



OBJECTIVE: The 2021 State and Federal Legislative Platform serves as the framework that will guide RCTC’s advocacy efforts for state and federal policy and funding decisions that enable Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) to: implement Measure A, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and adopted plans and programs; comply with state and federal requirements; and provide greater mobility, improved quality of life, operational excellence, and economic vitality in Riverside County.

RCTC’s State and Federal Legislative Platform offers positions on key policy issues which are likely to be the focus in the next legislative and congressional sessions.

Equity and Fairness

- Funding should be distributed equitably to Riverside County.
- Governance structures should give equitable voting and decision-making authority to Riverside County.
- Policies should be implemented recognizing regional variance by distinguishing high-growth regions for their impact on the economy, environment, and should be dynamic in order to address future population growth.
- Engage in policy discussions regarding the way public outreach and public meetings are conducted by public agencies.
- Ensure that rural, low income, and disadvantaged communities in Riverside County benefit from equity-based transportation planning and implementation policies.

Regional Control

- Project selection and planning authority for state/federal funds should be as local as possible, preferably in the hands of the Commission.
- State/federal rulemakings, administrative processes, program guidelines, and policy development activities should include meaningful collaboration from regional transportation agencies.
- Oppose efforts by non-transportation interests to assert control over transportation funding.
- Policies should be sensitive to each region’s unique needs and avoid “one size fits all” assumptions, over-reliance on one mode of transportation, and lack of distinction between urban, suburban, and rural needs.
- State/federal policies should align authority to select projects, manage performance, and should recognize state/federal mandates and responsibilities placed upon regional and local governments.

Protect Our Authority and Revenue

- Existing statutory authorities for the Commission should be preserved and protected.
- Oppose efforts to infringe on the Commission’s discretion in collecting and administering its revenue sources including, but not limited to: Measure A, tolls, and TUMF.
- Oppose efforts to place mandates on agencies which would drive up operating costs and thereby reduce the amount of funds available to deliver mobility improvements which could nullify RCTC priorities.
- Oppose efforts to remove or reduce tax exemption on municipal bond interest to avoid increased costs to finance projects.

- Support efforts to reinstate the ability to issue tax-exempt refunding of municipal bonds.
- Oppose legislation that restructures or interferes with governance of the Commission or other local and regional transportation agencies without the support and consent of the entity affected.
- Oppose legislation that amends procurement law in a manner that increases the Commission's exposure to litigation, costs, decreased private sector competition, conflicts of interest, or deviation from best practices.
- Support legislation that facilitates collection and remittance of sales taxes on e-commerce.
- Support efforts to preserve, stabilize, leverage and/or increase funding for transportation.
- Ensure the Commission receives maximum sales tax collections resulting from implementation the *Wayfair* Supreme Court Decision relative to state sales taxes on internet sales or any other change in policy.

Innovation

- Support the availability of project delivery tools such as design-build, construction manager/general contractor, and public-private partnerships to the Commission, the State, federal agencies, and other infrastructure agencies. Oppose efforts to add barriers to effective implementation of such tools.
- Support implementation and expansion of U.S. Department of Transportation initiatives to expedite and advance innovative transportation policies.

Project Delivery Streamlining

- Support all efforts to reduce project delivery timelines while maintaining important environmental protections.
- Support reciprocity of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA).
- Support removing the statutory sunset on the NEPA Assignment program California participates in with the Federal Highway Administration which continues to benefit Commission projects.
- Support the continuation and enhancement of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) reforms to accelerate project delivery in future surface transportation legislation including, but not limited to, the creation of a single NEPA document for all federal agencies; NEPA reciprocity; expediting and improving the federal permitting review process; and narrowing concurrence requirements.
- Engage with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and United States Department of Transportation to allow the State and the Commission to participate in the NEPA reciprocity pilot program.
- Support further efforts to streamline the federal environmental project approval processes and provide flexibility to meet planning requirements due to changing circumstances.
- Support creation of a low-interest loan program to support habitat conservation plans that mitigate the impacts of transportation infrastructure and make project approvals more efficient.
- Support efforts to modernize the CEQA, including but not limited to:
 - Reduce the Commission's exposure to litigation;
 - Increase accountability and disclosure for plaintiffs in CEQA cases;
 - Limit courts' ability to invalidate an entire CEQA document when a writ of mandate can resolve discreet issues;
 - Exempt illegal actions from CEQA review; and
 - Prohibit "document dumping".

Accountability

- Revenue derived from transportation sources should be spent exclusively on planning, development, and implementation of transportation projects. Support measures to strengthen the relationship between transportation revenue and expenditures; oppose measures that weaken them.
- Support efforts to ensure that all projects in a voter-approved tax measure are delivered to the public.
- Encourage the adoption of on time, balanced state budgets, and federal appropriation and authorization legislation to ensure transportation projects are delivered without delay or costly stoppages, and that adequate planning for future projects can take place.
- Promote policies that ensure state and federal agencies have adequate funding in order to be responsive and accountable to Commission concerns when working on Commission projects.
- Oppose efforts by non-elected, regulatory bodies to dilute, reduce, or withhold transportation funds.
- Support maximum transparency by funding agencies in revealing scoring and evaluation of funding requests.

