



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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Memorandum

To: Presiding Judge Martin Tangeman, Superior Court of California,
San Luis Obispo

From: Glen Priddy, San Luis Obispo County
Deputy Director of Public Works

Via: Paavo Ogren, San Luis Obispo County
Director of Public Works

Subject: Response to 2008-09 San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury Report:
Pothole & Priorities: County Road Conditions

The Grand Jury Report "Potholes & Priorities: County Road Conditions requires responses from the Public Works Department to Findings 1, 2, 3, & 4; and, Recommendations 1, 2, & 4.

Finding 1

The County Roads Program is well managed and the pavement condition index (PCI) is a useful tool for prioritizing road maintenance and repair expenditures in the annual county budget.

Response

The Public Works Department agrees with this finding.

Finding 2

The funding base for the Program varies from year to year, which will cause fluctuations in the overall condition of county roads.

Response

The Public Works Department agrees with this finding.

Finding 3

The communities of Shandon and Santa Margarita have very low average PCI ratings and are in need of road improvement.

Response

The Public Works Department agrees with this finding.

Finding 4

The communities of San Miguel, Oceano, Cambria, and Nipomo have higher average PCI than Shandon or Santa Margarita but are still rated below 70.

Response

The Public Works Department agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 1

The County should focus road improvements on those areas of the county that have average values below the state PCI goal of 70. Specifically Santa Margarita, Shandon, San Miguel, Cambria, Oceano, Nipomo, and Los Osos need attention.

Response

This recommendation is partially implemented. The remainder of the recommendation will not be implemented directly because it does not represent a reasonable management strategy

The portion of the recommendation that is implemented is attention to the pavement rating in the town of Santa Margarita. An asphalt paving contract that is currently underway includes the repaving of the majority of the town of Santa Margarita.

The portion of the recommendation that will not be implemented directly is the recommendation to focus road improvements on specific town or village areas. The Public Works Department manages the pavement condition countywide by using a cost/benefit strategy. This strategy takes into consideration factors including expected rehabilitation cost, and average daily traffic, and functional classification, as well as condition rating in making decisions on the expenditure of pavement management funding.

The roads in the county system are classified by the functional they perform. Most of the roads in the urban areas are Local roads providing access to individual properties. The Collectors bring the local traffic to the Arterials which link traffic generating areas.

Of the 1080 paved roads maintained by the County; 9% are Arterials, 38% are Collectors, and 53% are Local.

With a scarcity of funding available, it is important to balance the use of these funds in a way that best preserves the public funds while maintaining the function of the roads system.

Currently the average PCI countywide is 63 while for Arterials it is 73, for Collectors it is 63, and for Local Roads it is 61. It is unlikely that any of these averages will increase much until significant improvement in funding becomes available.

Recommendation 2

The County should increase the priority of road maintenance and improvement in the Los Osos area and maintain those roads on a comparable priority basis with all other county roads. Relatively short term maintenance processes such as crack seal, fog seal, slurry seal, chip seal and patching should be used in Los Osos until a more permanent program is established after the sewer project is completed.

Response

The Public Works Department will not implement this recommendation because it is not warranted or reasonable.

The Public Works Department establishes the priorities of the pavement management system on the basis of cost and benefit. The roads are analyzed on the basis of their function and not by their location. The cost and benefit to the road system as a whole is considered. Establishing an increased priority specifically for Los Osos could cause a greater cost and reduced benefit for the road system as a whole.

Currently the pavement condition in Los Osos is higher than Santa Margarita and Shandon, and the same as San Miguel. It is only one rating point less than Cambria and Oceano. This indicates that, while the pending sewer project has been considered in making maintenance funding decisions, routine maintenance of the roads in Los Osos has continued.

Pavement is managed as a life cycle system. Different maintenance techniques are used to preserve the life of the system, at different time in the life cycle, to address specific conditions while providing the most benefit at the least cost. Appropriate maintenance processes have been used in Los Osos to address specific pavement conditions and this practice will continue.

Recommendation 4

All County residents should be advised of planned road improvements in their area on an annual basis. County Residents should be provided with an easy telephone

complaint register with an easy alpha sequence number such as "Pot Hole" (768-4653) of "Bad Road" (223-7623), as well as an email complaint form for similar purposes to add to the existing DPW website.

Response

This recommendation will be partially implemented.

With respect to annually advising County resident of planned road improvements; this is currently done through the list of projects that is presented in the county budget. Timely public notice of construction projects is provided through press releases when the exact dates of the work are known.

With respect to telephone contact: It is impossible to limit the use of easy alpha sequences to only residents using the County Road System. Area Code 805 reaches from north of San Luis Obispo County through most of Ventura County. In this area there are thousands of mile of roads that are maintained by hundreds of different entities. There is no centralized complaint communication system between these entities and insufficient need to warrant the expense of creating one. The County Public Works Department telephone number is readily available in the telephone book and on-line. For after hours emergencies, County Road crews are dispatched by the County Sheriff's office which can be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the "911" emergency system.

Regarding internet contact: There is currently a "contact us" button on the San Luis Obispo County website home page that can be use for any comment including road maintenance complaints. On the County Public Works website home page there is a "Road Service Request" button under Quicklinks and "Contact Us" buttons on both sides of the page. Each of these buttons provides access to email forms on which comments, complaints, and requests can be made. There are also several other ways to contact the Department that can be accessed by using these buttons. The Department home page also provides a direct email link to the Public Works Director, the two Deputy Directors, and to all of the division heads; including the Road Maintenance Division Manager. A new button labeled "Comments & Complaints" will be added in response to this recommendation.

File: Grand Jury

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