: Includes \$2.7M for the Carbondale Road & Fiddletown Road Bridges

Public Works' Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budgeted revenues increased by over \$10M from Fiscal Year 2023-2024 actual revenues. As noted in Table D, some budgeted revenue items increased while others decreased. Material changes are explained below.

The County received \$2.7M from federal funds dedicated to the Carbondale Road Bridge Rehab and Fiddletown Road Bridge Replacement.

The State dedicated \$6.8M to the State Road 88 Corridor Improvement project (Pine Grove). In March 2025, the California Transportation Commission approved an extension for the construction award deadline to August 31, 2025. This deadline is for receiving construction bids, awarding a contract, and entering into a contract. On April 8, 2025, the Board of Supervisors approved the Public Works' request to advertise the project and receive bids. If bids exceed budget, the County can decline the project after reviewing the bids. The project funds are specifically only assigned to this project and cannot be used for any other road repair in the county.

The County increased the revenue budget for Public Works with a \$2.9M Operating Transfer from the General Fund budget and added an additional \$3.3M as a Fund Balance - Cash Account.

TABLE E
PUBLIC WORKS EXPENDITURES/APPROPRIATIONS

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC WORKS FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 BUDGET

Figures rounded to nearest dollar

	Actual 2023-2024	Adopted 2024-2025
SALARIES AND BENEFITS	\$ 2,741,973	\$ 3,103,628
SERVICES AND SUPPLIES	\$ 971,657	\$ 1,708,478.00
OTHER CHARGES		
Buena Vista Community Fund	0	255,000
FEMA Storm Damage Repair	595,865	0
Road Maintenance and Rehab	661,294	4,444,237
Public Works Improvement Projects - TBD	0	2,148,260
State Road 88 Corridor Improvement Project	86,433	6,800,000
Shenandoah Road Repair	2,649,930	0
Upper Ridge Road Repair	506	0
TOTAL OTHER CHARGES	\$ 3,994,028	\$ 13,647,497
CAPITAL FIXED ASSETS	\$ 410,686	\$ 596,957
SPECIAL FUNDED (REIMBURSABLE) PROJECTS		
Carbondale Road Bridge Rehab	102,550	2,700,000
Old Amador Road Bridge Replacement	311	0
Fiddletown Road Bridge Replacement	15,850	25,000
TOTAL SPECIAL FUNDED PROJECTS	118,711	2,725,000
COUNTYWIDE COST ALLOCATION PLAN	197,062	192,124
TOTAL EXPENDITURES/APPROPRIATIONS	8,434,117	21,973,684

The Public Works Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budgeted expenditures increased by \$13.5M from Fiscal Year 2023-2024 actual expenditures. As noted in Table E, some budgeted expenditure items increased while others decreased. Expenditures with notable budget differences are explained below.

The Services and Supplies budget category, which includes road materials, was \$971K for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. This increased to \$1.7M for the 2024-2025 budget, indicating that more funding for supplies or services that could support road work were allocated.

The category Road Maintenance and Rehab for actual work expenses were \$661k in Fiscal Year 2023-2024, compared to a budget for 2024-2025 of \$4.4M, an increase of \$3.8M. This line item does not include Salary and Benefits expenses for road work performed by Public Works staff, which are included in another section of the budget. This budget increase can be utilized for outside contractor road work, or an increase in staff and the associated costs. Public Works did not provide the Grand Jury with a documented plan of how the funds were intended to be spent in the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year.

The line item for Public Works Improvement Projects-TBD was zero for Fiscal Year 2023-2024, and is \$2.1M for the 2024-2025 budget, indicating that Public Works Improvement Projects not previously budgeted for could be undertaken. Public Works did not have a documented plan for the use of these funds.

The State Road 88 Corridor Improvement Project was projected as an expenditure, as covered in the Revenue section of this report. The Carbondale Road Bridge Rehab was budgeted as an expenditure of \$2.7M in Fiscal Year 2024-25.

The above observations about expenditures indicate that significantly more road work was anticipated for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 compared to the prior year.