Alignment of Responsibilities

- Support strong collaborative partnerships with state and federal agencies.
- Support policies that reflect and recognize self-help counties' funding contribution to transportation projects in California. Oppose policies that give outsized weight to minority funding partners.
- Advocate that Cap-and-Trade revenues be expended in a manner that enables regions to meet greenhouse gas reduction goals in SB 375, AB 32, and SB 32.
- Support policies that provide decision-making authority and flexibility to agencies bearing financial risk for projects. Oppose policies that place unfunded mandates and other undue burdens and restrictions on agencies that bear financial risk for projects.
- Support efforts by the state and federal governments to improve maintenance and operations of the state highway and interstate systems. Oppose efforts to realign maintenance and operations costs and responsibilities to local or regional agencies.
- Oppose efforts by the state legislature to deflect responsibility for voting on revenue for statewide transportation to local voters.

Alternatives to Driving

Ridesharing

- Support incentives to employers that enhance or create transit reimbursement or ridesharing programs.
- Oppose new mandates on employers or transportation agencies that would result in disruption of the Commission's ridesharing program.
- Support programs and policies that invest in and foster new technologies that promote ridesharing, traffic information, and commuter assistance.
- Support regional cooperation toward establishing transportation data standards and technological integrations.

Active Transportation

- Support maximum regional control of project selection for funding of active transportation projects.

Transit and Rail

- Support incentives for transit agencies that utilize alternative fuels.
- Support inclusion and prioritization of Coachella Valley-San Geronio Pass Rail service in the California State Rail Plan and other state planning and funding efforts.
- Support legislation to better enable the Coachella Valley-San Geronio Pass Rail service to become part of California's intercity rail network, such as legislation to allow intercity rail joint powers authorities to expand their service areas.
- Advocate for expeditious reviews and approvals for greenhouse-gas-reducing rail and transit projects.
- Support efforts to provide an equitable share of funding to West Coast intercity rail systems as compared to the Northeast Corridor.
- Support Metrolink's policy and funding needs with regard to implementation of positive train control and other rail safety items.
- Support Metrolink's SCORE implementation and encourage early SCORE investments in Riverside County.
- Support efforts to prioritize high-speed rail funding for connectivity improvements to existing transit systems and infrastructure in California's urban areas. In particular, support all efforts to ensure that funding is provided as soon as possible to projects included in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA), the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and the Commission.
- Ensure that the Commission's rights and interests in passenger rail in Southern California are properly respected in state, federal, and regional plans and policies. Support all transit operators in Riverside County with legislative concerns impacting the operators' funding and operations.
- Support efforts to provide for streamlined project delivery for transit projects in Riverside County that fulfill the goals of AB 32 and SB 375, as well as other state and federal air quality mandates and mobility performance measures.
- Support integration of public transportation systems in southern California.
- Support additional funding for specialized transit programs within state and federal programs.
- Support funding for vanpool and micro-transit programs, as well as efforts to classify these programs as transit operations/transit operators within state and federal programs.
- Support efforts to provide flexibility of funding between capital and operating budgets from state/federal programs for transit agencies.
- Oppose additional zero-emission bus transit unfunded mandates that would negatively impact the operating budgets of transit agencies.
- Advocate for additional and more flexible state funding sources from the Cap-and-Trade Program.
- Support efforts to reevaluate transit performance measures in state and federal law.

Teleworking/Remote Working

- Engage in policy discussions that utilize teleworking as a method to reduce traffic congestion and improve local economic and public health by permanently increasing the number of Riverside County residents who telecommute or work remotely.

Tolling and Managed Lanes

- Support legislation that enhances the full and accurate capture of toll revenues, to protect the Commission's debt and congestion management obligations.
- Support legislation that authorizes toll agencies to pilot or deploy new technology to improve toll operations and mobility.
- Engage in legislation regarding privacy laws to ensure an appropriate balance between customer privacy, public safety, financial obligation, and practical operations is reasonably met.
- Oppose legislation increasing the type and/or number of vehicles subject to free or reduced toll rates, to protect the Commission's debt and congestion management obligations, and to reduce operational costs and complexity.
- Engage in policy discussions that may involve legislation or regulatory efforts that add statutory barriers to expanding the use or expansion of tolling.
- Oppose policies that would dictate, limit use of, or create onerous requirements for utilizing surplus toll revenue.
- Engage in legislation and monitor administrative policies relating to interoperability of tolled facilities statewide and nationally, in order to ensure technical feasibility, efficient and effective operations, cost reasonableness, and customer satisfaction.
- Support increased enforcement of managed lanes for improved travel time reliability and effective operation of express bus service.
- Support policies that support the role of pricing and managed lanes as an integral part of multi-modal corridor mobility and achieving environmental goals.
- Support initiatives and research that demonstrate air quality, VMT, and economic benefits of toll and managed lanes.
- Support additional Transportation Infrastructure Financing and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program flexibilities.

