

# Memorandum

**To:** CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

**CTC Meeting:** May 17-18, 2023

**From:** TANISHA TAYLOR, Interim Executive Director

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**Subject:** Draft 2023 Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines for Metropolitan Planning Organizations

## **Summary:**

California Transportation Commission (Commission) staff is working in collaboration with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to update the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Guidelines.

As was done for the 2017 RTP Guidelines, separate versions of the 2023 RTP Guidelines will be developed for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs). The first draft of the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines for MPOs is available for public comment at:

<https://catc.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning>. Public comments will be accepted on the draft through June 5, 2023. Comments may be provided via email to [RTPGuidelines@dot.ca.gov](mailto:RTPGuidelines@dot.ca.gov).

The first draft of the RTP Guidelines for MPOs focuses on updates to incorporate changes in state and federal law, streamline language, and update references. Guidelines language to address policy changes since the 2017 RTP Guidelines will be developed through the work group process. Staff anticipates presenting a second draft of the RTP Guidelines for MPOs and a first draft of the RTP Guidelines for RTPAs to the Commission in the fall. To view a log of comments received to date and how those informed the first draft RTP Guidelines for MPOs, please visit: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning/division-of-transportation-planning/regional-and-community-planning/2023-rtp-guidelines-update>.

Since the RTP Guidelines were last adopted in 2017, relevant state plans, reports, and policies have been released, including Executive Order N-79-20, the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure, Caltrans' CTP 2050, the draft Senate Bill 150 Report, the 2022 Climate Change Scoping Plan, and the California Transportation Assessment (AB 285 Report). Federal policy direction has also emerged from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Additionally, updates to the RTP Guidelines are needed to reflect advances in the practice of long-range regional transportation planning, including improvements in the areas of housing coordination, zero-emission and near-zero emission vehicle technologies, climate change mitigation and adaptation planning, equity and engagement, goods movement, travel demand modeling, performance management, and vehicle miles traveled reduction strategies.

**Background:**

The Commission is authorized to develop RTP Guidelines (California Government Code Sections 14522 and 14524.3) and to direct Caltrans to prepare updates to the guidelines (California Government Code Section 14512). While there is no requirement for how frequently the guidelines must be updated, the Commission aims to initiate an update when there have been significant changes to federal or state law.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies are required by law to prepare an RTP that describes that region's transportation vision and goals. The RTP is a long-range planning and policy document that conveys the unique needs and characteristics of a region and identifies improvements to the transportation system. The RTP Guidelines set forth a statewide, long-range regional transportation planning framework; promote an integrated, multimodal planning process; and facilitate the efficient delivery of transportation projects that meet local, regional, and state goals. Staff anticipates presenting the final RTP Guidelines for both MPOs and RTPAs for adoption in late 2023.

The most recently adopted guidelines, the 2017 RTP Guidelines, are available online at <https://catc.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning>.

Since initiating the update of the RTP Guidelines in October 2022 there have been several engagement opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the development of the guidelines. On October 27, 2022, staff held a kick-off meeting for both the RTP and the California Transportation Plan (CTP) Guidelines, which are also being updated. The purpose of the kick-off meeting was to provide an overview of the guidelines update process and hear from stakeholders about their expertise in long-range planning and important issues to address in the guidelines.

Next, technical work groups were formed, and the first work group meetings were held in February 2023. Workgroup meetings give stakeholders an opportunity to provide comments and feedback throughout the update process of the RTP Guidelines. The work groups comprise subject matter experts who provide input into the development of the following subject areas:

- Equity, Engagement, and Health
- Housing
- Climate Change and Environment
- Freight and Economic Development
- Transportation Performance Management
- Modeling

To date, one meeting has been held for each work group topic area. If individuals would like to join future meetings of the work groups, they are encouraged to email [RTPGuidelines@dot.ca.gov](mailto:RTPGuidelines@dot.ca.gov) to sign up.