TABLE F
PUBLIC WORKS NET COST

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC WORKS FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 BUDGET

Figures rounded to nearest dollar

	Actual 2023-2024	Adopted 2024-2025
NET COST (Revenues less Expenditures/Appropriations)	\$ (3,528,018)	0

In Fiscal Year 2023-2024, Public Works had a \$3.5M budget surplus, meaning that the actual revenues were greater than the actual expenditures. This indicates that the department did not expend all revenues that were budgeted. The timing of major road projects could account for the variance.

The Grand Jury also notes that in Schedule 8 of the County of Amador Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 there was a \$2.6M reserve designated for roads.

2. Statewide Road Funding Sources

The 2023 *California Statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment Final Report (2023 Local Streets and Roads Report)* included 338 agencies reporting on their revenue source and pavement expenditures for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. The report stated: “Cities and counties identified a myriad of federal, state and local sources of funds for their pavement expenditures. More than a hundred different local funding sources were identified...Traditionally, cities and some counties have been able to rely on the General Fund for pavement funding. However, ...the number of agencies that receive General Funds has decreased in the last two years and is expected to continue in the future. The gas tax is the single largest funding source for cities and counties.”

Page 50 of the 2023 Local Streets and Roads Report includes tables with the statewide percent of total funding for pavements from the following sources:

GAS TAX:	45%
GENERAL FUNDS:	18%
LOCAL SALES TAX:	18%
OTHER:	19%

This illustrates that less than half of statewide counties' funding for roads came from the Gas Tax at the time of this report. Additionally, some counties in the state had successfully passed local sales tax measures. Within Amador County, the city of Sutter Creek passed Measure P in 2024, to establish a 1% city sales tax, some of which was planned to be expended for roads. Amador City passed Measure K in 2024 to establish a 1/4-cent (.25%) city sales tax for transportation improvements. This also allows Amador City to apply for matching funds from the California Department of Transportation's Local Partnership Formulaic Program.

3. Other Budget Observations

A. Grants for Roads

The Grand Jury's observation is that Amador County continues to make some efforts to increase funding for roads, whether through the ballot measure process, budget increases from the General Fund, or grants.

Recently, Amador County obtained a \$2.3M grant funded through State Senator Marie Alvarado-Gil for Upper Ridge Road improvements.

Additionally, a Keep Amador Roads Safe grant for \$800K with \$200K in-kind match¹⁶ was awarded, and requests for proposals have been released¹⁷. The grant provides funding to study safety improvements for county roads. Although this study is not specific to road maintenance and repair, the results of the study may generate information useful for future road improvement grant applications.

The Grand Jury found that only a small portion of the General Services Administration Grant Writer's time was devoted to seeking road grants. Given the significant road maintenance budget shortfall, additional resource time for seeking grants would be beneficial.

When the Grant Writer presented an update on numerous grants to the Board of Supervisors in February 2025, including those mentioned above for roads, the Supervisors gave the Grant Writer direction to make road grants a top priority.

B. Mid-Year Budget Review

In an Amador County Board of Supervisors meeting held March 11, 2025, a Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Mid-Year Budget Review was presented. The County was beginning the budget process for 2025-2026 that will not be concluded until after this Grand Jury's tenure is complete. The Mid-Year Budget Review estimated a \$3M county budget deficit for 2025-2026. The review identified multiple options for the Amador County Board of Supervisors to consider to "close the gap," including one option to "consider taking back some of the \$4 million of General Fund money that has been sent to Public Works this fiscal year." Board members expressed a desire to

¹⁶ Per this Department of Transportation grant, In-Kind Match is cost sharing, where a portion of the total project cost is not paid for with Federal Funds.

¹⁷ Per 2-5-25 grant report to Board of Supervisors, Request for Proposals were released.

avoid impacting the roads budget if possible. The County Administrative Officer was tasked with working on options for addressing the budget deficit to bring back to the Board of Supervisors.

4. Budget Conclusions

As noted earlier, the grand jury only conducted a high-level review of the current year budget compared to the prior year actuals, not a forensic analysis. However, general conclusions can be made based on extensive documentation reviewed and interviews conducted.

Overall, the current budget shortfall for roads is an overwhelming issue for Amador County and one that is a challenge statewide. In this investigation the grand jury focused on how Amador County can more proactively obtain funds for roads and improve processes to maximize the funds that are available.

