

# Lode's 49 eyed for National Highway System

By The Record  
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SAN ANDREAS - Transportation officials in Calaveras County and in the California Department of Transportation are considering whether to ask to have Highway 49 and part of Highway 4 included in the National Highway System.

Such a designation could bring much needed federal dollars for maintenance and upgrades, such as the long-awaited straightening of the so-called "Wagon Trail" section of Highway 4 between Copperopolis and Angels Camp.

A report prepared by Melissa Eads, executive director of the Calaveras Council of Governments, said that the "most realistic" future state funding opportunity for the Wagon Trail project would be through a funding source for which highways in the National Highway System get priority.

The National Highway System includes federal interstate highways (such as Interstate 5 through Stockton) as well as other highways deemed important to the nation's "economy, defense and mobility," according to the Federal Highway Administration website. Highway 88 through Amador County is part of the National Highway System, as is Highway 395 on the east slope of the Sierra Nevada.

Currently, the highways in Calaveras County are all classified as minor arterial roadways. But Eads' report said it is possible that data for traffic levels, population served and other statistics could justify upgrading the highways to principal arterials, which do qualify for the National Highway System.

Being part of the National Highway System could also have drawbacks, such as new regulation of junkyards and billboards next to the highways and design standards that could be damaging to historic downtowns if those sections of highway are upgraded.

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