



July 28th, 2017

Re: Final 2018 STIP Guidelines

Dear Ms. Favilia:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the 2018 STIP Guidelines.

California has provided unprecedented leadership to tackle climate change, advance sustainable transportation choices, increase walking and bicycling, and promote social equity. With the passage of laws such as AB 32, SB 32, SB 375, and SB 391, we've seen our state set clear climate targets and provide tools to better align our transportation and land use planning to meet those goals. With SB 535 – and the passage of SB 1 – we've seen our state take an ambitious step forward to align our transportation dollars to our goals to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and provide direct benefits to low-income communities and communities of color that are underserved and overburdened by transportation investments.

We, the undersigned organizations, want to ensure that the 2018 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Guidelines align with our state goals to help us reduce GHG emissions while also maximizing investment in sustainable transportation choices and providing direct benefits to low-income communities and communities of color. We appreciate the changes in the Final 2018 STIP Guidelines to better align our state transportation investments with our state goals, most notably:

- Clearly stating that the STIP should make progress towards our regional and statewide goals, as well as mitigate negative environmental and community impacts
- Ensuring that the Interregional Program objectives align with the California Transportation Plan 2040 (CTP 2040) including fostering livable, healthy communities that promote social equity

However, we believe much more can – and should – be done to better align the STIP to our ambitious climate and equity goals. We recommend the 2018 STIP include the following:

- All Interregional projects should align with the policies listed in the CTP 2040.
- Explicitly recommend that highway capacity expansion should be used as a last resort.
- Provide a breakdown of how previous STIP funds were spent, and how they benefited underserved and overburdened communities.
- New chapter specifying the obligations of countywide Congestion Management Agencies (or County Transportation Agencies/Commissions).
- A clear commitment to provide direct benefits to underserved and overburdened communities while decreasing existing environmental, social, and other burdens.

- Enhance the guidance for regional agencies in determining the consistency of Congestion Management Plans (CMPs) with the Regional Transportation Plan.
- Prioritize active transportation projects and leverage the oversubscribed Active Transportation Program.
- Leverage economic benefits for low income communities through targeted training and hiring.

**All Interregional projects should align with the policies listed in the CTP 2040.**

As noted above, we appreciate the alignment of Interregional Program objectives align with the CTP 2040 goals. We believe it is critical that our state transportation framework shape our state transportation funding and the inclusion of the CTP 2040 goals is an important step forward. To further align our state transportation framework to our state transportation funding, specifically STIP dollars, we recommend all Interregional Projects for the State Highways, Rail, and Bicycle and Pedestrians on pages 19-20 of Final 2018 STIP Guidelines should align with the CTP 2040 policies and emphasize an interregional transportation system that:

- Reduces fatalities, serious injuries, and collisions.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants.
- Promote public health and social equity.

**Explicitly recommend that highway capacity expansion should be used as a last resort.**

Given the academic research on induced demand and how it increases our greenhouse gas emissions, we believe that the 2018 STIP Guidelines should explicitly recommend that highway capacity expansion must be used as a last resort. Specifically, in the Final 2018 STIP Guidelines, Attachment A, we recommend including a bullet that outlines the findings from Dr. Susan Handy’s policy brief, “Increasing Highway Capacity Unlikely to Relieve Traffic Congestion”<sup>1</sup>, specifically including the following language:

“Increased roadway capacity induces additional VMT in the short run and even more VMT in the long run....one study predicted that the growth in VMT attributable to increased lane miles would produce an additional 43 million metric tons of CO2 emissions in 2012 nationwide.”

In a separate bullet in Attachment A, the Final 2018 STIP Guidelines should also recommend all highway capacity projects that increase throughput with physical expansion should be a last resort. This bullet should include recommendations for alternative programs to alleviate traffic congestion like the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP), which address commute traffic pattern problems by removing obstructions on the freeway as rapidly as possible, reduces overall traffic congestion and minimizes automobile emissions.

In addition, in Section 19, Criteria for Measuring Performance and Cost-Effectiveness, we recommend that projects should account for *generated* and *induced* vehicle travel (additional

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<sup>1</sup> Handy, S. (2015). National Center for Sustainable Transportation. “Increasing Highway Capacity Unlikely to Relieve Traffic Congestion.” [http://www.dot.ca.gov/newtech/researchreports/reports/2015/10-12-2015-NCST\\_Brief\\_InducedTravel\\_CS6\\_v3.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/newtech/researchreports/reports/2015/10-12-2015-NCST_Brief_InducedTravel_CS6_v3.pdf)

vehicle travel resulting from reduced congestion) when increasing highway capacity or roadway expansion. We also recommend that the Project Programming Request Form should also include “Increase VMT” as well as “Increase GHG”.