The grand jury asserts that formal planning for how currently available funds will be used to improve roads is essential. There also may be opportunities for expanding funding sources and/or reallocating more county funds towards roads. Additionally, revisiting the cost versus benefits of using internal staff and additional equipment compared to outsourcing road work should be explored to identify potential cost savings and increased efficiency in road maintenance processes

Amador County Public Works Personnel Resources

1. Staffing

Several people interviewed by the Grand Jury cited a shortage of Public Works personnel. Within the last decade, road maintenance crews were reduced from 3 crews to 2 crews, an approximate eight-person reduction in workforce. This has resulted in insufficient staffing levels to complete the road work that is needed.

Public Works has experienced challenges related to staff retention. Staff turnover results in increased time spent to onboard and train new employees. During the Grand Jury interviews non-competitive salaries were cited as a contributing factor to staff turnover.

Between the period of January 1, 2025 and March 31, 2025, Public Works hired 5 new employees to fill existing positions. Four of these positions are road maintenance crew members and one is a senior project manager.

The County outsources paving and other major road work to contractors instead of utilizing road maintenance crews, requiring a bidding process. Outside contractors have the skill levels and equipment needed for larger-scale jobs.

The table below summarizes the Public Works Employee Hours for Fiscal Year 2024/2025

year-to-date through February 2, 2025.^{18 19} The detailed data in the original report has been consolidated into major categories for clarity and brevity.

TABLE G

PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEE HOURS (1)	Total Hours	% of Public Works Hrs
ADMINISTRATION & ENGINEERING	8467	34%
ROAD CREW	14694	58%
TRUCK SHOP	2068	8%
TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEE HOURS	25228	100%

ROAD CREW EMPLOYEE HOURS BREAKOUT	% OF ROAD CREW HOURS	
NON-PRODUCTIVE HOURS (1), (2)	2953	20%

PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYEE HOURS (1)		
DRAINAGE MAINTENANCE	525	4%
SHOULDER MAINTENANCE	393	3%
DITCHING	1358	9%
ROADSIDE BRUSHING	357	2%
CULVERT REPAIRS / MAINTENANCE	1596	11%
TREE REMOVAL	592	4%
DEBRIS REMOVAL (TRASH)	161	1%
PATCHING	3964	27%
ROAD GRADING	169	1%
DIG OUTS	505	3%
SIGN MAINTENANCE	303	2%
STRIPING	357	2%
YARD/SIGN SHOP MAINTENANCE	355	2%
SUPERVISOR LABOR	608	4%
TRUCK SHOP MAINTENANCE	163	1%
OTHER WORK HOURS (3)	193	1%
MEETINGS, etc. (4)	144	1%
TOTAL ROAD CREW WORK HOURS (1)	11743	80%

(1) Figures rounded to nearest value
(2) Non-Productive hours = vacation, sick leave, holiday, comp time, personal leave, etc.
(3) Other productive hours = storm damage, vehicle maintenance, other road work;
Items with 50 or less hours were consolidated into this category
(4) Meetings, etc. = labor contract, safety meetings, etc.

¹⁸ Above report is extracted from *Amador County Department of Public Works Cost Accounting Management System Division/Activity Report – Summary Report by Act Cd (W/ Divsn) Month Posted*;
Run Date: 02/10/2025 Fiscal YR 2025: 7-1-24 thru 2-10-25

¹⁹ This report does not represent a full year; therefore, seasonality can impact employee hour percentages.

Of the total Public Works employee hours, road crews accounted for 58% and administration and engineering accounted for 34% of the total. The remaining 8% of employee hours represented truck shop maintenance.

Road crew non-productive employee hours accounted for 20% of total road crew hours, which included categories such as vacation, leave, holiday and compensatory time. Road crew productive employee hours covered a multitude of road work types, with ditching, culvert repairs, and patching the highest percentages of work conducted.

2. Training

The Grand Jury also received input during several interviews that there is generally a lack of formal training for the road maintenance crews. Much of the instruction is “on the job training.”