Lastly, a workshop was held to discuss the RTP and CTP Guidelines on February 15, 2023. Feedback received at the initial work group meetings was shared at the workshop. This feedback is summarized in the workshop presentation material (slides 19-34) available at <https://catc.ca.gov/meetings-events/workshops>. Two key themes that emerged from both the work group meetings and the workshop were the need to update the RTP Guidelines to reflect changes in federal legislation and regulations and the need to incorporate new planning practice examples.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Chapter 1 of the Draft 2023 Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines for Metropolitan Planning Organizations

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.0 Applicability of the Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines

Every Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is required by law to conduct long range planning to ensure that the region's vision and goals are clearly identified and to ensure effective decision making in furtherance of the vision and goals. The long-range plan, known as the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) or [Metropolitan Transportation Plan \(MTP\)](#), is an important policy document that is based on the unique needs and characteristics of a region. [The RTP impacts](#) a region's economy, environment, [public health and safety](#), and social equity future, [along with communicating](#) a regional vision to the State and federal government. [The RTP supports the State's goals](#) as enumerated in California Government Code (GC) Section 65041.1, [49 U.S.C., 5303\(i\), 23 U.S.C., 134, and 23 U.S.C., 150.](#)

The California Transportation Commission (Commission or CTC) is authorized to develop guidelines by GC Section 14522, which reads:

*In cooperation with the regional transportation planning agencies (RTPA), the commission may prescribe study areas for analysis and evaluation by such agencies and guidelines for the preparation of the RTPs.*

The eighteen MPOs, in alphabetical order, are:

Association of Monterey Bay Governments ([AMBAG](#)), Butte County Association of Governments ([BCAG](#)), Fresno Council of Governments ([FresnoCOG](#)), Kings County Association of Governments ([KCAG](#)), Kern Council of Governments ([KernCOG](#)), Merced County Association of Governments ([MCAG](#)), Madera County Transportation Commission ([MCTC](#)), Metropolitan Transportation Commission ([MTC](#)), Sacramento Area Council of Governments ([SACOG](#)), San Diego Association of Governments ([SANDAG](#)), San Joaquin Council of Governments ([SJCOC](#)), San Luis Obispo Council of Governments ([SLOCOC](#)), Santa Barbara County Association of Governments ([SBCAG](#)), Shasta Regional Transportation Agency ([SRTA](#)), Southern California Association of Governments ([SCAG](#)), Stanislaus Council of Governments ([StanCOG](#)), Tulare County Association of Governments ([TCAG](#)), and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency ([TRPA](#)).

While the guidelines include both State and federal requirements, MPOs have the flexibility to be creative in selecting transportation planning options that best fit their regional needs. The guidelines recognize that "one size does not fit all." Solutions and techniques used by a larger MPO will be different than those used by a smaller MPO.

The 2023 RTP Guidelines use the words "Shall" and "Should", a convention established by the previous RTP Guidelines. Where the RTP Guidelines reflect a State or federal statutory or regulatory requirement, the word "Shall" is used with a statutory or regulatory citation. The word "Should" is used where the Guidelines reflect a permissive or optional statutory reference such as "May" or "Should." Each section ends with

federal and State requirements (Shalls), federal and State recommendations (Shoulds), and refers to **Appendix G** for Planning Practices Examples where appropriate. Planning practice examples are intended to highlight exemplary state of the art planning practices that MPOs can seek to emulate as financial and technical resources allow.

MPO RTPs are updated every four years (or five years in attainment regions); however, many MPOs begin the next RTP update immediately upon adoption of the current RTP. As RTP development is a continuous process, consideration is given to MPOs that will be too far along in the planning process to conform their RTPs to the 2023 RTP Guidelines. All RTP updates started after the 2023 RTP Guidelines are adopted by the CTC must use the new RTP Guidelines. MPOs are encouraged to communicate with Caltrans, the [Federal Highways Administration \(FHWA\)](#), and the [Federal Transit Administration \(FTA\)](#) to discuss schedules for RTP adoption.

## 1.1 Why Conduct Long-Range Transportation Planning?

The long-range transportation planning process in metropolitan areas is uniquely suited to address a number of federal, State, regional, and local goals, from supporting economic growth to achieving environmental goals, promoting public health, quality of life, and [social equity](#). Not only does the transportation system provide for the mobility of people and goods, but it also influences patterns of growth and economic activity through accessibility to [housing, jobs, critical services, and other destinations](#). Furthermore, the performance of this system affects public policy concerns like [exposure to air pollution](#), greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, natural resources, environmental protection and conservation, social equity, [public health](#), smart growth, housing affordability, jobs/housing balance, economic development, safety, and security. Transportation planning recognizes and accounts for the critical links between transportation and societal goals. The planning process is more than merely a listing of multimodal capital investments; it requires developing strategies for operating, managing, maintaining, funding, and financing the area's transportation system in a way that advances the area's long-term goals [and vision](#).

