

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: August 14-15, 2025

From: TANISHA TAYLOR, Executive Director

Reference Number: 4.7, Information

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Subject: Hearing on the 2026 State Transportation Improvement Program Guidelines

Summary:

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a biennial five-year plan adopted by the California Transportation Commission (Commission) for future allocations of certain state transportation funds for state highway improvements, intercity rail, and regional highway and transit improvements. The STIP Guidelines describe the policy, standards, criteria, and procedures for the development, adoption, and management of the program.

The Draft 2026 STIP Guidelines, in accordance with Government Code Section 14530.1, were amended in coordination with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), regional transportation planning agencies, county transportation commissions, local agencies, a member of the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee, and public stakeholders. The Commission may amend the STIP Guidelines after conducting at least one public hearing. The purpose of this public hearing is to hear final comments on the Draft 2026 STIP Guidelines prior to considering their adoption at this Commission meeting under Reference Number 4.8.

Commission staff held a workshop on the Draft 2026 STIP Guidelines on May 5, 2025 and presented the initial Draft 2026 STIP Guidelines at the June 26, 2025 Commission meeting. An additional public workshop was held on July 22, 2025. Comments received during this workshop resulted in minor changes to the “Uncommitted Funding” and “Display of Project Descriptions and Costs” sections.

The following summarizes the substantive changes to the Draft 2026 STIP Guidelines, which were presented at the June 26, 2025 meeting, as well the minor changes made since then:

- Specific Guidelines – Uncommitted Funding Section – In prior programming cycles, the STIP required all proposed projects to be fully funded, except for projects seeking Senate Bill (SB) 1 program funds in the upcoming program cycle. This section was updated to allow more flexibility, including not limiting SB1 projects to a single cycle,

and adding the Active Transportation Program and Federal discretionary funds to the uncommitted funding section.

- Section 48 – Display of Project Descriptions and Costs – Added language that would require regions to provide the project and/or page number(s) in the adopted Regional Transportation Plan that correlates to each new proposed STIP project.

Background:

Each new STIP adds two new years to prior programming commitments. The 2024 STIP was adopted in March 2024, and the 2026 STIP must be adopted by April 1, 2026. The 2026 STIP will include the fiscal five-year period from 2026-27 through 2030-31. The 2026 STIP Fund Estimate is being considered for adoption at this Commission meeting under Reference Number 4.3.

Under state law, the Commission adopts a new STIP cycle by April 1 of every even year and may allocate STIP funds only in accordance with the adopted STIP. Updated guidelines for the STIP are adopted biennially along with the adoption of the Fund Estimate, which is generally adopted in August of every odd year.