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El Dorado looks to future

Road projects, parks are on list of capital improvements.

By Cathy Locke - Bee Staff Writer

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An estimated \$698.4 million in capital improvements, including major road projects, new buildings and park development, are outlined under El Dorado County's proposed five-year capital improvement plan.

In a presentation last week to the Board of Supervisors, Laura Gill, county chief administrative officer, said the plan for fiscal years 2007 through 2011 "matches major capital needs with our ability to pay for these improvements."

To be included in the plan, a project must cost at least \$10,000, and it must provide for or extend the useful life of the asset at least 10 years, she said.

Transportation projects account for nearly 87 percent, or more than \$600 million, of the total expenditures anticipated under the plan. About 12.7 percent of the funds are targeted for general services projects, including jail expansion, construction of a new animal shelter and park development. The remaining 0.41 percent is directed toward environmental management projects, primarily for closure and monitoring of the Union Mine Landfill, and expansion and improvement of the county's wastewater treatment plan.

On the revenue side, 47.5 percent of funding for the five-year plan is related to new construction in the county, coming from developer payments and impact fees.

Traffic impact mitigation fees account for 62 percent of the funding for transportation projects in the plan, according to an executive summary prepared by the Department of Transportation.

Transportation Director Richard Shepard said the county has about 1,100 miles of roadway. Approximately \$40 million in projects are under construction, and by the end of the year, another \$40 million worth of improvements will be under way, he said.

Key projects include the first phase of the Missouri Flat Road interchange, scheduled for construction this spring. With an estimated cost of \$20 million, Shepard said, "It will be the largest transportation project ever let by the county."

Also planned for this spring are two projects on Latrobe Road in the El Dorado Hills area, both funded by the Blackstone subdivision. One will widen Latrobe between White Rock Road and Highway 50 from four to six lanes, and the other will widen Latrobe between Golden Foothill Parkway and Suncastr Lane from two to four lanes.

Also funded by the Blackstone development will be a realignment of White Rock Road from Manchester Drive to Latrobe Road, and widening the roadway from two to four lanes.

Shepard said the environmental report for the long-awaited extension of Saratoga Way in El Dorado Hills to connect with Iron Point Road in Folsom is to be completed this summer. Funding to begin construction is anticipated in fiscal year 2009-10. The project is expected to help relieve traffic on Highway 50 by providing a route parallel to the freeway.

The first phase of construction for a Highway 50 interchange at Silva Valley Parkway and White Rock Road is scheduled for 2008, with the realignment of Tong Road.

Construction of carpool lanes on Highway 50 from El Dorado Hills Boulevard to the Bass Lake grade is

anticipated in 2009-10. The project is intended to relieve congestion during peak commute periods.

While major projects in the General Services Department's capital improvement plan include new jail and sheriff's facilities, and a new animal shelter, the plan also provides funds to for parks and airports.

The five-year plan includes nearly \$6.9 million for parks. Gill said funds would be directed to projects needed to preserve existing county parks. Development of Pollock Pines Regional Park also was given high priority because of the amount of public money already invested in purchasing land and planning for the project, she said.

General Services projects also include nearly \$2.8 million in improvements to the Placerville and Georgetown airports. Plans for the Placerville Airport call for improving runways, developing a new hangar area and remodeling restrooms. Work in Georgetown includes developing a new runway and installing security lights for an existing ramp.

Gill said various county panels, including the Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission, will be asked to review and comment on the capital improvement plan. General fund contributions to facilities and parks projects may change, she said, as the 2007-08 budget is prepared for presentation to the board.

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