Assembly Bill 285 (AB 285, Chapter 605, Statutes of 2019) required the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) to report on progress made towards achieving climate goals, including:

- [An overview of the California Transportation Plan \(CTP\)](#)
- [An overview of all regional Sustainable Community Strategies \(SCS\) and Alternative Planning Strategies \(APS\)](#)
- [An assessment of how the implementation of the CTP and regional plans will influence the configuration of the statewide integrated multimodal transportation system](#)
- [A review of the potential impacts and opportunities for coordination of key State funding programs, to be conducted in consultation with administering agencies](#)

- Recommendations for the improvement of these programs or other relevant transportation funding programs to better align the programs to meet long-term common goals, including the goals outlined in the CTP

The AB 285 Final Report can be found at: [https://sgc.ca.gov/resources/docs/20220831-AB\\_285\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](https://sgc.ca.gov/resources/docs/20220831-AB_285_Final_Report.pdf)

In 2008, transportation planning and land use planning became further linked following the passage of [Senate Bill \(SB\) 375 \(Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008\)](#). SB 375 requires the MPOs to develop a SCS or APS to demonstrate meeting regional GHG emissions reduction targets established by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) through the forecasted development pattern, [integrated land use and planned transportation network](#), and transportation measures and policies within the RTP. In 2013, the connection between higher-density development and GHG reduction was strengthened further with the passage of SB 743 (Chapter 386, Statutes of 2013), which required an update in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) transportation metrics to align with climate and planning goals. [In the past, the transportation impacts for new development were evaluated based on the potential increase in traffic congestion in the immediate area through level of service.](#) The Governor's Office of Planning and Research's 2018 CEQA Guidelines states Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) is the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. For transportation projects, agencies have discretion to determine the appropriate measure of transportation impact consistent with CEQA and other applicable requirements. To the extent that such impacts have already been adequately addressed at a programmatic level, such as in an RTP Environmental Impact Report, a lead agency may tier from that analysis.

The RTP or Long-Range Transportation Plan is the mechanism used in California for MPOs to conduct long-range (minimum of 20 years) transportation planning, integrated with local jurisdiction's land use planning, in their regions to achieve local and regional goals, in consideration of State and federal goals. Because transportation infrastructure investments [affect](#) travel patterns, smart investments play a key role in meeting climate targets. As a result of State legislation, as well as EOs, GHG emission reduction, transportation electrification, climate resilience, improving transportation mobility, [equity](#), addressing federal air quality criteria pollutants, and ensuring that the statewide regional transportation system addresses tribal, local, regional, and statewide mobility and economic needs are key priorities in the statewide and regional transportation planning process.

[Housing also plays an impactful role in long-range planning. Housing coordination is a key element in meeting GHG reduction goals. Housing, land use, and transportation are synergistic. Land use patterns that leverage transportation investments with housing enable a wider range of access and mobility choices. Creating communities with shorter travel distances and more options for active travel produces environmental benefits, reduced financial burdens, better access to opportunities, and improved public health.](#)

Equally important to consider in long-range transportation planning is how transportation can affect human health in many ways, for example: safety – reduction



of collisions; air quality – reduction of **hazardous air pollutants** from vehicle emissions; physical activity – increasing biking and walking; access to goods, services, and opportunities – increasing livability in communities; and noise – designing road improvements to decrease sound exposure. A timely opportunity to address public health outcomes is early during the RTP development process. MPOs can consider health priorities in selection of projects for the RTP and Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP). MPOs also can play a significant role in engaging residents and stakeholders in the regional transportation planning process to ensure the improvement of health outcomes for all segments of the population.

As interest in the link between transportation and health has grown, much cross-sector coordination and collaboration between transportation professionals and health practitioners has occurred at all levels of government, with input from public health and equity advocates, as well as active transportation stakeholders. The optimal result of this process is to improve transportation decisions and thereby improve access to healthy and active lifestyles. **Appendix E** highlights the various health and health equity-promoting projects, programs, and policies currently employed in MPO RTPs in California. Public health is also discussed in **Section 2.3**.

