

San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council

DRAFT 2023 Regional Priorities

Issue	Goal	Strategy
<p>1. Build Out the System To Maximize Previous Investments</p>	<p>Aggressively pursue funds through the State Budget, California Transportation Commission (CTC) allocation process or any other state sources to address safety, congestion management, and goods movement.</p> <p>Engage in discussions on transitioning from petroleum as a funding source for transportation.</p>	<p>In 2017, the legislature enacted SB 1 (Beall), Chapter 5, statutes of 2017, which provides \$5.2 billion in annual revenues to fund traffic congestion relief, highway rehabilitation and safety, local streets and roads repair, and multi-modal options through investments into public transportation, commuter and intercity rail, and bicycle and pedestrian programs. In 2020, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) approved funding for several projects in the Valley including: Stockton Diamond Grade Separation (\$100M), North County Corridor (\$20M in FY 22-23), SR 99 improvements in Madera (\$4.6M), SR 46 Widening (\$10M), I-580 interchange improvements (\$24M), and improvements to McHenry Avenue between Modesto and Escalon (\$2.1M). SB 1 Cycle 3 competitive programs will be awarded by the CTC in June 2023. The San Joaquin Valley received several awards from the CTC for ATP Cycle 6 in December 2022.</p> <p>On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (IIJA P.L. 117-58), which provides \$1.2 trillion in investments through 2026 for federal-aid highways, transit, highway safety, among other items. California is estimated to receive a guaranteed formulaic distribution of \$40 billion over the next five years as follows: \$25.3 billion for federal-aid highways (60/40 split between state and local agencies); \$9.45 billion to improve public transportation; \$4.2 billion for bridge repair and seismic retrofits; and \$384 million for expanding the electric vehicle charging network. Legislation will be introduced to distribute funding.</p> <p>The San Joaquin Valley is the heart of California’s transportation system and is a major economic generator within California. A significant majority—roughly 92 percent— of its commodities are transported by truck, primarily using State Route 99, Interstate 5, and other major east-west corridors. State Route 99 is consistently identified as one of the most dangerous and fatal highways in the nation. One of the major safety factors is capacity flows around the bottleneck areas, where freeway lanes go from three to two lanes in multiple locations across the region. Completion of gap closure should be a state priority.</p> <p>SJVPC will continue to educate our delegation and state funding partners, such as the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), CTC, Caltrans, and the Newsom Administration, about Highway 99, including the funding plan, and attributes that make it a highway of state and national significance, as previously recognized by the Brown</p>

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		<p>Administration in letters submitted to the Trump Administration. Work with San Joaquin Valley COGs (Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Tulare) and Caltrans to raise awareness of the importance of Highway 99 and its need for improvements as one of the two major interregional corridors in the state and the vital role it plays in goods movement in addition to regional connectivity to major metropolitan areas.</p> <p>SJVRPC will remain diligent in competing for additional state funds to complete gap closures to improve safety, congestion management, and goods movement throughput on State Route 99 and other regional arterials. This includes building out SR 99 to a minimum of six lanes, consistent with the Caltrans-adopted State Route 99 Business Plan, or consideration of truck-only lanes and temporary lane conversions. This will ensure that the return on previous state and local investments are maximized. This will assist with construction of AB 149. Additionally, SJVRPC, will advocate for obtaining remaining funding commitments from the SHOPP to complete work on SR 99 between Avenues 7 to 12 in Madera County. With the closure of Madera Community Hospital, ambulances will be forced to use SR 99 to access alternative hospitals in the Valley, amplifying the need to ensure throughput and safety along the route, and equity for healthcare.</p> <p>SJVRPC will pursue funding through the state budget, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, any federal appropriation bill, and SB 1 competitive program application efforts, under the Trade Corridor Enhancement Program, Local Partnership program, and Solutions for Congested Corridors Program to address safety, mobility, and goods movement throughput.</p> <p>In 2014, the Legislature called for a pilot program (SB 1077) to study a road charge model as a possible replacement source to the gas tax. Due to the limited number of participants from rural and low-income areas and the truncated timeline, more work is needed to recommend an appropriate charge rate. Issues include protecting privacy relating to data collection, enforcement, and compliance. While the enactment of SB 1 has delayed possible implementation, the issue may rise to the forefront soon due to the prevalence of alternative fuels and electric vehicles, which do not pay at the pump. This conversation has been accelerated by Executive Order N-79-20, which prohibits the sale of gas-powered passenger vehicles by 2035 and will require conversion to alternative fuels and funding sources for state transportation programs.</p> <p>SJVRPC will monitor the Road User Charge Technical Advisory Committee's activities, and efforts to transition to an environmentally sustainable funding source, such as full conversion to the vehicle registration fee or mileage-based user fee.</p>