During the Grand Jury investigation, some citizens complained that pothole repairs do not always last very long. Suggestions were made during Grand Jury interviews that Amador County road maintenance workers would benefit from training by Caltrans to determine their materials and methods to maximize durability of road repairs.

An analysis is needed to determine how current staff can be better trained to complete more effective repairs. According to the Caltrans website Training & Resources section, Caltrans offers cost-subsidized training classes for local agencies in coordination with the California Local Technical Assistance Program.

Communication about Amador County Roads

1. External Communications

Members of the public primarily file complaints and road work requests by visiting or calling Public Works, contacting their district county Supervisor, or through the County website.

Not everyone interviewed by the Grand Jury was aware that road information could be found on the county website, indicating that the availability of the online process is not well known. Further, the Online Service Request form is embedded on the website under the Transportation and Public Works Department section, making it difficult to find using general searches about roads on the website. In contrast, Calaveras County’s website displays road information on the home page, with direct links to a road maintenance schedule and a service request form.

Once a complaint or service request in Amador County is submitted either online, via phone message, or in person, the issue is directed to an administrative support person, who then documents the issue either via an email, a Service Request form, or a paper note. The administrative support person then forwards the issue to a Public Works supervisor or a member of the road crew to complete the repairs.

Once road work requests have been addressed, individuals who submitted a request are typically not directly notified of the outcome. They are informed only by viewing the road if the work is underway or when the work is or isn’t completed. Notification is sent if the request is deemed not currently feasible by Public Works. Internal documentation of Service Request forms is

maintained through paper copies within Public Works. The Grand Jury was informed that not all input is formally documented, depending on the type of issue or how the input was submitted.

Current road Projects are listed on the Amador County website, embedded in the Transportation and Public Works section, which include major projects, including the Carbondale Bridge Project, the old Amador Bridge Project, the Bell Road Bridge Project, and the SR-88 Pine Grove Corridor Improvement Project. A list of Completed Projects dating back to 2019 is included. The Grand Jury could not find a comprehensive list of other current scheduled road work on the website.

The Grand Jury observed that, despite the multitude of complaints and work requests, there is a lack of formal, regular communication with the community from Public Works, or Amador County as a whole, regarding the current state of the roads. Other information that would be informative for the community would include known roads in need of repairs, the amount of money budgeted for road maintenance, and the future plans and schedule for road improvements.

The current lack of effective communication leaves the public unaware of overall road conditions, maintenance priorities, and budgetary constraints. This limits the public's insight into how funds are allocated for road improvements. The 2024 Measure Q ballot sales tax proposal to help fund Amador County roads, which did not pass, highlights where more information available to voters could have had an impact.

Amador County does not have a Public Information Officer (PIO). Several people interviewed by the grand jury indicated that having a PIO would be beneficial, but a lack of financial resources was cited as the reason for the lack of such a position.

If budget constraints make hiring a full-time PIO unfeasible, another option is to allocate time from existing staff positions to manage communications about County roads. Alternatively, a volunteer communications committee could be established composed of knowledgeable and engaged community members. This committee could assist by proactively identifying and reporting hazardous or deteriorating road conditions, and coordinating information about roads between citizens, Public Works and the Board of Supervisors.

There are low-cost or no-cost communication methods available to the County to supplement town hall meetings, newspaper editorials and regularly scheduled Board of Supervisors meetings, which are currently recorded and posted by a local radio station on Facebook. Examples of road-specific communications methods that could be utilized include having an Amador County dedicated YouTube channel and using social media platforms such as Nextdoor, Facebook, and Instagram. These methods are commonly used by other public entities statewide.

These collaborative approaches would not only enhance Public Works' responsiveness but also foster greater public understanding and participation, along with shared responsibility in maintaining safe and reliable road infrastructure throughout Amador County.

2. Internal Communications

For ongoing road maintenance and repair work, the road maintenance Supervisor prepares a tentative monthly work schedule, assigning tasks to the road crew. Once the work is completed, it is recorded and emailed monthly to the Public Works maintenance Superintendent and the

Public Works Director. The road maintenance Supervisor maintains copies of the tentative monthly work schedule and a list of completed road work. The Grand Jury was not provided with any other reports that would inform the Public Works team about the Department's ongoing priorities and plans for road maintenance.

