

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	February 27, 2018
SUBJECT:	Receive Update Regarding the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan and Receive Public Comments on the Initial Study
AGENDA ITEM:	11
STAFF CONTACT:	Sean Tiedgen, AICP, Senior Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

The 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is due for adoption June 19, 2018. An initial study, which discusses the probable effects the 2018 RTP may have on the environment was released on February 7, 2018, for a thirty-day public review and comment period. A draft 2018 RTP and supplemental environmental impact report will be available in April for a 55-day public review and comment period.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. Receive an update regarding the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan and Initial Study; and
2. Receive public comments regarding the Initial Study.

DISCUSSION:

Background – SRTA is required by federal and state law to develop a long-range (20-year) RTP. 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.”¹ Key elements of the 2018 RTP include:

- A regional vision, supported by a program of short- and long-term strategies;
- An evaluation of regional mobility needs based on current trends and forecasts for regional population, housing, and jobs; and
- A list of transportation projects, including estimated construction schedules and a financial plan.

Staff will be presenting the 2018 RTP in stages to the board of directors as follows:

Topic	Meeting	Recommendation
• Receive Update on 2018 RTP • Initial Study	Feb 2018	• Receive public comments on Initial Study
• Draft 2018 RTP • Draft Supplemental EIR (SEIR)	Apr 2018	• Review and hold public hearing to receive comments on SCS and SEIR
• Final 2018 RTP • Final SEIR	Jun 2018	• Hold public hearing • Certify SEIR and adopt 2018 RTP

¹ California Transportation Commission. 2017 RTP Guidelines for Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Page 9.

Draft 2018 RTP – The focus of the 2018 RTP is to press forward with programs and projects that implement the vision, goals and strategies identified in the 2015 RTP. Additional factors that impact this RTP cycle include:

- Incorporating the federal safety-related performance measures and California targets adopted in August 2017;
- Revising revenue forecasts and project accelerations due to the passage of California’s Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017 (SB 1) and awarded grants;
- Updating transportation projects and land use development; and
- Adding new sections discussing freight movement and alternative fuel vehicles, including electric and autonomous vehicles.

In addition, any new or substantially revised transportation projects must be added to the RTP project list to be eligible for federal or state funding. Based on input from Caltrans D2 and local partners, 35 minor projects have been added to the RTP project list.

Greenhouse Gas Reduction (GHG) Targets – SRTA has a California Air Resources Board (CARB) assigned target of 0.0% per capita of CO₂ emissions for passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks for years 2020 and 2035, when compared to 2005 GHG emissions. SRTA’s 2015 RTP projects are expected to decrease GHG emissions by -4.5% by 2020 and -0.5% by 2035. CARB periodically reviews and updates the targets, and has been working on updating targets for all California metropolitan planning organizations for the past 18+ months. The SRTA Board of Directors issued a memo to CARB in June 2016 recommending no change to year 2020 targets and no more than a -6.0% target for year 2035.

In October 2017, CARB issued *draft* targets of -4.0% for years 2020 and 2035 for SRTA. CARB stated the new 2020 target was to “bring targets in-line with the MPO’s current RTP.” For the 2035 target, CARB said that certain proposed strategies were not considered eligible for reductions under SB 375, therefore they determined -4.0% was appropriate. Since revised targets have not been adopted by CARB, the new reduction targets will not apply to the 2018 RTP, but will apply to the 2022 RTP update. Thus, SRTA will use the 0.0% GHG per capita reduction targets for the 2018 RTP, but will need to modify and/or add to its GHG emission strategies for the 2022 RTP.

Environmental Analysis – The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that an environmental impact report (EIR) be prepared alongside the RTP. SRTA’s environmental consultant, Rincon Consultants, prepared an initial study to determine what possible environmental issues need to be addressed and the appropriate level of EIR. Based on the 2018 RTP project description, environmental laws, endangered species lists, and other information not previously available, preparation of a supplemental environmental impact report (SEIR) is being proposed. A SEIR is less comprehensive, and only addresses the environmental issues necessary to make the previous EIR adequate. The 2018 RTP SEIR will address five CEQA categories that “potentially have a significant impact”:

- Air Quality
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards – Wildland Fires
- Transportation and Circulation
- Tribal Cultural Resources

SRTA released a Notice of Preparation announcing the availability of the initial study for public review on February 7, 2018. SRTA is accepting comments on the initial study at the February board of directors meeting; at the EIR scoping meeting on February 28, 2018, at 3:30 PM at SRTA's office; and by mail or email until 5:00 PM on Friday, March 9, 2018.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may expand the scope of the SEIR to include the evaluation of additional potential environmental impacts.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Staff solicited input on preliminary projects and land use information from federal, state, and local agencies, tribes and other regional organizations. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) concurs with the staff recommendation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Approval of the 2018 RTP and SEIR will allow state, regional and local projects to receive federal and state funding. Transportation and land use projects may benefit from streamlined environmental review, which can lower project costs.



Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

Attachments:

Notice of Preparation for a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report is available on SRTA's website at:
<http://www.srta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3961>

Initial Study for the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy for the Shasta Region is available online at: <http://www.srta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3960>