



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 Regional Transportation Plan and Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) will be made 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. Provide an opportunity to receive 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.

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

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	Apr 2018	• Review and hold public hearing to receive comments on SCS and SEIR
• Final 2018 RTP • Final EIR	Jun 2018	• Hold public hearing • Certify SEIR and adopt 2018 RTP

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.

State, local and regional transportation projects must be included in the RTP in order to be eligible for federal or state funding. Based on input from regional partners, 35 minor projects have been added to the RTP project list. Staff is reviewing project schedules and financial assumptions to determine a list of financially-constrained projects that are likely to be implemented over the next twenty years.

Greenhouse Gas Reduction (GHG) Targets – The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has been in the process of updating GHG reduction targets for all 18 metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) in California 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, when compared to 2005 GHG emissions. In October 2017, CARB staff issued draft targets increasing SRTA’s 2020 and 2035 GHG reduction targets to -4.0%. CARB staff indicated that certain strategies proposed by SRTA were not considered eligible strategies for reductions, therefore they determined -4.0% was appropriate for year 2035. For consistency, CARB made 2020 targets to match 2035 targets. New targets will not apply to the 2018 RTP, but will apply to the 2022 RTP update. Therefore, SRTA will use the 0.0% GHG per capita reduction targets for the 2018 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 LLC, prepared an initial study to determine what possible environmental issues need to be addressed and the appropriate level of EIR. Based on previously mentioned RTP updates, changes in environmental laws, endangered species lists, and other environmental information not previously available, warrants preparation of a Supplemental EIR. The 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 an EIR scoping meeting on February 28, 2018 at 3:00 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 provide comments on environmental issues the Supplemental EIR should discuss.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

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

FINANCING:

Approval of the 2018 RTP and Supplemental EIR 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>