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Ideally, the County would maintain all County roads since they represent one of the County's largest assets. Unfortunately, we do not operate under ideal circumstances. Our current, primary, pavement preservation funding mechanism, the gas tax, does not provide sufficient revenue for optimal maintenance of all 1,382 miles of County roads. The gas tax formula is outdated and does not favor a county like Sonoma that has many, many miles of rural roads subject to harsh weather conditions.

The criteria used to determine which roads are a county priority is somewhat subjective. If you live on a road, it is a priority, even if very few cars drive it each day. The condition of your road determines the value of your property, and I don't want to diminish this important relationship. Road condition is also a public safety issue.

Since we cannot optimally maintain all roads we are forced to make choices, but I want to make these choices considering the input of citizens like you. We can focus our resources on the roads that are the most regionally significant, perhaps because they carry a lot of traffic. We must also look at roads that influence economic stimulation, such as Petaluma Hill Road and the traffic that will be coming to the Green Music Center. For the remainder of the system, stakeholders can influence what level of service they want and what they are willing to finance.

Road maintenances is a critical issue and it is among my highest priorities. I demonstrated my commitment to addressing the road crisis when I formed the Roads Ad Hoc Committee early this year and appointed myself as a member.

First, I would like to provide a little background information on our County General Fund budget. When you pay your property taxes, 29% of your dollars go into the General Fund. The General Fund represents only 27% of the road maintenance budget. Clearly, the General Fund is but a small part of the solution to our roads crisis.

Our General Fund revenues decreased due to the largest and longest economic downturn since the Depression. For the first time in memory, property taxes declined – a result of the collapse of the housing market which has yet to recover. Current analysis shows the County General Fund is faced with an \$11 million in gap for FY 12-13. Put into context, this is much better than the \$42 million addressed in FY 11-12 and the \$60 million in FY 10-11.

Nonetheless, I am considering many options for making more General Fund dollars available for road maintenance. For example, the Board of Supervisors has asked each department in the County to work on improving efficiencies as a way to provide better services with a smaller staff and budget. We saw a good example of this very recently with the consolidation of the lighting districts, which will make more funding available for road

maintenance. However, even with a 600 person reduction in full time staff, some costs have increased, most significantly the pension related costs. The pension system lost nearly \$600 million in assets in the 2008 recession which the County is still paying for. I am on the Pension Ad Hoc Committee and we are just about to start a series of reform actions that will take 12-24 months to fully implement. Moving forward, I expect that shared sacrifice will be needed to reform our pension system and I have been willing to make difficult decisions that will, over time, result in more resources being available for roads and other services.

Even during this difficult economic time the Board of Supervisors dedicated \$2.2 million in new funds to increase pavement preservation activities.

We must also look at taking some significant funding from special reserve sources, such as the delinquent property tax fund, to invest in pavement preservation. This will give us a jump start on where we need to go to restore our road systems.

You have my assurance road maintenance has been, and will continue to be, critically important for me.

I am willing to consider any and all measures to increase funding for roads, but any action must reflect the will of my constituents. So far, options being considered include a special road maintenance district, supplemental property or sales taxes dedicated to road maintenance, and the allocation of tourism tax funds for road maintenance.

The SOS Roads Group has been an important partner in helping the County stay connected with people who care deeply about the quality of our roads. I look forward to working cooperatively to improve the condition of our roadways.