Long-range transportation planning provides the opportunity to compare alternative **scenarios** and improvement strategies, track **implementation and plan** performance over time, and identify funding priorities. The California Transportation Plan (CTP) defines this as performance management that helps ensure efficient and effective investment of transportation funds by refocusing on established goals, increasing accountability and transparency, and improving project decision-making. To further reach this end, MPOs implement a performance-based approach in the scope of the statewide and nonmetropolitan and metropolitan transportation planning process. In addition to federal performance-based planning, the State of California has articulated **numerous state goals for the transportation system, the environment, the economy, and social equity through statute, regulation, EO, and legislative intent language**. RTPs are developed to reflect regional and local priorities and goals, but they are also instruments that can be used by federal and State agencies to demonstrate how regional agency efforts contribute to those federal and state agencies meeting their own transportation system goals. The inclusion of goal setting in RTPs allows the federal and state governments to both understand regional goals and track progress toward federal and State goals.

Performance-based planning is the application of performance management within the planning process to help the federal government, states and regional agencies achieve desired outcomes for the multimodal transportation system. The benefits of well-designed and appropriately used performance measures are transparency about the benefits of the RTP, not only for transportation system performance, but also for other regionally important priorities such as improved public health, housing affordability, farmland conservation, habitat preservation, and cost-effective infrastructure investment. The performance-based approach will continue to develop over the years and will be implemented at the federal and State levels. Transportation performance management and the performance-based approach are further discussed in Chapter 7.

## 1.2 RTPs and the CTP

The CTP is a core document that addresses the applicable federal statewide and non-metropolitan transportation planning regulations and helps tie together several internal and external plans and programs to help define and plan transportation in California. Unlike an RTP, it is not project specific or subject to both federal air quality conformity regulations and CEQA, but it does explore how RTP/SCS implementation will influence the statewide multimodal transportation system, as well as how the state will redouble efforts to achieve maximum feasible GHG emission reductions in order to mitigate impacts of climate change per AB 32, SB 391, [SB 32](#), and [EO N-19-19](#). While the CTP is prepared by Caltrans, it is developed in collaboration with various stakeholders [through an ongoing public engagement process](#). Furthermore, the CTP is a fiscally unconstrained aspirational policy document that integrates and builds upon six Caltrans modal plans (Interregional Plan, Freight Plan, Rail Plan, Aviation Plan, Transit Plan, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan) as well as the fiscally constrained RTPs prepared by the MPOs and the RTPAs. RTPAs and MPOs address transportation from a regional perspective, while the CTP, building on regional plans, addresses the connectivity and/or travel between regions and applies a statewide perspective for the transportation system. Therefore, integration of CTP and RTP goals (where applicable and consistent with federal and State fiscal constraint requirements) may provide greater mobility choices for travelers not only within their regions but across the state. The CTP and the RTP can be developed in a cyclical pattern aligning one with another using comprehensive, cooperative, and continuous planning. This should result in delivering better projects and using resources more efficiently. The following diagrams illustrate the relationship between the CTP and RTP.

## 1.3 Background and Purpose of the RTP Guidelines

The purposes of these RTP Guidelines are to:

1. Promote an integrated, statewide, multimodal, regional transportation planning process and effective transportation investments
2. Set forth a uniform transportation planning framework throughout California by identifying federal and State requirements and statutes impacting the development of RTPs
3. Promote a continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process that facilitates the rapid and efficient development and implementation of projects that maintain California's commitment to public health and environmental quality; and,
4. Promote a planning process that considers the views of all stakeholders

The purpose of RTPs is to encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of a regional intermodal transportation system that, when linked with appropriate land use planning, will serve the mobility needs of goods and people. The RTP Guidelines are intended to provide guidance so that MPOs will

develop their RTPs to be consistent with federal and state transportation planning requirements. This is important because state statutes require that RTPs serve as the foundation of the FTIP. The FTIPs are prepared by MPOs and identify the next four years of transportation projects to be funded for construction. The CTC cannot program projects that are not identified in the RTP.

Since the mid-1970s, with the passage of AB 69, (Chapter 1253, Statutes of 1972) California state law has required the preparation of RTPs to address transportation issues and assist local and state decision-makers in shaping California's transportation infrastructure. SB 375 requires that the RTP Guidelines are to be developed pursuant to California GC Sections 14522 and 65080 which State:

*"14522. In cooperation with the regional transportation planning agencies, the commission may prescribe study areas for analysis and evaluation by such agencies and guidelines for the preparation of the regional transportation plans."*

*"14522.1. (a) (1) The commission, in consultation with the department and the State Air Resources Board, shall maintain guidelines for travel demand models used in the development of regional transportation plans by federally designated metropolitan planning organizations.*