There is an annual report submitted to the Board of Supervisors with general road work categories as required for SB1²⁰ funding.

The Grand Jury was informed that there are no other regular, specific reports about road conditions and maintenance work that are shared with the County Administrative Officer or the Board of Supervisors. This limits County management's ability to monitor road complaints and service requests and to oversee road conditions, road work scheduled, and road work completed. As a result, County management does not regularly have the requisite information to effectively determine staffing and funding priorities for Public Works.

Planning for Improving Amador County Roads

1. Road Conditions Information

As noted in the Amador County Road Conditions section of this report, Public Works uses a pavement management system, called StreetSaver, to analyze datasets of field-measured road conditions. The Public Works department only updates StreetSaver with projects considered pavement improvements; therefore, the County largely relies on the output of the system calculations based on data that is not current. Without comprehensively surveying road conditions and updating StreetSaver on an ongoing basis, the County only has a system-generated estimate of road conditions based on modeled degradation.

Establishing an ongoing survey of roads and updating StreetSaver as part of road maintenance work will lead to more accurate forecasting, budgeting and scheduling of short and long-term road maintenance.

2. Short and Long-term Planning Tools

Multiple respondents in Grand Jury interviews characterized the current road maintenance planning strategy as reactive and complaint driven. Amador County does not currently have a formal multi-year plan that outlines a strategy for prioritizing road repairs.

Public Works crews normally operate on a tentative monthly road repair schedule. Those crews are sometimes redirected from scheduled work to respond to a more immediate road issue. This creates inefficiencies such as multiple mobilizations to a scheduled work location.

Public Works does not have an ongoing action plan that lists roads requiring repairs or improvements, what staffing and budget is needed, and the forecasted date for completing the work. It is understood that current funding for completing all needed road work in the County is severely inadequate. An action plan would provide a method to define and prioritize the work

²⁰ Senate Bill 1: Road Repair & Accountability Act of 2017

needed to improve County roads within current budget constraints. Defining the roads requiring repairs and improvements on an ongoing basis can form the foundation for long-term planning.

FINDINGS

- F1.** Amador County's lack of sufficient funding to complete necessary road repairs, maintenance and paving has resulted in the deterioration of county roads. **(R1), (R2)**
- F2.** Due to Amador County's limited use of existing personnel to more proactively seek available road grants, opportunities for funding have potentially been missed. **(R2)**
- F3.** The Amador County Public Works' current shortage of staff limits the quantity and timeliness of road maintenance and repair work that can be completed. **(R3), (R4)**
- F4.** Amador County's lack of short-term and long-term planning for the repair and maintenance of roads has resulted in a reactive rather than proactive approach, leading to an ineffective system in which repairs and maintenance occur mainly in response to complaints, rather than being guided by strategic prioritization. **(R7), (R8), (R9)**
- F5.** The Amador County Public Works' lack of a comprehensive method to assess and document road conditions on an ongoing basis has resulted in the Department's inability to conduct remedial action effectively. **(R5), (R6)**
- F6.** The Amador County Public Works' lack of producing ongoing, informative reports to County managers hampers the ability to effectively determine staffing requirements, road work priorities and funding needs for Public Works. **(R9), (R10)**
- F7.** Amador County's lack of effective communication to inform the public about planned road repairs, the response to complaints, and the funding mechanisms for road improvements has led to widespread frustration. **(R11), (R12)**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Amador County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

- R1.** Amador County Public Works evaluate current internal road work costs versus outsourced road work for labor and material to determine ways to improve cost efficiencies. Evaluation to be completed by January 1, 2026. Execute any process changes by June 1, 2026. **(F1)**
- R2.** The Amador County General Services Administration and/or Public Works allocate more ongoing personnel time to seeking available road grants. To be implemented by November 1, 2025. **(F1) (F2)**
- R3.** To increase efficiency, the Public Works Director identify the training needs of current department staff, including that of road crews, and develop a training plan. To be completed by January 1, 2026. Implement plan by March 1, 2026. **(F3)**
- R4.** The County Administrative Officer and the Public Works Director evaluate current Public Works Department staffing numbers, skill levels, and job responsibilities to make any necessary changes to maximize productivity. To be completed by January 1, 2026. **(F3)**