**Provide a breakdown of how previous STIP funds were spent, and how they benefited underserved and overburdened communities.**

The 2014 SSTI noted a serious disconnect between California’s sustainability goals and transportation funding, stating, “Nor is Caltrans (or for that matter the agency or the CTC) a major player in ensuring the regions are moving toward lower VMT development, as envisioned in SB 375, even though much of the work done in the region is funded through state STIP monies.”<sup>2</sup> To help achieve our climate and equity goals, we believe the California Transportation Commission (CTC) can play an important role to increase transparency to better help the Legislature and public understand how the state and regions are spending their STIP funds. We recommend the CTC provide a breakdown of how the STIP funding is spent and how the funds are providing benefits to underserved and overburdened communities. This should breakdown should be provided in advance of the STIP adoption and the final project breakdown should be included in the CTC’s annual report to the Legislature.

The California Bicycle Coalition’s analysis<sup>3</sup> of RTIP from 2007-2016 shows that despite our sustainability goals, the regional share continues to be heavily dominated by programming on highway expansion (see Figure 1).

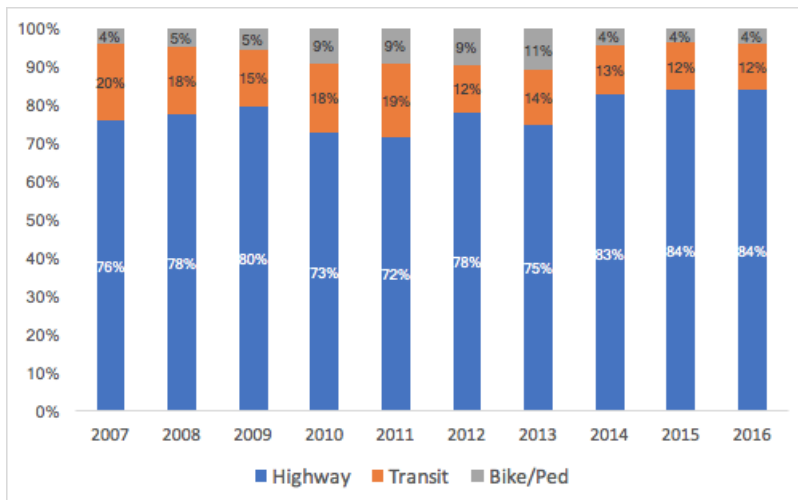


Figure 1: RTIP Programming by Mode, 2007-2016

<sup>2</sup> State Smart Transportation Initiative. (2014). The California Department of Transportation: SSTI Assessment and Recommendations. <http://www.dot.ca.gov/CIP/docs/SSTIReport.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Note that each of these years represents 5 years of spending, e.g., the 2007 figures represent the spending planned for 2007-2011. Data was summarized using the California Transportation Commission’s “Orange Books,” which are the STIP county share reports produced annually.

## **New chapter specifying the obligations of countywide Congestion Management Agencies (or County Transportation Agencies/Commissions).**

The Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs) are held by statute (Gov. Code sections 65088 et seq.) to significant requirements that, while they preceded SB 375, are congruent with its major objectives. The Congestion Management statute, like SB 375, emphasizes the need for better-coordinated planning<sup>4</sup> and, in particular, stresses the importance of ensuring that transportation investments support affordable housing production.<sup>5</sup>

The Congestion Management Program (CMP) statute specifically requires that countywide transportation agencies, in the adoption of their Congestion Management Programs that become the basis for the allocation of county shares of the RTIP, include:

- A “performance element” that “includes performance measures to evaluate current and future multimodal system performance for the movement of people and goods.” Those performance measures “shall support mobility, air quality, land use, and economic objectives, and shall be used in the development of the capital improvement program.” (Gov. Code § 65089 (b) (2).)
- A “program to analyze the impacts of land use decisions made by local jurisdictions on regional transportation systems, including an estimate of the costs associated with mitigating those impacts.” (Id., subd. (b) (4).)
- A “seven-year capital improvement program, developed using the performance measures described in paragraph (2) to determine effective projects that maintain or improve the performance of the multimodal system for the movement of people and goods ...” (Id., subd. (b) (5).)