*(2) Any revision of the guidelines shall include the formation of an advisory committee that shall include representatives of the metropolitan planning organizations, the department, organizations knowledgeable in the creation and use of travel demand models, local governments, and organizations concerned with the impacts of transportation investments on communities and the environment. Before amending the guidelines, the commission shall hold two workshops on the guidelines, one in northern California and one in southern California. The workshops shall be incorporated into regular commission meetings.*

*(b) The guidelines shall, at a minimum and to the extent practicable, taking into account such factors as the size and available resources of the metropolitan planning organization, account for all of the following:*

*(1) The relationship between land use density and household vehicle ownership and vehicle miles traveled in a way that is consistent with statistical research.*

*(2) The impact of enhanced transit service levels on household vehicle ownership and vehicle miles traveled.*

*(3) Changes in travel and land development likely to result from highway or passenger rail expansion.*

*(4) Mode splitting that allocates trips among automobile, transit, carpool, and bicycle and pedestrian trips. If a travel demand model is unable to forecast bicycle and pedestrian trips, another means may be used to estimate those trips.*

*(5) Speed and frequency, days, and hours of operation of transit service."*

*"65080 (d) Except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, each transportation planning agency shall adopt and submit, every four years, an updated regional transportation plan to the California Transportation Commission and the Department of Transportation. A transportation planning agency located in a federally designated air quality attainment area or that does not contain an urbanized area may at its option adopt and submit a regional transportation plan every five years. When applicable, the*

*plan shall be consistent with federal planning and programming requirements and shall conform to the regional transportation plan guidelines adopted by the California Transportation Commission. Prior to adoption of the regional transportation plan, a public hearing shall be held after the giving of notice of the hearing by publication in the affected county or counties pursuant to Section 6061.”*

The 1999 revision of the Guidelines was prepared to achieve conformance with State and federal transportation planning legislation and was based on the Federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and California SB 45 (Chapter 622 Statutes 1997). A 2003 Supplement was also prepared that was based on a 2003 RTP Evaluation Report completed for the CTC. The federal surface transportation reauthorization bill called the SAFETEA-LU was signed into law in 2005. The 2007 revision of the RTP Guidelines was prepared in order to address changes in the planning process resulting from SAFETEA-LU.

Subsequent to the passage of AB 32 (California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006), an addendum to the 2007 RTP Guidelines was adopted by the CTC in May 2008 to address a request from the California Legislature to ensure climate change issues were incorporated in the RTP process. That addendum was adopted by the CTC prior to the September 2008 passage of SB 375.

The 2010 update was prepared to incorporate new planning requirements as a result of SB 375 and to incorporate the addendum to the 2007 RTP Guidelines. SB 375 requires the 18 MPOs in the state to identify a forecasted development pattern and transportation network that, if implemented, will meet GHG emission reduction targets specified by CARB through their RTP planning processes.

Since the 2017 update, the final rulemaking for federal performance measures 2 and 3 was released, establishing new requirements for performance management to promote the efficient investment of federal transportation funds, and a federal surface transportation reauthorization bill, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, has been signed into law. It includes the largest federal investment in public transportation to date and a re-authorization of the core federal surface transportation program, which sets federal funding levels and policy direction for the next five years.

## 1.4 MPOs in California

Federal transportation legislation requires the formation of an MPO for any urbanized area with a population greater than 50,000. MPOs were created in order to ensure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects and programs were based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) planning process. MPOs' federally required responsibilities are identified in Title 23 U.S.C. Section 134 and Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 450.300. To carry out various transportation planning functions, MPOs receive annual federal metropolitan planning funds from FHWA and FTA.

An MPO has five core functions:

1. Maintain a setting for regional decision-making
2. Prepare an Overall Work Program (OWP)
3. Involve the public in this decision-making
4. Prepare an RTP
5. Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

MPOs' federally required responsibilities are identified in Title 23 U.S.C. Section 134 and Title 23 CFR Part 450.300. To carry out various transportation planning functions, MPOs receive annual federal metropolitan planning funds from the FHWA and FTA.

California GC 65080 sets forth the requirements for an RTP to be an internally consistent document that contains an SCS in addition to the policy, action, and financial elements. With the added requirement for an SCS in 2008, state law placed new emphasis on the RTP as an integrated planning document that promotes sustainable land use and increases mobility options. This heightens the importance of the MPOs as regional leaders to bring together local governments and other partners in a collaborative discussion about setting public policy and investments that can be implemented for the region's future.

The map below identifies the 18 MPOs (in gray) and the 26 RTPAs that prepare RTPs (in green or dot pattern).





