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Funding approved for HOV lanes

By: Cheri March

The California Transportation Commission's approval of \$20 million to add HOV lanes to Highway 50 in El Dorado County could have a big impact on traffic congestion.

New HOV (high-occupancy vehicle) lanes will run between the El Dorado County line and the Bass Lake Road interchange.

The allocation comes from the first round of voter-approved Proposition 1B Transportation Bond funding. Of an available \$4.5 billion, the Sacramento region, including El Dorado County, received more than \$242 million for six regional projects.

"We got 6 of the 17 we applied for. The good news is that three of the projects directly affect us in a positive manner," said Rusty Dupray, El Dorado County supervisor and Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) chair.

In addition to the El Dorado Hills-Bass Lake lanes, HOV lanes will be added to Highway 50 between Sunrise Boulevard and Watt Avenue, having a "tremendous impact for commuters," Dupray said.

For El Dorado County residents who commute into Rancho Cordova or Elk Grove, the \$22 million White Rock Road project will widen White Rock Road to four lanes between Sunrise Boulevard and Prairie City Road. Two hairpin turns will also be straightened out.

"We're changing it from a dangerous country road into a more easily traveled suburban road," Dupray said.

Folsom public works director Rich Lorenz credited the Highway 50 Mobility Partnership in the White Rock Road project's successful funding.

"Typically funding from the CMIA (Corridor Mobility Improvement Account) goes almost exclusively for highway projects, so we knew this would require extra effort," he said.

White Rock Road was the only non-highway project approved in the first round.

The Mobility Partnership is a public-private partnership of members representing each jurisdiction along the Highway 50 Corridor, including El Dorado and Sacramento counties, the cities of Folsom and Rancho Cordova, Sacramento Regional Transit, and SACOG.

Construction on the HOV lanes could begin within a year, Dupray said.

Caltrans estimates the regional projects will save drivers 1.7 million minutes per day during peak traffic times.



Rusty Dupray

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