Transportation Roadmap FAQ

Has Richland County Council decided to continue the Transportation Penny Tax? Richland County Council passed a third reading of the Transportation Sales Tax Referendum on July 16, 2024.

Council passed a first reading of the Transportation Sales Tax Referendum on April 9 and approved a second reading on May 14.

What is the projected revenue from a potential new Penny? The projected revenue from a potential new Penny collected over 25 years or until the maximum revenue is received, whichever comes first, is estimated at $4.5 billion.

Is the proposed new Penny an additional tax on top of what is already being collected? No. The new Penny, if passed, would be a continuation of the current sales tax. Individuals would not pay more into the Transportation Penny program than they do now.

Does the $4.5 billion include funding for The COMET and if so, at what amount? Yes, 22 percent of the projected figure includes funding for COMET-related enhancement projects.

How would the remaining 78 percent be allocated? County Council would allocate 48 percent to community investment projects and 30 percent to County advancement projects.

The motion also included a minimum of $20 million for each Council district that could be spent on advancement and/or investment projects.

What is considered a community investment project? A community investment project targets the integrity, safety, reliability and sustainability of transportation infrastructure in local communities that impact the day-to-day activities of residents and local businesses. These projects include road improvements, widening, resurfacing, paving of dirt roads, intersection improvements, bikeways, greenbelts, sidewalks and other pedestrian-friendly enhancements.

What is considered a County advancement project? These projects target the expansion of transportation infrastructure to achieve, sustain and support economic growth on a county-wide basis.

They include new construction, improvements and widening for major roadways, intersections and commuting corridors.

How is project cost determined? Cost is determined by various factors, including but not limited to:

- Recent construction cost history – Per foot of improvement based on recent bids received by Richland County and the S.C. Department of Transportation
- Complexity – Review of considerations such as drainage, utilities, railroads and bridges
- Associated costs – Professional fees, utility costs, land acquisition and construction services
- City of Columbia-provided cost estimates for its requested projects

Have future projects been determined? County Council is finalizing a list of future projects. Council participated in a third [Transportation Work Session](#) on June 25, 2024, to work on finalizing principles (guidelines), projects and allocations regarding a potential new Penny.

During its first work session March 12, Council reviewed the results of a Transportation Needs Assessment completed by Stantec Consulting. This first work session also included information related to recent Transportation Planning Meetings (TPMs) held in each Council district, as well as next steps.

A second work session was held April 23. Council discussed project principles, defined transportation project categories, and considered estimated revenue projections from a potential new Penny.

What is a Transportation Needs Assessment? An evaluation of various components of a transportation system, including the system's existing condition, current use and projected future use.

How was Richland County's Transportation Needs Assessment accomplished? Stantec hosted TPMs in January and February 2024 to hear from residents in each of the County's 11 districts. Additionally, Stantec received a list of projects as determined by the Central Midlands Council of Governments, local municipalities, and input received via email and social media to compile the report.

How can I find out more information? Additional information can be found on [Richland County's website](#) under the Transportation Roadmap header.