

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	April 30, 2026
SUBJECT:	Hold Workshop on the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS)
AGENDA ITEM:	4
STAFF CONTACT:	Michael Kuker, CNU-A, Senior Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

Every four years the Regional Transportation Plan must be updated for the region to be eligible for federal and state transportation funding. Staff has begun work on the Shasta 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS). A workshop has been prepared to help explain the purpose of the RTP/SCS, kick off the start of the next update, present an outline of activities for the next two years, and receive input on the draft updates to the RTP/SCS goals.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the SRTA Board of Directors hold a workshop and receive a presentation from Senior Transportation Planner Michael Kuker, CNU-A, regarding the next update of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS) planning effort.

DISCUSSION:

Background – Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) were created by the federal government in the early 1960s during a time of heavy transportation investment to ensure existing and future expenditures of federal funds for transportation projects and programs are based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive ("3-C") planning process. As of the 1980 Census, the Redding urbanized area reached the population threshold (50,000 persons) to require a regional MPO in order to receive federal transportation funds, and SRTA fulfills that role. One of SRTA's primary MPO functions is to develop a regional transportation with a minimum 20-year planning horizon.

The purpose of an RTP is to "encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of a regional intermodal transportation system that, when linked with appropriate land use planning, will serve the mobility needs of goods and people." The RTP is updated every four years in collaboration with local, state, and federal partners. With limited exceptions, transportation projects must be included in the RTP to be eligible for federal and state funding. A programmatic environmental impact report (EIR) is prepared alongside the RTP in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Federal law describes development of an RTP as containing the following components:

- Identify policies, strategies, and projects for the future;
- Determine demand for transportation services over 20 years;
- Focus at the systems level, including roadways, transit, non-motorized transportation, and intermodal connections;

- Articulate regional land use, development, housing, and employment goals and plans;
- Estimate costs and identify reasonably available financial sources for operation, maintenance, and capital investments;
- Determine ways to preserve existing roads and facilities and make efficient use of the existing system; and
- Be consistent with the Statewide transportation plan.

In addition to federal regulation, there are also California statutes relating to the development of the RTP. State-required elements of the RTP include:

- A policy element that describes the transportation issues in the region, identifies and quantifies regional needs in light of population, housing, and employment projections, and describes the desired short-range and long-range transportation goals, and pragmatic objective and policy statements;
- An action element that describes the short- and long-term programs and actions necessary to implement the plan and assigns implementation responsibilities during the 20-year or greater life of the plan;
- A financial element that summarizes the cost of plan implementation constrained to a realistic projection of available revenues; and
- A SCS that uses the most recent planning assumptions considering local general plans and other factors to, among other things, propose how the region will meet its on-road greenhouse gas reduction requirements pertaining to light-duty vehicles.

Sustainable Communities Strategies – The SCS component was added to the RTP following the passage of SB 375 in 2008 and was first included in SRTA’s 2015 RTP/SCS. MPOs must work with local land use authorities and other regional partners to evaluate regional land uses, housing needs, and resource areas and farmlands, in conjunction with regional transportation needs in the RTP. A SCS must:

- Identify the general location of uses, residential densities, and building intensities.
- Consider state housing goals and identify areas sufficient to house the region’s population, including all economic segments of the population identified in the Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA), over the 20-year RTP planning horizon.
- Identify a transportation network to service the transportation needs of the region.
- Gather and consider the best practically available scientific information regarding resource areas and farmland in the region.
- Identify a forecasted development pattern for the region, which, when integrated with the transportation network, and other transportation measures and policies, will reduce the GHG emissions from automobiles and light trucks to achieve the region’s GHG emission reduction targets.
- Allow the RTP to comply with the federal Clean Air Act.

Planned Shasta 2050 RTP/SCS Schedule – The next RTP/SCS update is currently underway. It typically takes 18–24 months to prepare the RTP/SCS and accompanying EIR, which will be presented to the board of directors in stages (see Attachment A for schedule) for review and approval:

- 2026 Q2: Review/Approve RTP goals and objectives

- 2026 Q3: Review/Approve SCS strategies
- 2027 Q2: Review draft documents and hold public hearing
- 2027 Q4: Hold second public hearing and adopt final plan

Performance-based Planning and Safe Systems Approach – Both federal and state partners are requiring a renewed emphasis on performance-based planning (PBP)—a strategic, data-driven approach to transportation decision-making that enables transportation planning agencies to efficiently allocate resources, maximize return on investments, and achieve desired performance outcomes while increasing accountability and transparency to the public. Federal and state agencies are increasingly asking grant applicants to demonstrate how proposed projects will help achieve the region’s respective federal or state transportation performance targets. With the imminent launch of the Shasta Planning Data Dashboard, SRTA will be prepared to more strongly implement this approach. Staff is reviewing what additional information needs to be added to the RTP project lists to demonstrate how projects help achieve transportation performance metrics and align with programming efforts.

