

**To: John Cunningham, Lara DeLaney**

**From: Stephen Kowalewski**

**Date: 10/15/24**

**Subject: Proposal to Amend Federal and State Gas Tax Eligibility for Non-Motorized Transportation Corridors**

**Overview:**

Non-motorized transportation corridors, such as regional trails, pedestrian malls, and dedicated cycling paths, are vital to promoting sustainable mobility and public health in Contra Costa County. However, **under current federal and California state laws, gas tax funds are restricted to motorized roadways**, limiting resources available for developing and maintaining these non-motorized facilities. This proposal seeks legislative changes to classify non-motorized transportation corridors as eligible for gas tax funding, ensuring they receive sustainable support. However, **it is important to note that expanding eligibility could diminish the funds available for motorized road maintenance and improvement.**

**Proposal Components:**

**1. Reclassify Non-Motorized Transportation Corridors for Gas Tax Eligibility**

- Advocate for federal and California state amendments to allow non-motorized transportation corridors, including regional trails and pedestrian malls, to be classified as eligible for gas tax funding. This change would support both the development and maintenance of these active transportation assets.

**Rationale and Benefits:**

**1. Broaden Funding Sources for Non-Motorized Infrastructure**

- Reclassifying non-motorized transportation corridors as eligible for gas tax funds would provide a stable, long-term financial source for building and maintaining these facilities, recognizing their integral role within the transportation system.

**2. Support Sustainable and Active Transportation Options**

- Trails and pedestrian malls offer safe options for walking, cycling, and other non-motorized activities, reducing vehicle dependency, lowering emissions, and promoting public health. Including these corridors in gas tax eligibility underscores their significance in achieving sustainability and mobility objectives.

**3. Enhance the Longevity and Safety of Non-Motorized Facilities**

- Regular maintenance is essential to ensuring safety and accessibility on non-motorized transportation corridors. Gas tax funding would enable more consistent upkeep, which reduces accident risks and extends facility lifespans, thereby supporting their long-term usability.

**4. Alleviate Financial Pressure on Local Budgets**

- Expanding gas tax eligibility to non-motorized corridors would lessen the financial burden on local budgets, allowing municipalities to allocate resources more effectively and ensuring that non-motorized transportation infrastructure can be developed without detracting from other critical services.

### **Considerations and Drawbacks:**

#### **1. Potential Reduction in Funds for Motorized Roads**

- Expanding gas tax eligibility to non-motorized corridors may reduce the overall funds available for motorized roadways, potentially impacting the maintenance and improvement of existing motorized infrastructure. This could affect resources available for road repairs, traffic management, and other critical motorized road projects, and therefore warrants careful consideration and strategic planning.

### **Implementation Strategy:**

To promote a balanced approach, the County can:

- **Collaborate with Legislators to Explore Options:** Advocate for legislative changes at both the federal and state levels while engaging in discussions about the potential impacts on motorized road funding. Consider strategies to mitigate these impacts, such as phased implementation or setting specific funding allocations.
- **Build Partnerships with Stakeholders:** Work with other counties, municipalities, transportation agencies, and advocacy groups to gather support, recognizing both the benefits and challenges of this initiative.
- **Conduct Public Outreach and Education:** Explain the benefits of reclassifying non-motorized corridors and address potential concerns about impacts on motorized road funding, fostering informed public discussion on sustainable funding options.

### **Conclusion:**

Expanding gas tax eligibility to include non-motorized transportation corridors will support sustainable funding for critical active transportation infrastructure, aligning with Contra Costa County's goals of promoting sustainable mobility and public health. While it may reduce the funds available for motorized roads, careful planning and strategic allocation can help balance these needs. I recommend that the Board of Supervisors include this proposal in the 2024-2025 Legislative Platform, considering both the advantages and potential impacts.

Thank you for considering this proposal, which aims to support diverse transportation options while addressing the complexities of shared funding resources.