



**Santa Cruz County  
Regional Transportation Commission  
2017 STATE Legislative Program**

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**Address Transportation Funding Shortfalls**

- **Restore and Stabilize Funding:** Support legislation and other efforts to restore, increase and stabilize funding for transit, local streets and roads, and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) projects.
  - Protect all current and future taxes and fees and other transportation funds (including Highway Users Tax Account (HUTA), transit, and regional funds) from elimination or diversion to other State programs, General Fund loans, general obligation bond debt service, or to other non-transportation purposes.
  - Restore the price-based excise tax to at least 18-cents per gallon and eliminate annual downward adjustments.
  - Restore, protect, and expand the funding and decision-making role of local and regional agencies, rather than the State making top-down funding decisions that are not community-based.
  - Restore State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) county-shares. Over \$9 million in past county shares need to be restored to the Santa Cruz County region and new stable funding is needed to address multimodal regional transportation priorities.
  
- **Increase State Funding for All Transportation Modes:**

State investments have not kept pace with the demand and cost to maintain and operate California's transportation system. Immediate and long-term sustainable solutions are needed.

  - **Immediate measures:** Support measures that immediately increase funds for transportation, including but not limited to a comprehensive transportation funding package and other measures which: index and increase state gas and diesel taxes; new transportation bonds, if debt repayments do not negatively impact other transportation programs; new vehicle license and/or vehicle registration fees; increased state funds for the Freeway Service Patrol program.
  - **New funding systems:** Phase in new funding systems which are tied to system use, rather than fuel consumption or fuel prices. May include new user fees, such as a Road User Charge or Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) fee and other alternative funding mechanisms.
  - **Redirect and Increase Weight Fees:** Restore approximately \$1 billion per year in truck weight fees that have been diverted to pay for General Fund bond debt obligations, and restore all the of the price-based gas tax to STIP and Local Streets and Roads.
  - **Cap & Trade:**
    - Increase percent of Cap & Trade revenues allocated to transportation projects and programs that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Santa Cruz County.
    - Broaden the definition of "disadvantaged communities" to ensure areas in Santa Cruz County that are recognized as such under most understandings of the term are not excluded from the definition used for the Cap and Trade program.

- **Support options to replace the loss of redevelopment funding**, to support economic development and affordable housing consistent with sustainable community strategies.
- **Distribution:** For any statewide or federal revenues, ensure a strong role for regional agencies in planning and determining transportation investment priorities; ensure funds are available for projects in Santa Cruz County, are distributed equitably, and are not disproportionately distributed to large regions.
- **STA:** Ensure that any new State Transit Assistance (STA) formulas do not diminish revenues to Santa Cruz County which are needed to operate and maintain the local transit network.
- **Support multimodal transportation system:** Support legislation that increases funding for and supports implementation of complete streets, active transportation bike, pedestrian, transit projects, transit-oriented development, and specialized transportation for seniors and people with disabilities in Santa Cruz County.
- **Electrification** of vehicle fleets: Support funding and coordination, including policy, planning, and infrastructure, for vehicle electrification. Support improved utility pricing for public transit fleets.
- **Expand local revenue-raising opportunities** and innovative financing options to address the significant backlog of transportation needs. Provide locals with the ability to supplement and leverage state funding for investments that protect state and local transportation assets
  - **Expand the authority of the RTC and local entities to increase taxes and fees** for transportation projects, including new gas taxes and vehicle registration fees.
  - Support clarifying amendment to Government Code Section 65089.20 that will give RTPAs equal treatment with Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs) to seek voter approval for a local vehicle registration fee. *(SB83 cleanup)*
  - **Lower Vote Threshold:** Support efforts to amend the California constitution to lower the voter threshold for local transportation funding measures, such as local sales tax or vehicle registration fee ballot measures, from the 2/3 supermajority to a simple majority or 55% vote.
- **Support measures and programs that improve transportation safety:** Includes support for commercial driver, bus driver, motorist, bicyclist, safe routes to schools training programs which reduce collisions.
- **Increase and Preserve Funding for Priority Projects in Santa Cruz County:**
  - Projects on Highway 1
  - Local Street and Roadway Preservation
  - Transit projects
  - Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line
  - Bicycle and Pedestrian facilities, including the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST)

## **Project Implementation**

- **Streamlining & Expediting:**  
Support legislation and other efforts that modernize and accelerate project delivery and the creation of jobs. Support delegation of National Environmental Policy Act review and fund allocation responsibilities to Caltrans, environmental streamlining measures for bike, pedestrian, transit, and infrastructure preservation within existing public rights of way, and other measures that expedite project delivery.

- **Advanced Mitigation:** Support implementation of “advanced mitigation” environmental programs, including approving up-front environmental mitigation funding for projects, such as the Highway 17 Wildlife Crossing.
- **FAST Act Implementation:** Support legislation and administrative strategies to implement the FAST federal authorization bill, in a way that ensures the best possible outcome for transportation projects in Santa Cruz County.
- **SHOPP Program:** Support Caltrans’ efforts to provide more outreach regarding State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) projects and to include measureable targets for improving the state highway system. Support clarification of existing laws to permit the expenditure of SHOPP funds for operational projects on state highways.

Support inclusion of complete streets within SHOPP projects, as appropriate, but especially in areas where state highways serve as main streets, such as Highway 9 and Highway 152 in Santa Cruz County.

- **Encroachments**  
Support legislation that clarifies the authority under which rail property owners may remove, or by notice may require the removal of encroachments.
- **Active Transportation Facilities:**  
Support modification to rules, regulations, and government codes that will make roadways more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly, including laws associated with sharing the road; ensuring complete streets components (e.g. accessible pedestrian signals) are considered during the design of all projects; increasing funds for pedestrian safety countermeasures; providing additional direction and consistency for accessible pedestrian design.
- **SB 743 Implementation:** Ensure SB743 (Steinberg, 2013) implementation supports infill development and expedites transportation project delivery.
- **Administrative:** Allow advance payment of planning, programming, and monitoring (PPM) and other program funds, in order to resolve cash flow challenges faced especially by small regional agencies, including the RTC.
- **Unfunded Mandates:** Oppose unfunded mandates and seek funding for mandates imposed in recent years. Require new regulatory proposals to include an estimate of the cost and impact such proposals will have in the delivery of California’s transportation program.
- **Commuter Programs:** Expand statutory authority for regions statewide to adopt and implement a regional commuter benefits ordinance similar to the successful program in the Bay Area.