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<p>2. Pragmatically Address Air Quality and Mobility Goals Through Operational Improvements</p>	<p>Monitor activities on conversations regarding the jobs-housing imbalance and the impact on vehicle miles traveled.</p> <p>Protect transportation funding from being withheld or diverted and find other alternatives to address meeting affordable housing goals.</p> <p>Support state funding to expand infrastructure and incentives for conversion to electric vehicles to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>Monitor the implementation of SB 743 and AB 285 and protect the ability to continue addressing congestion management and safety on the state highway system.</p> <p>Ensure predictability and stability of transportation revenue should conversion occur due to lack of reliance on petroleum consumption to address greenhouse gas emission reduction.</p>	<p>Per AB 179 of 2017, the CTC and California Air Resources Board are required to convene twice a year to coordinate transportation policies, with a focus on reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions. The California Department of Housing and Community Development has been added as a participant. Concurrently, the legislature continues to work on providing resources to develop additional affordable housing and assess job creation opportunities to help mitigate vehicle miles traveled. In 2019, the legislature enacted AB 101, Chapter 159, Statutes of 2019, which provided resources for local jurisdictions to zone for additional affordable housing.</p> <p>On September 20, 2019, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order, N-19-19, directing the California State Transportation Agency to leverage \$5 billion in state funding to encourage mode shift with an emphasis on reducing greenhouse gasses and vehicles miles traveled. Regional transportation planning agencies face greater challenges in addressing mobility and congestion management while accounting for local land use planning and complying with state mandates to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled. Given the unique geography of the San Joaquin Valley and the travel patterns associated with the jobs-housing nexus and goods movement, has exacerbated gridlock traffic, making reducing vehicle miles traveled a challenge. The prospects for reducing greenhouse gas emissions however could be realized through investments made to improve the availability of charging station infrastructure and providing incentives for converting from gas-powered to electric passenger vehicles, where feasible, along the state highway system. On September 23, 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-79-20, which prohibits the sale of gasoline-powered passenger vehicles by 2035, and promotes zero-emission vehicles for future mobility needs. Given that transportation is predominantly funded through the gas tax, a successor funding mechanism will be needed. In July of 2021, the California State Transportation Agency adopted the Climate Action Plan for Transportation infrastructure (CAPTI), which prioritizes multi-modal investments to compel mode shift, and limits highway capacity projects to be delivered on an as needed basis.</p> <p>Per the bill's legislative intent, SB 743, Chapter 386, Statutes of 2013, was explicitly enacted to provide CEQA relief for the construction of the Golden 1 Center in Sacramento but is being used as a template for prospective transportation planning on the state highway system, with an emphasis on eliminating capacity projects and further influencing local sales tax measure investments. Recommendations made pursuant to the Strategic Growth Council's report on AB 285, further disadvantage the Valley from reaching its air quality with recommendations that would curb local sales tax contributions and the ability to complete state highway infrastructure in the Valley.</p>