## 1.5 Purpose of the RTP

Regional Transportation Plans are planning documents developed by MPOs in cooperation with FHWA, FTA, Caltrans, and other stakeholders, including system users. Following the passage of SB 375, MPOs also need to work closely with CARB and the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) (GC Section 65080 et seq.). MPOs are required to prepare these long-range plans per federal statute (Title 23 U.S.C. Section 134). The purpose of the RTP is to establish regional goals, identify present and future needs, deficiencies, and constraints, analyze potential solutions, estimate available funding, and propose investments.

California statute refers to these documents as "Regional Transportation Plans" or RTPs. In California planning circles, these long-range planning documents normally use the term "RTP". However, several California MPOs refer to RTPs as "Metropolitan Transportation Plan or MTP" which is used in federal planning regulations. "RTP" or "MTP" are terms used to describe the same document.

Pursuant to Title 23 CFR Part 450.324 et seq. FHWA describes the development and contents of RTPs as follows:

*"The transportation plan is the Statement of the ways the region plans to invest in the transportation system. The plan shall "include both long-range and short-range program strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods." The plan has several elements, for example: Identify policies, strategies, and projects for the future; Determine project demand for transportation services over 20 years; Focus at the systems level, including roadways, transit, non-motorized transportation, and intermodal connections; Articulate regional land use, development, housing, and employment goals and plans; Estimate costs and identify reasonably available financial sources for operation, maintenance, and capital investments); Determine ways to preserve existing roads and facilities and make efficient use of the existing system; be consistent with the Statewide transportation plan; and Be updated every five years or four years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas. MPOs should make special efforts to engage interested parties in the development of the plan. In cases where a metropolitan area is designated as a nonattainment or maintenance area, the plan must conform to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality."*

The regional transportation planning led by the MPOs is a collaborative process that is widely participated in by federal, State, local and tribal governments/agencies, as well as other key stakeholders and the general public. The process is designed to foster involvement by all interested parties, such as the business community, California Tribal Governments, community groups, environmental organizations, the general public, and

local jurisdictions through a proactive public participation process conducted by the MPO in coordination with state [agencies](#) and transit operators. It is essential to extend public participation/engagement to include people who have been traditionally underserved by the transportation system and services in the region. Neglecting public involvement early in the planning stage can result in costly delays during the project development stages.

The traditional steps undertaken during the regional planning process include:

1. Providing a long-term (20 year) visioning framework
2. Monitoring existing conditions
3. Forecasting future population and employment growth
4. Assessing projected land uses in the region and identifying major growth corridors
5. Identifying alternatives and needs and analyzing, through detailed planning studies, various transportation improvements
6. Developing alternative capital and operating strategies for people and goods
7. Estimating the impact of the transportation system on air quality within the region
8. Developing a financial plan that covers operating costs, maintenance of the system, system preservation costs, and new capital investments
9. [Considering all planning factors](#)
10. [Utilizing a performance-based planning approach](#)
11. [Assessing capital investments and other strategies](#)
12. [Considering public transportation facilities and intercity bus facilities](#)
13. [Providing engagement, public participation, and meaningful consultation opportunities](#)
14. [Utilizing scenario planning](#)

The RTP is an integrated planning document and must include the SCS. It may consider the following:

1. Transportation projects, non-auto mobility strategies, and the forecasted development pattern in the RTP must be modeled to determine their impacts on regional GHG emissions. Current travel models are not always sensitive to the land use and transportation strategies in an SCS; therefore, MPOs have had to find alternative methods to quantify the GHG emissions reduction benefits of these strategies. [The technical methodology for quantifying emissions and off-model methods](#) is discussed further in Chapters 3 and 6.
2. The RTP must contain an SCS that includes a forecasted development pattern for the region, which, when integrated with the transportation network, and other transportation measures and policies, will reduce the GHG emissions from automobiles and light trucks to achieve, if feasible, the GHG emission reduction target approved for the region by CARB, [if implemented](#). The MPO will need to coordinate with cities, counties, [transit operators, and other interested parties](#)



within the region to work towards strategies that will reduce regional GHG emissions.

3. The MPO must prepare an APS if the SCS is unable to reduce GHG emissions to achieve the GHG emissions reduction targets established by CARB. The APS shall be a separate document from the RTP, but it may be adopted concurrently with the RTP.
4. SB 150 (Chapter 646, Statutes of 2017) requires CARB to prepare a report to the Legislature starting in 2018 and every four years thereafter, to discuss progress related to SB 375 implementation. An MPO can use this report to inform scenario development.