Goods Movement

- Policies should recognize the impact of goods movement from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and the U.S.-Mexico border on Riverside County.
- Support Congressional action to continue dedicated funding for goods movement projects, inasmuch as the funding source:
 - Has a nexus to the user;
 - Does not reduce funding to existing highway and transit programs;
 - Provides funding to California, and Southern California in particular, commensurate with this region and state's significance to interstate goods movement; and
 - Can be spent on grade separation projects.
- Provide input to the National Freight Advisory Committee and California State Freight Advisory Committee.
- Advocate for accurate representation of Riverside County in the Primary Freight Network or other national or statewide freight route designations.
- Advocate for freight funding from state and federal sources to be distributed based on a bottoms-up regional consensus, in consultation with state and federal freight plans.
- Oppose increasing the capacity or intensity of freight movement in and near Riverside County without commensurate mitigation of impacts.
- Support legislation to ensure that the Commission is eligible to seek federal goods movement and freight program discretionary grant funding.

- Oppose policies that restrict the ability to deliver goods movement enhancements due to application of SB 743.

Environment

- Support a greater share of state greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction funds toward transportation investments to address the transportation sector's share of GHG emissions.
- Ensure criteria for defining disadvantaged communities and environmental justice areas of concern accurately represent Riverside County and enable the region to compete for funding.
- Support the simplification of SB 743 VMT modeling and analysis for capacity increasing highway projects.
- Support efforts that allow transportation agencies to receive retroactive credit for VMT reducing projects that have been recently delivered or are planned in their delivery plans.
- Support efforts or initiatives that limit the liability of transportation projects for long-term conservation or mitigation.
- Support efforts to increase the number of highway related improvements that qualify for Categorical Exclusions and Exemptions while remaining sensitive to environmental impacts.
- Support efforts or initiatives that expedite the approval of Habitat Conservation Plans or Special Area Management Plans for transportation projects.
- Oppose efforts to place new environmental criteria (such as GHG reduction or vehicle miles traveled reduction) on transportation projects and programs without commensurate funding for alternatives or mitigations. Oppose legislation to authorize a multicounty revenue measure for environmental programs if the measure is not required to: (1) provide equitable funding to Riverside County, and (-2) be developed through formal consultation with the Commission before and after passage, and (3) involve the Commission in expenditure of funds within Riverside County related to transportation projects, programs, and services; or if such a measure would negatively impact the Commission's ability to achieve voter approval of local transportation revenue.

Projects

- Support programs and policies that advantage transportation projects in Riverside County, including, but not limited to:
 - Measure A-funded projects
 - Grade separations
 - Transit capital projects and operations by regional and municipal transit agencies
 - Commuter rail capital projects and operations
 - Intercity Rail Service to the Coachella Valley and San Geronio Pass
 - Local streets and road projects sponsored by the county and municipalities
 - Active transportation projects
 - Expansion and rehabilitation of the state highway system
 - Interchanges
 - Safety enhancements
 - Mitigation of the impacts of goods movement
 - Connectivity to high-speed rail
 - Connectivity to commercial airports
 - Tolled express lanes, tolled highways, and related infrastructure and technology
 - Projects included in the Traffic Relief Plan adopted in May 2020
 - Technology projects that manage freeway operations
- Oppose policies that inhibit the efficient, timely delivery of such projects.

- Support implementation of projects in other counties that are contained in the Southern California Association of Governments RTP/Sustainable Communities Strategy when requested by other counties and not in conflict with the Commission’s interests.

Funding

- Support continued testing and analysis of California’s road charge pilot program as a potential replacement of the state motor fuels excise tax as the primary funding mechanism for transportation and ensure that both urban, suburban, and rural communities are treated in an equitable manner.
- Encourage the federal government to authorize a program to test and analyze a pilot program to explore potential replacement mechanisms for the federal gasoline excise tax.
- Support all efforts to maintain, at the very least, level state/federal funding for transportation programs.
- Support re-dedication of California truck weight fees to transportation accounts.
- Monitor legislation relating to tax collection for impacts on Measure A revenues or administration fees.
- Support maximizing Commission flexibility and discretion over funding decisions.
- Funding sources should be discretionary and distributed by population share to facilitate expeditious project delivery and expenditure of funds.
- Support maintaining the legislative intent behind Senate Bill 1 (Statutes 2017) and historic base program funding, by:
 - Opposing efforts to tie distribution of transportation funding to ancillary policy matters, such as housing.
 - Supporting efforts to adjust formula allocations to maximize funding decisions being made as locally as possible.
 - Ensuring program guidelines are as broad as possible with respect to mode, to the extent appropriate while adhering to legislative intent.

Regional Partnerships

- Collaborate with regional transportation agencies to impact transportation funding and regulatory policies to bring equity and fairness to the Inland Empire region.
- Collaborate with public and private sector stakeholders on policy and funding matters that enhance economic development and quality of life in the Inland Empire region.
- Engage in legislative efforts impacting regional transportation agencies, particularly when the efforts have a nexus to the Commission.