- R5.** The Public Works Director develop and implement a process to routinely survey and document current County road conditions, based on the Pavement Condition Index (PCI), in the Pavement Management Program on an ongoing basis. Process implementation to begin by April 1, 2026. **(F5)**
- R6.** The Public Works Director determine, from road condition surveys and updated Pavement Management Program data, the roads that require immediate repair. Initial report to be completed by June 1, 2026. **(F5)**
- R7.** The Amador County Board of Supervisors oversee the development of a 5-year strategic plan, updated annually, for how the County will work to improve County roads to an overall Good condition, per the rating criteria in Table A in the Road Conditions section of this report. To be completed in time for the 2026/2027 Fiscal Year Budget planning. **(F4)**
- R8.** The Amador County Board of Supervisors oversee the development of a short-term action plan, to be developed by the Public Works Director, to improve the County's roads that incorporates current road conditions, prioritizes road projects, includes a forecasted schedule of road work, to be updated at least semi-annually. To be completed by November 1, 2025. **(F4)**
- R9.** The County Administrative Officer and the Public Works Director oversee the development of an electronic database for entering and tracking road service/work requests and complaints received - from initiation to resolution. To be implemented by October 1, 2025. **(F6), (F4)**
- R10.** The Public Works director oversee the development of reports, to be provided to the County Administrative Officer monthly and quarterly to the Amador County Board of Supervisors, that includes data for the month and fiscal year-to-date:
- Road Work Scheduled – Including which road and type of work
 - Road Work Completed – Including which road and type of work
 - The number and type of road service/work requests received and those completed
 - The number and type of citizen road complaints and damage claims received and the resolution **(F6)**

Above to be completed by April 1, 2026.

- R11.** The Amador County Board of Supervisors oversee the development and execution of a communication plan for enhancing information provided to the public about roads. To be completed by January 1, 2026. **(F7)**
- R12.** The County Administrative Officer and Public Works Director oversee enhancements to the County website so that County road information is on the home page, including direct links to a road maintenance schedule and the online Work Request form. To be completed by December 31, 2025. **(F7)**

RESPONSES

Pursuant to California Penal Code §§ 933 and 933.05, the Civil Grand Jury requests each entity or individual named below to respond to the enumerated Findings and Recommendations within specific statutory guidelines.

Responses to Findings shall be either:

- The respondent agrees with the finding.
- The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore.

Responses to Recommendations shall be one of the following:

- The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
- The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for implementation.
- The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency where applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six months from the date of the publication of the Civil Grand Jury report.
- The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

The following responses are required within the above-mentioned statutory period;

- The County Administrative Officer and Public Works Director:
Respond to F1 through F7 and R1 through R12, inclusive
- From the following governing body:
The Amador County Board of Supervisors: Respond to F1, F2, F4, F6, F7 and R1, R2, R7, R8, R10, R11.

APPENDICES:

APPENDIX A. Documents Reviewed by the Grand jury

The grand jury reviewed the following Amador County reference documents and used selected information from these documents in this report:

Department Spotlight – Department of Transportation and Public Works (Located on the Amador County Website December 2024)

County Website: Links - *Departments – Transportation & Public Works*

- *Online Service Request* (Form on the link: *Online Work Request*)
- *Current Public Works Projects* as of 1-19-25
- *Maintained Mileage Road List, 2024*

County of Amador “State of the Roads,” November 24, 2015 (Located on the Amador County Website) (File used to extract information and tables included in this report.)

County of Amador Budget – Fiscal Year 2024-25 for the Public Works Department – In particular: Schedules 8 and 9 and Allocation of Positions by Department (Financials include 2022-23 and 2023-24 Actuals) (File used to extract data for a table in this report.)