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		<p>AB 180, Chapter 44, Statutes of 2022, includes \$1.2 billion for port infrastructure, with 70 percent supporting activities at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, and 30 percent to all other ports statewide, including inland port development. On November 4, 2022, the SJVRPC voted to support all inland port projects that forward the interest of boosting the region's economy.</p> <p>SJVRPC will coordinate with the metropolitan planning organizations in the San Joaquin Valley to ensure that efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emission account for opportunities and limitations within the region due to socioeconomic disadvantages, geographical considerations, the jobs-housing imbalance, the lack of density, and the profile of the regional economy. SJVRPC will collaborate with all stakeholders to implement CAPTI to promote mode-shift where feasible, while also working towards completing key highway projects that enhance safety, and support goods movement, tourism, disaster response, and national defense operations.</p> <p>SJVRPC will also work with organizations such as the California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG), California League of Cities, California State Association of Counties, and Self-Help Counties Coalition (SHCC), among others, to pursue funding from Cap-and-Trade revenues or other means to comply with the statewide mandate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and endorse policies that promote equity and regional job creation to reduce vehicle miles traveled with pragmatic solutions that fit the region. This includes supporting efforts to expand the infrastructure and incentives, particularly for disadvantaged communities, for electric vehicle conversion by minimizing concerns over range, cost, and infrastructure. The goal is to maximize investments to move the most people in a safe, clean, and efficient manner. The Valley should be a priority for incentives geared towards zero emission trucks, transit and school buses. SJVRPC will pursue funding made available through the FY 22-23 State Budget for zero-emission vehicles for constituents to augment work that has been conducted for decades by the region to reduce greenhouse gas emissions..</p> <p>SJVRPC will also support operational improvements such as telecommuting, vanpools, shipping more freight via rail, availability of more e-bikes, and promoting opportunities for regions to sell mitigation credits to generate revenue for providing multi-modal options.</p> <p>SJVRPC will work with organizations such as CALCOG and SHCC, among others, to protect transportation funding from being withheld or diverted, while working with stakeholders to find alternatives to address jobs-housing imbalance. This includes</p>

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		<p>monitoring the implementation of SB 743 and AB 285 recommendations, possible SB 375 reform, and the impact on addressing safety, congestion management, goods movement on the state highway system to ensure that capacity projects are not precluded from being funded. Eliminating highway capacity projects designed to alleviate congestion, increase safety, and facilitate goods movement throughput on facilities that have not been improved since being built in the 1950s is not a viable strategy.</p> <p>SJVRPC will pursue resources made available through the state budget to build or expand multiple inland ports in the San Joaquin Valley to better facilitate goods movement logistics.</p> <p>SJVRPC supports a revenue-neutral conversion to a source that ensures equity in revenue collection that does not disadvantage those that must drive further to job centers. Distribution should respect the vital role the San Joaquin Valley plays in maintaining system integrity and providing mobility options. This includes continuing to monitor the Road User Charge Technical Advisory Committee’s activities.</p> <p>SJVRPC will work with CALCOG, and other stakeholders, to develop additional revenue sources at the state, regional and local levels to support the planning required by SB 375. This includes assistance in revising guidelines for the distribution of REAP funding.</p> <p>SJVRPC will also continue to pursue revenue made available through the Cap and Trade, Active Transportation Programs, and Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program, for operations and capital needs for bus, rail and bicycle and pedestrian programs.</p>
<p>3. Transit Funding Reform</p>	<p>Support potential changes to the Transportation Development Act that will assist local public transportation systems with funding eligibility.</p>	<p>The Transportation Development Act dedicates a statewide ¼-cent sales tax for each county for local transportation purposes. That 1/4 cent sales tax, known as the Local Transportation Fund (LTF), generates over \$1.5 billion annually, primarily for public transit. Many Valley transit operators have had difficulty in meeting the farebox recovery ratio (FRR) requirements (20% for urban operators) that are necessary to qualify to use funds for operational purposes. In 2018, StanCOG sponsored the enactment of SB 903 (Cannella), providing operators with temporary relief from FRR requirements. AB 149 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 81, Statutes of 2021, provides statutory relief in meeting farebox recovery requirements for receiving State Transit Assistance (STA), Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP), and State of Good Repair funds, through fiscal year 22-23. It suspends Transportation Development Act (TDA) and STA penalties for this duration. The bill also adds a list of new</p>