Additionally, both the FHWA and Caltrans are recognizing the Safe Systems Approach (SSA) as an effective way to address and mitigate the risks inherent in our enormous and complex transportation system. A SSA seeks to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries by building and reinforcing multiple layers of protection to both prevent crashes from happening in the first place and minimize the harm caused to those involved when crashes do occur.

Workshop Focus Topic: Updated RTP Goals and Objectives – Due to renewed federal and state focus on performance-based planning and a Safe Systems Approach, staff is proposing an iterative update of the RTP to better align with best planning practices and for improved clarity. The first of these changes is a new naming convention to better convey the plan’s long-term planning horizon. The tag “Connecting people, places, and possibilities” will be used to help increase awareness of the plan’s purpose.

The 2024 RTP Guidelines for MPOs state “RTPs are developed to provide a clear vision of the regional transportation goals, objectives, and strategies.” In other words, these are three unique concepts. Ideally, goals should reflect the regional vision and can be thought of as broad purposes or general outcomes we wish to accomplish. Goals are often not quantifiable, but objectives usually are. Objectives typically describe in general terms how we are going to meet our goals, and strategies are more specific versions of objectives. For example, an objective might be “reduce fatalities and serious injuries” where a strategy might be “implement safety projects on ‘x miles’ of high-risk corridors within 10 years.”

The currently adopted regional vision and goals can be found in the 2022 RTP/SCS (<https://www.srta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9214>) on pages 50–53 (Attachment B), respectively and are largely unchanged from SRTA’s original 2015 RTP/SCS. While benchmarking the practices of other California MPOs, staff discovered many have fewer goals that are stated more plainly. Many items listed as goals in the policy section of SRTA’s 2022 RTP are more accurately objectives or

strategies, and are being reorganized accordingly. In the interest of brevity and clarity, staff proposes the goals be revised into four “themes” in the Shasta 2050 RTP/SCS as follows:

- **Connecting:** A seamless and reliable multimodal transportation network
- **People:** That provides safe and efficient options for all
- **Places:** Connecting livable, healthy, and vibrant communities
- **Possibilities:** While enhancing regional economic opportunity, prosperity, and sustainability

Each goal in the policy section will have multiple objectives and strategies, and at least one (often more) metric to measure progress. Some of these will be federal or state required measures; others may be unique to our region.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may ask for more information, request items come back at a future board meeting, or postpone the workshop.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

SRTA will be collaborating with local Tribes, local jurisdictions, Caltrans, federal agencies, federal land management agencies, and other regional partners throughout the RTP/SCS update.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Work on the RTP/SCS is programmed in Work Element 701.01 of SRTA’s Overall Work Program and funds come from a variety of federal and state planning funds. Having an updated and current RTP/SCS is crucial for transportation projects to be eligible for federal and state formula funding and competitive grants.



Sean Tiedgen, AICP, Executive Director

Attachments:

A: Planned Shasta 2050 RTP/SCS Development Schedule

B: 2022 Regional Transportation Plan Vision and Goals (pages 50–53)

Attachment A

Shasta 2050 Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategies Development Schedule

“Connecting people, places, and possibilities.”

	Calendar Year (CY) 2026				CY 2027			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Staff / Consultant Actions	Begin updating RTP/SCS document.	Initiate project list updates with regional partners. Continue updating RTP/SCS document.	Project list updates completed. Begin major work on EIR. Draft scenario alternatives for public input.	Finalize technical methodology with CARB.	Ongoing work	Ongoing work	Hold public workshop and 55-day comment period. Incorporate public and board feedback.	Present final draft to board. Submit adopted RTP/SCS to federal and state partners. Finalize travel model data.
Board Actions		Receive workshop on RTP/SCS and proposed revisions. Receive additional workshop on SCS strategies.	Approve SCS strategies.			Hold public hearing and review draft RTP/SCS and EIR.		Hold final public hearing and adopt RTP/SCS and EIR. Adopt new travel model.

