

EO N-19-19 Transportation Action Plan: Discussion Draft

Background

On September 20th 2019, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order (EO) N-19-19 which calls for actions from multiple state agencies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change. This includes a direct acknowledgement of the role the transportation sector must play in tackling climate change. The order states:

“California has ambitious and essential climate goals to transition to a healthier, more sustainable and more inclusive economy, including reducing GHGs 40% below 1990 levels by 2030...California has made substantial, measurable progress on our goals, but in recent years, direct tailpipe emissions from cars, ships, diesel trains, airplanes, and other transportation sources have remained a stubborn driver of greenhouse gas emissions, totaling 40.1 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions statewide.”

To further the State's climate goals, EO N-19-19 directs the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) to leverage discretionary state transportation funds to reduce GHG emissions in the transportation sector and adapt to climate change. The Executive Order directs CalSTA to align transportation spending with the State's Climate Change Scoping Plan where feasible; direct investments to strategically support smart growth to increase infill housing production; reduce congestion through strategies that encourage a reduction in driving and invest further in walking, biking, and transit; and ensure that overall transportation costs for low income Californians do not increase as a result of these policies.

Since the release of the EO, much has changed in California and across the world. California now finds itself in a recession and a pandemic, both of which have significantly impacted transportation system needs and funding. Amongst all the uncertainty, given that transportation can be a key economic recovery and stimulus tool, this Action Plan leads with a vision on how to prioritize future state transportation dollars—whether it be existing programs or future funding opportunities—for economic and community resilience and recovery. CalSTA acknowledges that the current COVID-19 crisis is a fluid situation and will continue to evaluate assumptions and strategies as we develop this Action Plan.

Implementation of this Action Plan is scheduled to begin upon finalization of the plan in early 2021.

Vision and Goals of the Transportation System

The draft California Transportation Plan (CTP) 2050 clearly articulates the overarching goals for our state's future transportation system. This Action Plan will chart a path on how to work towards these CTP goals in a manner that furthers our ability to meet state climate change mandates, targets, and policies, through the levers described in the EO. The CTP goals are listed in the graphic below.



Fundamental to this vision is a continued commitment to a “fix-it-first” approach to our transportation system—ensuring the continued maintenance and repair of transportation infrastructure necessary to serve communities and support the state’s goals.

Investment Strategies to Reduce Emissions & Prepare for Climate Change

EO N-19-19 directs CalSTA to leverage state funding programs where the State plays a role in scoping, recommending, or selecting specific projects to further the implementation of this transportation vision. These specific funding programs are as follows:

- Active Transportation Program (ATP)
- Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP)
- Local Partnerships Program (LPP)
- Solutions for Congested Corridors (SCCP)
- State Highway Operations & Protection Program (SHOPP)
- Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP)
- Transit & Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP)

Although California's statewide transportation funding programs have different statutory aims and invest in different types of infrastructure, collectively they can help us work towards our transportation vision. Understanding that there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach to meeting our vision across the state's diverse communities, a range of investment strategies are needed to reach the outcomes outlined in the draft CTP 2050. These investment strategies will work to reduce our dependence on driving, increase multi-modal options for all communities, and equitably meet our climate goals. In turn, these programs should collectively focus on prioritizing projects that align with the following investment strategies, as applicable within their existing program intent.

State investments should deploy the following strategies, as applicable:

1. **Reduce public health harms and maximize benefits to disproportionately impacted** disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, and communities of color, in urbanized and rural regions and involve these communities early in decision-making. Investments should also avoid placing new or exacerbating existing substantial burdens on communities, even if unintentional.
2. **Make safety improvements to reduce fatalities and severe injuries of all users towards zero** on our roadways and transit systems by focusing on context-appropriate speeds, prioritizing vulnerable user safety to support mode shift, and ultimately implementing a safe systems approach.
3. **Assess physical climate risk** as standard practice for transportation infrastructure projects to enable informed decision making, especially in communities that are most vulnerable to climate risks.
4. **Champion projects that do not increase passenger vehicle travel**, particularly in urbanized settings where other mobility options can be provided. Consistent with SB743, projects should aim to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and not induce significant VMT growth. When addressing congestion, prioritize alternatives over highway capacity expansion, favoring approaches such as providing multimodal options in the corridor, employing demand management strategies (i.e. pricing), and using technology to optimize operations.
5. **Build towards an integrated, statewide rail and transit network**, centered around the existing California State Rail Plan that leverages the California Integrated Travel Program to provide seamless, affordable, multimodal interregional travel options to all.
6. **Promote compact infill development while protecting residents and businesses from displacement** by supporting transportation projects that support housing for low income residents near job centers, provide walkable communities, and address affordability to reduce the housing-transportation cost burden and reduce auto trips.
7. **Progress developing a zero-emission freight transportation system** that avoids and mitigates environmental justice impacts, reduces criteria and toxic air pollutants, improves freight's economic competitiveness and efficiency, and integrates multimodal design and planning into infrastructure development on freight corridors.
8. **Incorporate safe and accessible bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure** on portions of the State Highway System that intersect active transportation networks, provide accessibility for transit users, or serve as small town or rural main streets, particularly in low income and disadvantaged communities across the state.
9. **Include investments in light, medium, and heavy-duty zero-emission-vehicle (ZEV) infrastructure** or supportive infrastructure as part of larger transportation projects. Support the innovation in and development of the ZEV market and help ensure ZEVs are accessible to all, particularly to those in more rural or remote communities.
10. **Protect natural and working lands** from conversion to more intensified uses by supporting local and regional conservation planning that focuses development where it already exists to help retain carbon sequestration benefits.

Necessary Actions to Support Climate Investment Strategies

To ensure investments are made in ways that align with the aforementioned strategies, changes may be necessary to transportation planning, programming, project delivery, maintenance, and operations. Such changes will help advance a slate of projects that meet climate goals, ensure that these projects are prioritized for state funding, and promote project construction and operations that minimize emissions and impacts from climate change. Many of the necessary changes are currently underway, but additional efforts may be needed. This Action Plan identifies those existing and additional actions necessary for implementation of the EO. Once this plan is adopted, implementation of the actions will be led by the various responsible state agencies, on the noted timeline, as listed in the matrix below.

These actions are:

(Insert Actions Matrix Here)

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