

March 17, 2014

Mr. Carl Guardino and Commissioners
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street
Room 2221 (MS-52)
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) reform recommendations

Dear Chairman Guardino and Commissioners:

Over the past decade, California made tremendous strides to develop a clear vision to create more sustainable and equitable communities. From SB 375 and SB 391 to the newly-minted Active Transportation Program, state leaders continue to lay the groundwork for systems and infrastructure that dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions while improving health and sustainability in California for future generations. State transportation funding should reflect these statewide goals and priorities. However the 2014 STIP, as the primary funding mechanism for capital projects through 2018-19, continues to be devoted to expanding highway capacity with only a minor percentage for rail and active transportation projects.

We, the undersigned organizations, recommend the following long-term and near-term changes to the State Transportation Improvement Program to align transportation funding with state policy priorities and expand California's transportation options:

- Prior to the 2016 STIP adoption, we request that the Commission, Caltrans, and CalSTA adopt performance measures for the STIP that support statewide environmental sustainability, health, and equity goals. In addition, we recommend a comprehensive reform of the development and review process for the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) and for the Regional Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIPs) to ensure a transparent and public evaluation of project lists.
- In the near-term, we have identified four priority rail projects that we recommend be amended into the 2014 STIP to shift the balance of funding in the interregional share toward greater multi-modal investment that contributes to reducing vehicle-miles traveled and sends a strong signal that Caltrans and the Commission are serious about meeting the goals of SB 375 and SB 391.

As noted in the recent State Smart Transportation Initiative (SSTI) Assessment and Recommendations report commissioned by CalSTA, one of the most immediate tasks for Caltrans in modernizing its mission and structure is to understand what sustainability means for the state DOT and then operationalize its goals, measures, and actions. We believe that the Commission has an important role in supporting this task as the funding oversight body for Caltrans, and ask that the Commission work with Caltrans and CalSTA to define and operationalize sustainability. As stakeholders with expertise in land use and transportation planning for protection of health, climate, and the environment, we recommend the following definition for transportation sustainability:

Equitable, efficient connectivity of people and places in livable communities that contributes to public and environmental health, well-being, and economic opportunity for all Californians.

With a focus on sustainability, we need better performance metrics for STIP investments that track progress towards implementation of state policies such as SB375 and SB391. We ask that the Commission, CalSTA, and Caltrans develop improved performance metrics for the 2016 STIP that track transit, bicycle and pedestrian mode share, multi-modal safety, equitable distribution of investments in disadvantaged communities, induced vehicle-miles traveled, greenhouse gas emissions, public health impacts, household travel costs, and natural and agricultural resources protection. Regional agencies and Caltrans should be required to report on the performance of each project in the RTIPs and ITIP based on the metrics established, and the Commission should more closely monitor the RTIPs and ITIP to ensure that projects are contributing towards specified performance targets.

In addition to tracking performance measures, the Commission should clearly communicate to the public how STIP investments are contributing to climate goals and making our state healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous. To increase future funding for transportation through voter-approved measures, the Commission, CalSTA, and Caltrans must improve communications with the public on the benefits the transportation system is providing to communities, and clearly demonstrate accountability in improving service to the public.

It is also critical that Californians have a direct voice to state, regional, and local agencies to ensure their needs are recognized and addressed through planning and investments. The Commission should be a primary venue for public engagement, yet the current process lacks clarity and accessibility to transportation stakeholders, let alone to the average public citizen. We ask that the Commission update its public participation process to make it transparent and accessible for *all* communities, so plans and investments accurately reflect the public will.

To send a strong signal in this STIP cycle that the Commission and Caltrans are committed to changing the priorities for transportation funding, the Commission should amend four eligible interregional rail projects in the Los Angeles-San Diego (LOSSAN) corridor into the 2014 STIP. The LOSSAN corridor is the second most heavily traveled rail corridor in the United States. Including the projects in the ITIP will allow for necessary upgrades to increase the frequency of trains which will allow the trains to reach services levels that will ultimately help the region achieve the greenhouse gas reduction targets listed in SB 375. We ask the CTC to work with Caltrans to ensure these projects are included in the ITIP.

In closing, we offer our help and support to the Commission in addressing our recommendations, communicating with stakeholders and the public, and ensuring that our transportation funding aligns with our sustainability vision and goals.

Sincerely,

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