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## Traffic plan may fade into sunset

By Cathy Locke - [clocke@sacbee.com](mailto:clocke@sacbee.com)

A proposal to modify a controversial El Dorado County traffic initiative will go to the Board of Supervisors on July 1 with the endorsement of the county Planning Commission and an El Dorado Hills citizens group. Measure Y, approved by nearly 61 percent of voters in 1998, requires new development to pay for the cost of road improvements to serve growth. Its provisions have been incorporated in the general plan, the county's blueprint for growth.

But a decade after its passage, critics and supporters say the measure's implementation has had unintended consequences. Measure Y includes a sunset clause, and the supervisors must decide by next month whether to put the original initiative, or a modified version, on the November ballot.

The board in April directed planning staff members to prepare a general plan amendment, analyze the environmental impacts of the proposed changes and hold a hearing before the Planning Commission to receive public comment.

Paul Raveling, president of the El Dorado Hills Citizens Alliance, was the only member of the public to comment during last week's hearing.

After considerable discussion, he said, the alliance's board of directors voted to support the modifications.

"It was not without a certain amount of trepidation," Raveling told the commission. But he said the proposed changes appeared the best solution to meet the original intent of the measure.

He said the alliance favored a change allowing sources of funding besides developer-paid fees to be used for growth-related road improvements. As El Dorado County's most populous community, El Dorado Hills has been hit hardest by traffic congestion because road improvements haven't kept pace with growth, Raveling said. The problems are caused by urban development on a rural road network, he said.

In endorsing the Measure Y modifications, the citizens alliance was heartened that "there was agreement between sides that traditionally have been more or less at war in El Dorado County," Raveling said. "Cooperation is the best way to go forward."

Paula Frantz, deputy county counsel, said the proposed changes were developed through meetings with representatives of the Measure Y Committee.

"That's what I wanted to hear," commission Chairman Alan Tolhurst said.

The proposed modifications include:

- Specifying that Measure Y applies to traffic from single-family residential subdivision development projects of five or more parcels that would result in gridlock, or stop-and-go traffic congestion, during weekday peak-hour periods on any highway, road, interchange or intersection in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Measure Y Committee members have said the measure was not intended to impede commercial development, or construction of affordable housing, including apartments, condominiums or secondary dwellings. Such projects, they say, could help reduce commute traffic.

- Clarifying the timing of growth-related improvements. A single-family subdivision would have to show that all necessary improvements were set for construction in the county's 10-year capital improvement program, or the project would be responsible for building the improvements. All other projects would have to show that the necessary improvements were in the 20-year capital improvement program.

- Permitting the Board of Supervisors to make additions to a list of roads allowed to operate with stop-and-go conditions without seeking voter approval.

Commission member John Knight said he had intended to suggest a couple of changes. Instead, he made the motion to recommend board approval of the proposed amendments as presented.

"Actually, I think this is a good cleanup item," he said. Knight said he thought the modifications would go a long way toward resolving problems that have resulted from Measure Y's implementation.

The Board of Supervisors will take up the matter at 2 p.m. July 1 in the board meeting room, 330 Fair Lane, Building A, Placerville.