Regional Transportation Policy and Action Plan

The RTP is a technical analysis of mobility issues and potential solutions viewed through the lens of community values and priorities. The path forward is expressed as a regional vision with accompanying goals, objectives, and strategies.

- A vision defines an organization's purpose. It represents an aspirational, if not idealized, view of the future.
- Goals are broad statements that describe a desired product or result toward which efforts are focused. They are coordinated to support and reinforce one another.
- Objectives are quantifiable, measurable outcomes in support of goals.
- Strategies represent a course of action. They include specific activities designed to accomplish stated objectives.

Regional Vision and Policies

SRTA will meet the region's evolving mobility needs and generally avoid traffic congestion and other growth-related pitfalls commonly observed in larger metropolitan regions. This will be accomplished through strategic and timely transportation system improvements; the integration of travel options into a seamless network; and collaborative effort toward transportation-efficient land use patterns where it is most beneficial. Where appropriate, SRTA will utilize its unique regional role and resources to take the lead on transformative projects aligned with the regional vision.

SRTA acknowledges that its efforts are intertwined with regional prosperity, environmental quality, community health and well-being, and various other elements that collectively define quality of life, and will use regional transportation planning, policy-making, and project programming to lead the development of projects that yield multiple community benefits. Planning and decision-making processes shall engage partner agencies, community stakeholders, and the public, and be transparent and responsive to documented community values and priorities.

To accomplish the regional vision, the following nine goals have been identified, each having objectives and a range of implementation strategies.

2022-2042 Regional Goals	How do we plan to do it?
Keep people and freight moving safely, efficiently, and effectively	Identify, explore, evaluate, and implement proven best practices and innovative approaches that are consistent with local, regional, state, and federal goals and priorities. Work with regional partners to design projects that are flexible and maximize state and federal funding opportunities.
Optimize the use of existing interregional and regionally significant roadways to prolong functionality and maximize return-on-investment	Work with regional partners to proactively maintain interregional and regionally significant roadways in a manner that balances cost and facility lifecycle. Identify and evaluate alternate configurations that may be more effective and efficient at meeting local, regional, state, and federal goals and priorities.
Strengthen Performance-Based Planning and Programming	Develop a regional data and performance plan scaled appropriately to regional resources and capabilities. Key elements include: 1) performance metrics and methodology; 2) performance target setting; and 3) a performance tracking and reporting strategy. Develop and implement Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) strategies as required by California Senate Bill 375. Track and report activities to the California Air Resources Board consistent with state guidelines and requirements. Regional funding programs may be updated periodically for board of directors' approval.
Strengthen regional economic sustainability and competitiveness to help support long-term prosperity	Work with regional partners to facilitate sustainable economic development programs and projects. Work with regional partners to identify opportunities to reduce transportation-related barriers to increased economic activity and productivity.
Integrate multimodal options via a 'one system' network of infrastructure, services, programs, and technologies	Connect regional activity centers and disadvantaged communities via a single, coordinated multimodal strategy that works together to meet the complete, origin-to-destination mobility needs of residents. Link regional funding programs, grant applications, and other activities for implementation.
Help encourage transportation-efficient growth and development where it is supported by current or planned mobility options	Reevaluate the 'Regional Infill & Redevelopment Incentive Program' and develop future options for consideration by the board of directors. Identify other potential complementary investments that would support increased transportation efficiency and accessibility. This may be done on an individual project basis, or at a larger scale.
Ensure historically marginalized and otherwise disadvantaged communities have an equitable role in the planning and decision-making processes	Using best practices, evaluate past transportation planning practices and projects; assess current needs and challenges; provide targeted outreach to disadvantaged communities; identify funding opportunities; and generate recommendations for updating regional policies, processes, and programs to direct resources as appropriate. Ensure public participation processes engage and encourage participation from disadvantaged communities.
Improve the reliability, safety, efficiency, and resiliency of regionally significant roadways based on transportation system data and alignment with regional performance targets	Based on current and emerging state and federal funding opportunities, apply data, geospatial tools, and policy priorities/outcomes to develop a project selection process for regional funding that focuses on reliability, safety, efficiency, and resiliency.

Work with regional partners to create people-centered communities that support public safety, health, and well-being

Identify and minimize the direct and indirect adverse impacts of growth, development, and transportation systems on people and the environment, and strive to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather. Cultivate a joint effort with local agency and community stakeholder partners to identify assets, risks, and resources/opportunities.