We are aware of no source of guidance that the CTC provides on compliance with these important statutory requirements. This guidance is sorely needed and we recommend the CTC provide guidance in the Final 2018 STIP Guidelines. For instance, the performance-based project selection the statute requires is far from routine, and many county agencies fail to prioritize transit projects for RTIP funding, as seen above in Figure 1.

## **A clear commitment to provide direct benefits to underserved and overburdened communities while decreasing existing environmental, social, and other burdens.**

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<sup>4</sup> See Gov. Code § 65088 (b) (“California’s transportation system is characterized by fragmented planning”) & (d) (“all methods and means of transport between major destinations must be coordinated to connect our vital economic and population centers”).

<sup>5</sup> See Gov. Code § 65088 (f) (“rebuilding California’s cities and suburbs, particularly with affordable housing and more walkable neighborhoods, is an important part of accommodating future increases in the state’s population”) & (g) (“The Legislature intends to do everything within its power to remove regulatory barriers around the development of infill housing, transit-oriented development, and mixed use commercial development in order to reduce regional traffic congestion and provide more housing choices for all Californians”).

The Regional Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIPs) should ensure that our state transportation dollars provide direct benefits to underserved and overburdened communities while simultaneously mitigating existing and preventing any future environmental, social, and other burdens. The 2018 STIP Guidelines should align with other state transportation funds such as the Active Transportation Program and provide direct benefits to underserved and overburdened communities. Specifically, the Final 2018 STIP Guidelines should require the regions to do the following:

- Each region must specifically assess localized impacts in underserved and overburdened communities, evaluating benefits or costs for underserved and overburdened communities.
  - Page 21 in “Project descriptions” add “(h). A CalEnviroScreen map of the project area along with a description on how each project aligns with its region’s RTP goals on environmental justice, social equity, and Title VI requirements”.
- Prioritize projects that target community identified benefits to underserved and overburdened communities focused on improving accessibility and safety while reducing emissions of diesel particulates, greenhouse gases, and other pollutants and reducing other negative community impacts.
  - “Policies and Procedures Specific to the 2018 STIP”. 1) Under “Commission expectation and priorities” as part of new projects “in accordance with statewide climate and equity goals and directive”. 2) Add additional language under the mention of EO B-30-15 and other state transportation goals found in SB 99 and SB 350 that strive towards equity in transportation planning and investments.
  - Page 7-9 Section 19. Add approximate language above: 1) as a new sub-bullet E. on page 7; 2) modify sub-bullet C. to include “and social and economic impacts on underserved and overburdened communities”; 3) environmental justice criteria of performance in “A. Regional level performance evaluation”; 4) in the SCS section on page 9; and 5) a new paragraph below the SCS section where greater DAC priority equals greater performance.

In addition to the RTIPs, the Final 2018 STIP should take into account broader negative social equity impacts when assessing traffic congestion and highway expansion. Specifically, the Final 2018 STIP should include the following metrics:

- The inequity of higher-occupant vehicle (bus, van and carpool) passengers being delayed by traffic congestion caused by lower-occupant vehicle passengers who require 10 to 100 times more road space, and therefore the equity justification for parallel bus, train, and active transportation infrastructure projects.
- The inequity of reduced pedestrian and cycling safety and accessibility caused by wider roads, increased traffic speeds, reduced roadway connectivity and sprawled development. This indicates that there is an equity justification for favoring narrower roads, lower traffic speeds, and other pedestrian and cycling improvements.

- The regressivity of congestion reduction strategies that favor automobile travel over more affordable modes (walking, cycling and public transport) and therefore forces lower-income households to own more vehicles than they can afford.
- The harm that automobile-dependent transport systems have on underserved and overburdened communities.
- The performance measures in Section 19 and in Appendix B should be updated to add a measure of the percentage of STIP funds directed to communities most dependent on transit, biking and walking.

### **Enhance the guidance for regional agencies in determining the consistency of Congestion Management Plans (CMPs) with the Regional Transportation Plan.**

The Guidelines should do more to ensure that regional agency oversight of county-level decisions is robust. The draft includes a short section (sec. 29) on “Consistency with Land Use Plans and Congestion Management Programs.” It does not, however, specify the evaluation criteria that regional agencies should use in determining consistency, nor does it provide any guidance on when a county program should be found “inconsistent” with the RTP/SCS. We recommend expanding the Final 2018 STIP Guidelines to discuss at least three important dimensions of consistency:

- Consistency in achieving the RTP/SCS’s GHG-reduction target: CTC should specify that CMPs, or projects, that increase GHG emissions are not consistent with a compliant RTP/SCS.
- Consistency with achieving the housing goal of SB 375: CTC should specify that CMPs that do not demonstrate that they promote the land-use objectives of the RTP/SCS in general, and transit-oriented affordable housing development in particular, are not consistent.
- Consistency in ensuring civil rights and environmental justice compliance: Just as RTPs are required by federal law to undergo an “equity analysis,” so should CMPs.