The RTPs are developed to provide a clear vision of the regional transportation goals, objectives, and strategies. This vision must be realistic and within fiscal constraints. In addition to providing a vision, the RTPs have many specific functions, including:

1. Providing an assessment of the current modes of transportation and the potential of new travel options within the region
2. Projecting/estimating the future needs for travel and goods movement
3. Identification and documentation of specific actions necessary to address regional mobility and accessibility needs
4. Identification of guidance and documentation of public policy decisions by local, regional, state, and federal officials regarding transportation expenditures and financing and future growth patterns
5. Identification of needed transportation improvements, in sufficient detail, to serve as a foundation for the: (a) Development of the FTIP, and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), (b) Facilitation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/404 integration process and (c) Identification of project purpose and need
6. Employing performance measures that demonstrates the effectiveness of the system of transportation improvement projects in meeting the intended goals
7. Promotion of consistency between the CTP, the RTP and other plans developed by cities, counties, districts, California Tribal Governments, and state and federal agencies in responding to statewide and interregional transportation issues and needs
8. Providing a forum for: (1) participation and cooperation and (2) facilitation of partnerships that reconcile transportation issues which transcend regional boundaries; and,
9. Involving community-based organizations, the public, federal, State, and local agencies, California Tribal Governments, as well as local elected officials, early in the transportation planning process to include them in discussions and decisions on the social, economic, air quality and environmental issues related to transportation.

## 1.6 California Transportation Planning and Programming Process

The State of California and federal transportation agencies allocate millions of dollars of planning funds annually to help support California's transportation planning process. The RTP establishes the basis for programming local, state, and federal funds for transportation projects within a region. State and federal planning and programming legislation has been in place and is periodically revised to provide guidance in the use of these funds to plan, maintain and improve the transportation system.

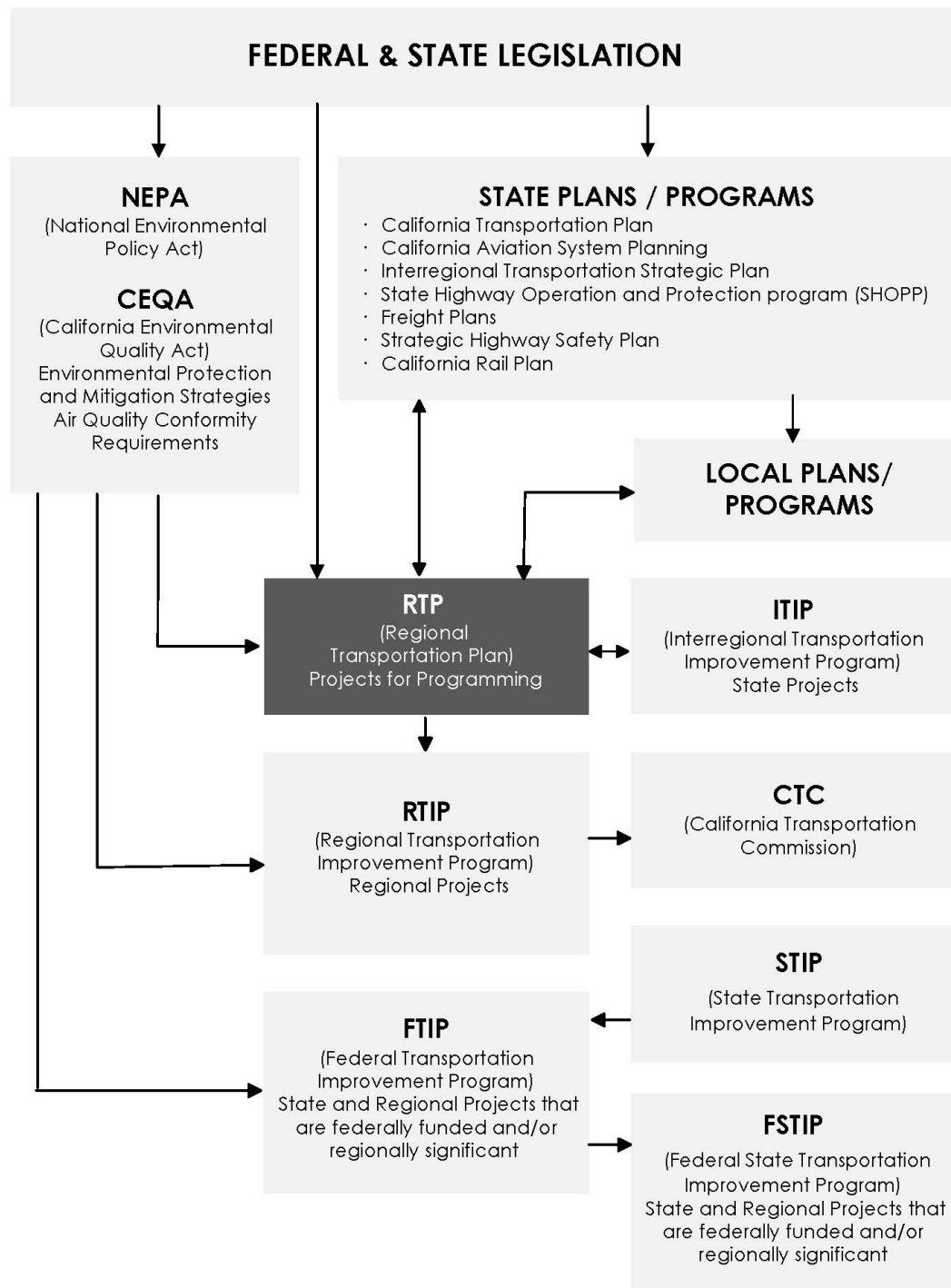
The RTP Guidelines include recommendations and suggestions for providing documentation that is needed to meet the requirements of the FTIP) and the STIP. Because there are a variety of names used for the programming document that is prepared by an MPO, the RTP Guidelines refer to the programming document that accompanies an RTP as the FTIP. The FTIP is defined as a constrained four-year prioritized list of regionally significant and non-regionally significant transportation projects that are proposed for federal, state, and local funding. The FTIP is developed and adopted by the MPO and is updated every two years. It is consistent with the RTP, and it is required as a prerequisite for federal funding. In this document the words FTIP and Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) are used interchangeably.

