

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - LAND USE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026**

MINUTE ORDER NO. 2

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO ESTABLISH APPROPRIATIONS, EXECUTE UTILITY REIMBURSEMENT AGREEMENTS, AND ADVERTISE AND AWARD A CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT FOR COLE GRADE ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - PHASE 1 AND CEQA FINDING (DISTRICT: 5)

OVERVIEW

Cole Grade Road is a heavily traveled 7.9-mile road that connects the Valley Center community to State Route 76 and provides essential access to residential neighborhoods, agricultural operations, schools, and tribal communities. It also serves as a designated emergency evacuation route and supports access to the Valley Center Library and Valley Center Fire Protection District Temporary Fire Station No. 3. Much of the roadway currently exists as a two-lane road with no dedicated turn lanes, narrow shoulders, no pedestrian facilities, and insufficient drainage facilities.

The improvements to Cole Grade Road (Project) were identified by the Department of Public Works (DPW) based on community input and concerns regarding congestion and safety at key intersections, particularly near the Valley Center High School, and the lack of bike lanes and pathways. The Project proposes widening approximately 2.8 miles of Cole Grade Road between Pauma Heights Road and Fruitvale Road to add a new center, two-way left turn lane, bike lanes, and a multi-use trail. The Project also proposes to replace and improve existing stormwater systems to reduce the risk of flooding, underground overhead utilities to reduce fire risk, and install Green Street drainage features to improve water quality. The Project has been divided into two phases to streamline project development and minimize construction impacts to the community. The Project is listed by the Valley Center Community Planning Group as the number one capital improvement project priority for their community.

Design, environmental clearance, and right-of-way acquisition for Phase 1 of the Project between Pauma Heights Road and Cool Valley Road is complete. Construction of Phase 1 is scheduled to begin mid-2026 with an estimated completion in early 2028. Phase 2 of the Project, from Cool Valley Road to Fruitvale Road, is currently in the preliminary design phase and is planned to begin construction following the completion of Phase 1 in 2028 through proposed TransNet funding which will be presented to the San Diego County Board of Supervisor's the coming year.

Today's request is to establish appropriations and approve the advertisement and subsequent award of a construction contract for Phase 1 of the Cole Grade Road Improvement Project, from Pauma Heights Road and Cool Valley Road. The total construction cost for Phase 1 is estimated at \$27,250,000, including contingency, and funding will be local sales tax revenue from TransNet, General Fund fund balance from DPW's Watershed Protection Program, and revenue from Utility Reimbursement Agreements. This request will also authorize the Director, Department of Public Works, to negotiate and execute Reimbursement Agreements with San Diego Gas & Electric Company, Pacific Bell Telephone Company dba AT&T California, Mediacom, and Valley Center Municipal Water District.

RECOMMENDATION(S)
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Find that the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on file in the Department of Public Works for the Cole Grade Road Improvement Project, certified by the Board of Supervisors on November 20, 2019 (08), State Clearinghouse # SCH No. 2015121090 was completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and State and County CEQA Guidelines, that the decision-making body has reviewed and considered the information contained therein and the CEQA 15162 Findings dated January 22, 2026 (Attachment B) before approving the project, that the EIR reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the Board of Supervisors; and

Find that there are no substantial changes in the project or in the circumstances under which it is undertaken which involve significant new environmental impacts which were not considered in the previously certified EIR, that there is no substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects, and that no new information of substantial importance has become available since said EIR was prepared.

2. Establish appropriations of \$23,250,000 in the Department of Public Works Road Fund, Services & Supplies, for the construction of the Cole Grade Road Improvement Project - Phase 1 based on revenue from Transnet (\$16,000,000), available prior year Road Fund fund balance (\$1,000,000), San Diego Gas & Electric Transmission (\$2,300,000), San Diego Gas & Electric 20A Program (\$2,050,000), AT&T (\$450,000), Mediacom (\$450,000) and Valley Center Municipal Water District (\$1,000,000). **(4 VOTES)**
3. Approve and authorize the Director, Department of Public Works to negotiate and execute Utility Reimbursement Agreements between the County of San Diego and each of the following utility companies: San Diego Gas & Electric Company, Pacific Bell Telephone Company dba AT&T California, Mediacom, and Valley Center Municipal Water District.
4. Authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting, to advertise and award a construction contract and to take other actions authorized by Section 401 et seq. of the Administrative Code with respect to contracting for Construction Contract for Cole Grade Road Improvement Project - Phase 1.
5. Designate the Director, Department of Public Works, as the County Officer responsible for administering the construction contract in accordance with Board Policy F-41, Public Works Construction Contracts.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The County of San Diego is committed to supporting a transportation network that is safe and accessible for all users and modes of travel. The Cole Grade Road Improvement Project supports equitable mobility by improving access and safety for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and people with disabilities in the community of Valley Center. Phase 1 improvements will add continuous bicycle lanes, pedestrian pathways, and upgraded Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant facilities to enhance connectivity and safety for all users. The Department of Public Works (DPW) considers community health, safety, and accessibility indicators to ensure that transportation investments benefit all residents. The proposed improvements will provide safer, more equitable transportation options for residents, including children, older adults, and people with mobility challenges.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The project supports environmental and economic sustainability goals of the County. The project incorporates stormwater quality improvements for local habitats, consistent with County standards. Additionally, the project will implement energy-efficient lighting and use recycled durable pavement materials designed for long-term resiliency. Asphalt concrete and aggregate base is typically composed of at least 25% recycled aggregate saving thousands of tons of aggregate each year and supporting the County's sustainability goal to reduce pollution and waste through recycling. Together, these features will help extend the roadway's service life, reduce maintenance needs, and support safe, efficient travel for all users in the Valley Center community.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are partially included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operational Plan in the Department of Public Works, Road Fund. If approved, this request will result in additional costs and revenue of \$23,250,000 related to recommendation 2, for total construction costs of \$27,250,000, including contingency. The funding sources are Transnet (\$16,000,000), available prior year General Fund fund balance (\$1,000,000), bond proceeds (\$4,000,000), San Diego Gas & Electric Transmission (\$2,300,000), San Diego Gas & Electric 20A Program (\$2,050,000), AT&T (\$450,000), Mediacom (\$450,000) and Valley Center Municipal Water District (\$1,000,000). There will be no change in net General Fund costs and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

This project will improve the condition of the road which will facilitate the transit of goods and ease movement to jobs, schools, shopping and other services. County of San Diego construction contracts are also publicly advertised and competitively bid and help stimulate the local economy. All workers employed on public works projects must be paid prevailing wages determined by the California Department of Industrial Relations, according to the type of work and location of the project. Construction is administered in conformance with federal standards for labor practices, wage requirements, safety standards, the County of San Diego's Working Families Ordinance and are subject to ongoing reporting and verification of compliance with these federal provisions. Construction activities may cause temporary traffic delays or limited access for businesses and residents along Cole Grade Road during work hours. The Department of Public Works will coordinate with affected property owners and provide advance notice of construction schedules to minimize disruptions. Upon completion, the project will improve safety, accessibility, and circulation, supporting local businesses and the Valley Center community.

ACTION:

ON MOTION of Supervisor Montgomery Steppe, seconded by Supervisor Aguirre, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended, on Consent.

AYES: Aguirre, Anderson, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

State of California)
County of San Diego)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed
by Andrew Potter