### **Prioritize active transportation projects and leverage the oversubscribed Active Transportation Program.**

Given our state’s ambitious climate and equity goals, the 2018 STIP should prioritize sustainable transportation choices for funding. Active transportation projects should be prioritized in accordance with the state’s newly created State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (which seeks to triple biking and double walking by 2020 and reduce bicycle and pedestrian fatalities by 10 percent each year) and to meet state Complete Streets requirements.

Specifically, the Final 2018 STIP Guidelines should:

- Add under “Purpose and Authority” on page 1 a bullet stating “Advance state goals to ensure all transportation projects comply with the Complete Streets directive and to increase walking and biking rates and reduce walking and biking fatalities per the state’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
- All projects should be required to be in compliance with the state’s Complete Streets Deputy Directive 64-Revision 2. This requirement should be added into Section 19,

Section 25, and Section 61. A checkbox should also be added to the Project Programming Request (Appendix A) to indicate whether the project complies with the Complete Streets directive.

- The performance measures in Section 19 and in Appendix B should be updated to add a measure of the percentage of fatalities and serious injuries that are made up of people walking and biking.
- Regions that have applied (or that encompass jurisdictions or districts that have applied) to the Active Transportation Program, but that have not received funding due to the ATP being oversubscribed, should be encouraged to use STIP funds to advance those projects. Regions seeking STIP funding for ATP projects should include with their Project Fact sheet the ATP application reviewers scores/notes, so that CTC can determine whether the project in question was lacking merit, or simply refused because of oversubscription to the ATP.

### **Leverage economic benefits for low income communities through targeted training and hiring.**

With the passage of SB 1, there is now a foundation to direct economic opportunity created by transportation investments to low income communities experiencing high unemployment and poverty. As outlined in SB 1, the California Workforce Development Board will develop guidelines for pre-apprenticeship partnerships and investments, including the focus on recruiting people of color, disconnected youth, women, formerly incarcerated individuals, and other underrepresented groups into these programs and jobs. To fully realize these outcomes and build upon SB 1's intent to strengthen local and regional economies, the 2018 STIP Guidelines should encourage regions to:

- Partner with pre-apprenticeship training programs and other community workforce training entities that specifically work with the targeted populations identified in SB 1.
- Target employment opportunities to youth and young adults facing barriers to employment as identified in SB 1, by encouraging regions to develop projects that utilize workforce development and hiring strategies that are designed to achieve these outcomes such as:
  - Project labor agreements with targeted hire commitments,
  - Community workforce agreements,
  - High-road agreements,
  - Caltrans' Local Labor Hiring Program, and
  - "Earn-while-you-learn" models, and/or YouthBuild programs.

In closing, we thank you for your hard work on the STIP. We look forward to partnering with you to better align this program to our climate and equity goals.

Sincerely,

Chanell Fletcher, Associate Director  
ClimatePlan

Jonathan Matz, California Senior Policy Manager  
Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Richard Marcantonio, Managing Attorney  
Public Advocates Inc.

Jared Sanchez, Policy Associate  
California Bicycle Coalition

Angela Glover Blackwell, President and CEO  
PolicyLink

Matt Baker, Land Use and Conservation Policy Director  
Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS)

Howard Penn, President  
Planning and Conservation League

Tony Dang, Executive Director  
California Walks

Cc: Deputy Director Mitchell Weis, California Transportation Commission  
Deputy Director Eric Thronson, California Transportation Commission  
Executive Director Susan Bransen, California Transportation Commission  
Deputy Director Kate White, California State Transportation Agency  
Deputy Director Brian Annis, California State Transportation Agency  
Secretary Brian Kelly, California State Transportation Agency  
Deputy Director Ellen Greenberg, California Department of Transportation  
Director Malcolm Dougherty, California Department of Transportation  
Deputy Executive Officer Kurt Karperos, Air Resources Board  
Senior Advisor to the Chair Steve Cliff, Air Resources Board  
Chair Mary Nichols, Air Resources Board