

## Build Out Highway System to Maximize Previous Investments (Mayor Mendoza and Supervisor Townsend)

- Governor Newsom wants to prioritize bike, bus, and rail projects and severely limit funding capacity projects on the state highway system, favoring investments into multi-modal options (bike, bus, rail) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled.
- Six out of the eight counties in the Valley, 25 statewide, have passed (multiple) sales tax measures to help subsidize the state highway system, a state asset.
- Allow for the will of voters to prevail and finish projects to realize investments to reduce congestion and enhance safety on a highway system that has yet to be updated in the Valley since the 1950s. The state has over 27 million licensed drivers.
- We can only fund items that taxpayers are willing to pay for. Transit ridership was down in 31 metropolitan areas pre-pandemic, including the Bay Area.
- The state owns the highway system and can say no to local sales tax investments.
- The State is using SB 743 (Steinberg) of 2013, a CEQA exemption bill for the Sacramento Kings, to build an arena to stop capacity projects on the state highway system.
- Over 92% of all commodities are transported by truck using Highway 99, Interstate 5, and east-west connectors.
- SR 99 is consistently identified as one of the most dangerous highways in the nation.
- We still have gaps in the system that need to be addressed.
- The San Joaquin Valley plays a vital role in goods movement, with over 25 percent of the nation's produce is grown in the region. Highways also serve as the main arterial for over 95 percent of truck traffic in the region.
- We need to build out SR 99 to a minimum of six lanes, consistent with the Caltrans-adopted State Route 99 Business Plan to eliminate bottlenecks, maximize previous investments, and improve safety and air quality.
- Many of our constituents work in agriculture, manufacturing, and skilled labor, making it infeasible to use transit or active transportation as a reliable mode.
- This storm season has shown that our state highway infrastructure needs attention.
- **ASK: We need legislators to advocate for completing projects on the state highway system to gain the full benefits of previous investments to help accommodate goods movement and tourism and enhance safety for those who do not have access to transit.**
- **ASK for supporting funding opportunities through the state budget, implementing federal funding, and pursuing SB 1 competitive program funds, such as the Trade Corridor Enhancement Program and Interregional Transportation Improvement Program.**
- **ASK to use the \$951 million in budget stabilization account funds identified in the Governor's January FY 23-24 State Budget as a solution.**
- **Make VMT proportional to each region so that it is realistic and does not disqualify funding projects, particularly those that improve air quality and enhance safety, mobility, and throughput of people and goods.**

## **Pragmatically Address Air Quality and Mobility Goals Through Operational Improvements (Samir Sheik and Tom Jordan)**

- We need help to address our air quality, but solutions vary by region.
- We cannot control our geography or wind patterns; agriculture is the state's number one industry. People nationwide benefit from crops grown and shipped from our communities.
- Density is an issue in the Valley. The Bay Area has a population of 6.8 million over 7300 square miles, and Los Angeles County has 10 million people living over 4700 square miles. The Valley has 4.3 million people spread out over 27,000 square miles. The Bay Area has nearly 60% more people living in an area a quarter the size of the Valley. Los Angeles has more than 2.5 times the population, over 1/6 of the area.
- VMT reduction is not always possible, given the lack of density, discretionary income, travel patterns/needs, and overall practicality of using a bike, bus, or train as an option to conduct activities in a timely manner.
- The FARMER Program, administered by the California Air Resources Board and funded through local Air Districts, expedites the turnover of high-emitting agricultural equipment, like tractors, harvesters, pumps, and utility task vehicles for cleaner and zero-emission equipment. This has the benefit of supporting our farmers in the movement to carbon neutrality. More importantly, providing for immediate and discernable community health and air quality improvements across the state, including the San Joaquin Valley.
- Since 2017, investments in the FARMER program (complimented by matching funds) have reduced 185,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent and 22,210 tons of harmful air pollutants, such as particulate matter and nitrous oxide. Reducing these pollutants expedites the delivery of cleaner air in the state's Central Valley, where residents experience some of the highest adult and childhood asthma rates.
- FARMER is one of the most cost-effective and timely ways the state can advance our communal goals—improving air quality and lessening adverse health impacts while advancing carbon neutrality. Realizing our vision of a more equitable and healthy future requires us to follow through with targeted and strategic investments that leave no one behind.
- Unfortunately, the Governor's 2023-24 proposed budget does not include any funds for the FARMER program.
- **ASK that the FY 23-24 include \$160 million to continue the FARMER program.**
- **ASK that VMT be proportional to each region so that it is realistic and does not disqualify funding projects, particularly those that improve air quality and enhance safety, mobility, and throughput of people and goods.**

**Transit Funding Relief (Councilmember Dan Wright, Councilmember Escutia-Braaton,)**

- All transit operators must achieve a farebox recovery threshold to receive state funding to operate their system. The purpose is to hold operators accountable for running efficient service.
- Based on population, operators need to collect up to 20% in farebox to be eligible to receive funding from various programs to maintain, if not expand, service. This means up to 80% of the service is subsidized.
- If farebox thresholds are not met, MPOs such as StanCOG must penalize operators, making it more difficult to maintain existing services.
- The pandemic decimated transit 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.
- In 2018, StanCOG sponsored SB 903 (Cannella) to relieve Stanislaus County operators from farebox recovery to avoid penalties.
- AB 149 (Committee on Budget) of 2021 provides statutory relief for operators statewide in meeting farebox recovery requirements through June 30, 2023.
- **ASK that farebox relief be extended permanently to help compel mode shift and support society's most challenged maintain mobility options.**

**Passenger Rail (Supervisor Chiesa, Supervisor Poythress, Dan Leavitt)**

- We are responsive to the state's goals of encouraging mode and improving air quality.
- Rail investments are a critical mitigation strategy for the San Joaquin Valley to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide multi-modal options.
- Helping to build out ACE to the Sacramento Airport and the Valley Link system to connect the Bay Area to the San Joaquin Valley will ease congestion and tremendously improve air quality.
- The Valley Link rail project is an example of a transformative zero-emission, megaregional mobility investment into the state's passenger rail system to connect over 105,000 Bay Area workers commuting daily from their affordable homes in the Northern San Joaquin Valley to higher-paying jobs in the Bay Area.
- The 42-mile system from Dublin to Lathrop system will run off of hydrogen produced on a 200-acre facility in Tracy that will also fuel commercial trucks and transit buses.
- Valley Link also brings new transit riders to the existing Bay Area transit systems, such as BART and Caltrain, and removes thousands of single occupancy vehicles from the highly congested and freight significant I-580 corridor.
- We have concerns regarding the recently released draft 2023 State Rail Plan that identifies Valley Link as a mid-term solution.
- It should be a near-term solution as \$814 million in local funds has been secured, and with capital investments, the initial 22-mile segment from Dublin to Mountain House could begin construction in FY 25-26.
- **ASK for supporting ACE and Valley Link application submitted for the Transit Capital and Intercity Rail Program that will be awarded by April 25.**
- **ASK that Valley Link be prioritized as a near-term project in the State Rail Plan.**
- **ASK for support to provide funds to build the hydrogen facility in Tracy to help improve air quality in the transportation sector.**