The planning and programming process is the result of state and federal legislation to ensure that:

1. The process is as open and transparent as possible
2. Environmental considerations are addressed
3. Funds are allocated in an equitable manner to address transportation needs

The chart [below](#) attempts to provide a simple diagram of a complex process. Each entity in the chart reflects extensive staff support and legislative direction. The result is the planning and programming process that reflects the legislative and funding support of the California transportation system. Additional information regarding the programming process is available in **Sections 2.5** and **6.15**.

## Regional Transportation Planning and Programming Process



## 1.7 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Items Impacting the Development of RTPs

This section is intended to outline the new federal requirements and recommendations resulting from the IIJA. Only the items that have a direct impact on RTP development are listed. Other sections may contain optional requirements that could have impacts to the overall regional transportation planning process.

**Public Participation of Interested Parties** – In addition to all entities listed in **Chapter 4**, IIJA requires MPOs provide affordable housing organizations a reasonable opportunity to comment on the RTP. 23 U.S.C. 134 (i)(6)(A)

**Housing Coordination Plan** – MPOs may develop a housing coordination plan that includes projects and strategies that may be considered in the RTP. MPOs may align transportation improvement projects with proposed housing developments – and can coordinate these projects with local and regional housing and land use agencies. MPOs may consider managing the effects of increased VMT as it relates to housing and economic developments. MPOs may coordinate the location of existing and planned housing and employment to coordinate transportation options that connect housing and employment. MPOs may include a comparison of RTPs to land use management plans, such as zoning plans, that may affect VMT, public transit, and housing development. 23 U.S.C. 134 (i)(4)(C)

It is important to note that MPOs already integrate land use, housing, and transportation as part of the SCS. To the extent possible, an MPO preparing a housing coordination plan should build off its SCS.

## 1.8 Key Additions, Recommendations, and Additional Resources to the 2023 RTP Guidelines

Key Additions to the 2023 RTP Guidelines include the following items:

1. Alignment with performance measurements and asset management
2. Updates for the IIJA/BIL throughout the RTP Guidelines, including:
  - a. Regional housing planning. Housing coordination plan (IIJA Section 3002)
  - b. Community engagement practices, including virtual engagement (IIJA Section 3003) to be included
3. Considerations for CAPTI to be included
4. Information on federal environmental justice direction, including the Justice40 Initiative and President Biden's Executive Order to Revitalize Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All
5. Planning Practice Examples