

LOCAL ELECTIONS

# Placer County transportation tax for Roseville, Rocklin, Lincoln short of two-thirds majority

BY ARIANE LANGE

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Cars drive on the Interstate 80/Highway 65 interchange in Roseville in 2020. Placer County leaders put the Measure B transportation tax on the ballot for projects to improve commute times, and the interchange would be upgraded if it passes. DANIEL KIM [dkim@sacbee.com](mailto:dkim@sacbee.com)



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Measure B, the South Placer County ballot measure that would slightly increase local sales tax to fund road projects with 52% of the money going to road widening, was ahead in the last update of results after Tuesday's election but was falling short of its needed two-thirds majority.

The transportation tax increase after three batches of results [had just under that — 63%](#).


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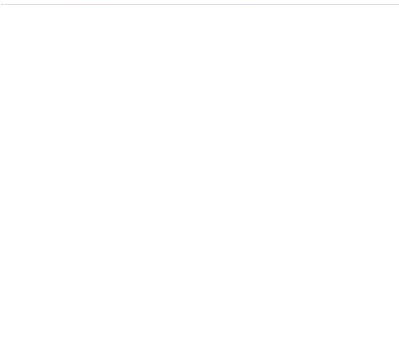
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The measure sought to add a half percent to retail purchases in Roseville, Rocklin and Lincoln for 30 years. Officials [estimated it would raise \\$41 million annually](#). Without the sales tax, [the county has no money budgeted to provide the “local match”](#) demanded by many state and federal grants.

The ordinance [laid out exactly what infrastructure plans the tax measure was intended to fund](#). Placer County Local Transportation Authority laid out its plans to focus on widening roads as the population grows.

A major goal of the ordinance is to “reduce traffic congestion,” but several of the projects it would fund are unlikely to achieve that aim. Decades of research has shown that widening roads only temporarily relieves congestion and ultimately leads to more drivers on the road. Two researchers explained in a 2011 article in the American Economic Review that there is a “fundamental law of highway congestion: [People drive more when the stock of roads in their city increases.](#)”

In the expenditure plan, officials said that they intended to provide “a reasonable balance between competing highway, rail, transit, bicycle/pedestrian, and local streets and road needs.” However, the ordinance earmarked a majority of the funds for six major roadway projects, including widening Highway 65, [attempting to fix a bottleneck at the Interstate 80/Highway 65 interchange and constr](#) **AD**  [expressway on Placer Parkway between two highways.](#)



Only 5% would go to pedestrian and bike projects. UC Berkeley's Transportation Injury Mapping System shows that between 2013 and the end of last year, at least 52 pedestrians were killed or severely injured in traffic collisions in Roseville, Rocklin and Lincoln. Vehicles have struck and injured more than 200 cyclists in the three cities, and three crashes killed cyclists in Roseville.

A quarter of the tax revenue would go toward maintenance and repairs on existing roads. And 12% of the estimated \$41 million in annual revenue would go to transit. The remaining funds would go toward flexible projects and administration.

If the measure passes, a citizens' oversight committee would also form to monitor the way revenues from the new tax are used.

In 2016, a similar transportation tax measure was put before voters. It won a majority of votes, but [not the two-thirds majority needed to pass](#).

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