FY 2024-25 SBI Project List Correction – Memorandum 5-24-24 from Transportation & Public Works Department to “All Interested Parties”

Board of Supervisors Meeting 1-28-25 minutes re: SR 88 Pine Grove Corridor Improvement Project

Grant Report presented to Board of Supervisors 2-11-25 – In particular, Item: Keep Amador Roads Safe Project

Memorandum: Summary of Cost of Effort for road crew and outside contractors (in dollars) for Fiscal Year 2023-24 (Received from public works 1-27-25)

Memorandum: Summary of numbers of Service Requests from the public for Calendar Years 2023 & 2024 (Received from public works 1-27-25)

Detailed Report of Labor, Vendor, Materials, Equipment from Cost Accounting Management System for the Department of Public Works, Full Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025 year-to-date (Report generated 2-10-25 and used to extract data for summary tables in this report.)

Copies of Damage Claims from <Fiscal Years> 2022 through 2025 year-to-date – Received 2-10-25 (Forms used to summarize claims for this report.)

Service Request Forms from July 1, 2023 through December 31, 2024. (Forms used to summarize complaints and service requests for this report.)

Amador County Public Works FY 24/25 SBI Miscellaneous Project List and memorandum dated May 24, 2024

County of Amador Transportation and Public Works 2025 Maintained Mileage Road list presented to Amador County Board of Supervisors 3-11-25

Amador County FY 24-25 Mid-Year Budget Review Presented to Amador County Board of Supervisors 3-11-25 (Data covering July 2024 through December 2024.)

Memorandum entitled Update on Grant Progress dated February 11, 2025 and presented to the Board of Supervisors on that same date.

The grand jury also reviewed:

Amador County Chamber of Commerce: The Case for Measure Q, Published prior to the November 2024 election

Vote by Mail voter information guide for November 2024 election: Impartial Analysis of Measure Q and Arguments in Favor of Measure Q

Various editorials in the Ledger Dispatch newspaper re: Measure Q and citing poor road conditions/needs

Various local social media opinions via Next Door and Neighborhood Watch re: Measure Q and citing poor road conditions/needs

Rural Counties Task Force Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (Prepared by NCE): *California Statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment - Final Report April 2023* (Report used to extract tables for this report.)

Amador County Transportation Commission Website: Various documents, and in particular: *ACTC 2024 Regional Transportation Improvement Program – 4 Amador County Road projects* (Document used in this report.)

Calaveras County Website 2-15-25:

Front page (as of 2-15-25): Links to Calaveras County Road Information:

- *Public Works Maintenance Schedule* – Goes to Schedule (Ex: 2-17-25 through 2-21-25)
- *Road Maintenance Service Requests* – Goes to page for Minor and Major Road Maintenance Requests online forms
- *The Wagon Trail Project*

Calaveras County Department of Public Works Strategic Plan 2020 thru 2025

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) 2024 Annual Update April 23, 2024

County of Calaveras Adopted Budget FY 2024-25 - Road Department and Roads CIP including narrative goals/objectives

U.S. Department of Transportation in USA TODAY 10-25-24: *Grants nearly doubled for deadly rural roads after USA TODAY investigated* – Re: federal *Safe Streets and Roads for All* grants.

Websites for Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, El Dorado and Sacramento counties: Posted 2024 and/or 2025 public works salary ranges.

2023 California counties' salary information posted on:

<https://transparentcalifornia.com/download/salaries/> (grand jury focused on public works positions)

Caltrans website, Training & Resources section, California Local Technical Assistance Program (dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/training)

APPENDIX B. Sample Photos of Amador County Roads

SAMPLE AMADOR COUNTY ROADS IN
DISREPAIR

SUGAR PINE DRIVE
WESTBOUND



FAIRVIEW COURT
EASTBOUND

SAMPLE AMADOR COUNTY ROADS IN GOOD CONDITION

SHAKE RIDGE
ROAD

EAST BOUND



SHAKE
RIDGE ROAD
AT
PONDEROSA
ROAD
EAST BOUND

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

AMADOR COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

2024-2025

OTHER ACTIVITIES

As required by California Penal Code § 919(b), the 2024-2025 Amador County Civil Grand Jury inquired into the conditions and management of the following public prisons within the county:

1. Mule Creek State Prison (visited on November 13, 2024)
2. Pine Grove Youth Conservation Camp (visited on November 15, 2024)
3. Amador County Jail (visited on December 11, 2024)