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		<p>exemptions from the farebox recovery calculation, including on-demand service and micro transit service beyond fixed-route service, costs for security, ticketing services, pensions, planning for improvements in transit operations, integration with other operators and agencies, transitioning to zero-emission operations, and for compliance with state and federal mandates.</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic has decimated ridership, drastically reducing farebox recovery and further hindering mobility options for society's most vulnerable populations including seniors, school children, the physically challenged and those on a fixed-income. The slow roll out of the vaccine will continue to limit ridership, revenue collection, and route availability. Ridership was also declining prior to the pandemic with choice riders opting to take other means such as services offered by transportation network companies.</p> <p>SJVPC will continue to monitor the CTA TDA working group and support modifications to the TDA process as appropriate to ensure that transit operators are provided with flexibility to continue accessing funding to maintain and expand service.</p> <p>SJVRPC will support efforts to advocate for additional flexibility for TDA, State Transit Assistance Program, and State of Good Repair funding. This includes supporting and extension of AB 149 and seeking additional funding for operations.</p> <p>SJVRPC will also advocate for new formula funding to transit operators that provides specifically for public transit service for state and national parks. This would support YARTS service through Merced and Madera Counties (Mariposa, Tuolumne and Mono as well), and the Sequoia Shuttle serving Sequoia National Park.</p> <p>SJVRPC will continue working with Caltrans on the completion of a multi-modal funding plan for State Route 99.</p>

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<p>4. Enhance Passenger Rail Infrastructure and Service</p>	<p>Provide enhanced passenger rail commuter service connecting the Valley to the Bay Area and Southern California</p> <p>Maintain and increase funding for commuter and intercity passenger rail for Ace/ San Joaquins, and ValleyLink. Pursue funding opportunities made available through CalSTA.</p>	<p>Work cooperatively with CalSTA, Caltrans Division of Rail, Amtrak, CTC, LOSSAN, ACE, San Joaquins, Valley Link and Union Pacific Railroad to expand passenger rail service and connectivity to accommodate Valley residents.</p> <p>SJVRPC will also continue to diligently work on establishing extended commuter/intercity rail and high-speed rail service and connections to not only offset the impacts of congestion on SR 99, but to also reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and expand mobility options.</p> <p>AB 180, Chapter 44, Statutes of 2022, contains intent language directing \$4 billion over the next two fiscal years for priority capital transit and rail purposes, distributed via a population-based formula. This is speculative funding as the appropriation is contingent upon the availability of funds for FY 23-24 and FY 24-25. AB 180 also provided a one-time augmentation of \$3.63 billion for transit capital projects to be allocated via the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP), a competitive program administered by CalSTA. Of that amount, San Joaquin Valley rail operators, such as ACE, the San Joaquins, and Valley Link, are eligible to compete for \$1.4985 billion, with applications due in February 2023, and awards announced in April. Operations funding however will continue to be a critical component for delivering expanded and more frequent rail service.</p> <p>SJVRPC will advocate to increase and acquire funding from CalSTA through the State Rail Assistance and Transit Capital and Intercity Rail Program on an ongoing basis to help expedite delivery of multimodal options and meet 2030 climate goals.</p> <p>SJVRPC supports the Governor’s plan and CHSRA’s 2022 Draft Business Plan recommendation to pursue, complete without diverting funds to southern California, the Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield interim operating segment, with stations at Madera and Kings/Tulare to provide high-speed rail service to Californians. SJVRPC will await the release of the latest version of the Business Plan to ensure that stated investments match the region’s priorities for project delivery and mobility.</p>