

02

Introduction





2 INTRODUCTION

The Stanislaus Council of Government's 2018 Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS or 'Plan') specifies the policies, projects, and programs necessary over a 25-year period to improve, manage, and maintain the region's transportation system.

As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and state designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for the Stanislaus region, StanCOG has developed the 2018 RTP/SCS update through an integrated and formal planning process, referred to as Valley Vision Stanislaus. This process was executed in collaboration with the nine cities in the Stanislaus region and the County of Stanislaus through coordination with our local, state, and federal planning partners and outreach to our key stakeholders and the public.

The Plan serves as a guide for transportation investment and land use across Stanislaus County throughout 2042. It presents a roadmap for accommodating anticipated growth and development and identifies a transportation investment strategy for achieving regional goals that link air quality, land use, and transportation.

RTP/SCS Preferred Scenario

The 2018 RTP/SCS is based on a preferred land use and transportation scenario, referred to as Scenario 2 (Preferred Scenario/Infill Redevelopment), which defines a pattern of future growth and transportation system investment for the region emphasizing a more transit-oriented development and a compact infill approach to land use and housing as compared to Scenario 1 (General Plan Trend/Business As Usual). The 2018 RTP/SCS scenarios are discussed in further detail in Chapters 8 and 9.

This chapter first describes the regulatory setting and planning initiatives that govern the development of the 2018 RTP/SCS. Second, it outlines StanCOG's goals and objectives used to evaluate different transportation investment and land use scenarios, and presents the performance framework used to quantify and describe the performance of the RTP/SCS. Third, it summarizes the steps StanCOG followed, including public outreach and involvement, for the 2018 RTP/SCS planning process. Lastly, it presents a summary of forecasting efforts that informed this plan.

Regulatory Setting & Planning Initiatives

This 2018 RTP/SCS sets the foundation for transportation investment and land use priorities for years 2018 through 2042. A number of federal and state statutes and regulations direct the content of the Plan and the process by which it is developed. Additionally, regional planning initiatives also affect the priorities of the Plan. A few of the key statutes, regulations, and initiatives are listed below.

Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act)

The FAST Act was enacted on December 4, 2015. The FAST Act replaces MAP-21 and continues the performance-based planning and programming stipulations enacted in MAP-21, which requires MPOs to implement a performance-based approach in the scope of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning process. MPO federally required responsibilities are identified in Title 23 U.S.C. Section 134 and Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 450.300. The FAST Act includes requirement to:

- 1) Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- 2) Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- 3) Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- 4) Increase accessibility & mobility of people & freight;
- 5) Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and promote consistency between (regional) transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- 6) Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across all modes, for people and freight;
- 7) Promote efficient system management & operation;
- 8) Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- 9) Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system
- 10) Reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
- 11) Enhance travel and tourism.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

CEQA directs governmental agencies to consider cumulative regional impacts and analyze the environmental consequences of proposed projects. Development of the RTP/SCS requires a program-level Environmental Impact Review (EIR) of the collection of projects it contains. StanCOG is designated as the lead agency to prepare the environmental review associated with the RTP/SCS.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin by recipients of federal funds such as state and local government agencies. Additionally, Title VI imposes obligations on recipients of federal funds to take affirmative action to assure, among other things, “that no person is excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of the program or activity on the grounds of race, color, or national origin.” These prohibitions against discrimination were later supported by additional state and federal actions including Presidential Executive Order 12898 on environmental justice (EJ), which requires that federal agencies and recipients of federal funding “identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations.”

Regional Housing Need Assessment (RHNA).

State housing element law assigns the responsibility of preparing the RHNA for Stanislaus County jurisdictions to StanCOG. Per SB 375, the SCS must accommodate not only the housing need as determined in the RHNA for the planning period, but must also accommodate housing for the expected population over the entire life of the RTP/SCS plan. Further, the RHNA must accommodate and distribute this housing need equitably throughout the region, considering all incomes and tenure needs, while promoting infill and addressing the intraregional jobs-housing balance.

Clean Air Act Amendments (1990). Pursuant to Section 176 (c)(4) of the 1990 Federal Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA), MPOs such as StanCOG must demonstrate that the RTP conforms to the applicable State Implementation Plan (SIP). This process is described in the Federal Transportation Air (FTA) Quality Conformity Rule. The purpose of conformity is to ensure that regional transportation planning and programming remain consistent with state and local air quality planning efforts to expeditiously achieve

and/or maintain the health-based National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Specifically, the following activities/tests are required to be documented when making conformity determinations of regional transportation plans in the Stanislaus region:

- 1) Expeditious Implementation of Transportation Control Measures Test (Conformity Regulation, Section 93.113)
- 2) Emission Budget Test (Conformity Regulation, Section 93.118)
- 3) Transportation Plan is financially constrained (Section 93.108)
- 4) Interagency Consultation and Public Participation Procedures (Section 93.110)

California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32 and SB 32).

AB 32 requires that GHG emissions within California must be at 1990 levels by the year 2020. AB 32 identifies GHGs as specific air pollutants that are responsible for global warming and climate change, and it directs the Air Resources Board (ARB) to implement the regulatory and market mechanisms necessary to achieve the specified reductions in GHG emissions. These efforts include reducing emissions through land use and transportation planning. SB 32 extends the reductions of GHG emissions required by AB 32 by specifying a GHG reduction of at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2030. SB 32 also authorizes the ARB to adopt rules and regulations to achieve the maximum technologically feasible and cost-effective GHG emissions reductions. ARB is directed to carry out the process to achieve GHG emissions reductions in a manner that benefits the state’s most disadvantaged communities.

Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375).

SB 375 requires that California’s 18 MPOs, including StanCOG, incorporate an integrated Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) as part of the RTP/SCS. Specifically, SB 375 requires the alignment of three major components within the regional transportation planning process – land use planning, transportation planning and funding, and State housing mandates – to reduce GHG emissions from cars and light trucks.

The SCS is required to be based on realistic planning assumptions; consider adopted general plans and spheres of influence; and consider natural resources and farmland. It must be consistent with both the transportation and financing elements of the RTP,

and the adopted Regional Housing Needs Allocation. Finally, the SCS must be able to achieve the GHG reduction targets established by the California Air Resources Board (ARB).

Federal Congestion Management Process.

Federal law requires metropolitan areas with a population exceeding 200,000, known as Transportation Management Areas (TMAs), to develop a congestion management process as an ongoing process that is fully integrated into the MPO planning process. Federal law also states that “In a TMA designated as a nonattainment area for ozone or carbon monoxide pursuant to the Federal Clean Air Act, federal funds may not be programmed for any project that will result in a significant increase in the carrying capacity for single occupant vehicles (i.e., new general purpose highway on a new location or adding general purpose lanes, with the exception of safety improvements or the elimination of bottlenecks), unless the project is addressed through a congestion management process.” The federal congestion management process must include the following elements:

1. Develop Regional Objectives
2. Define CMP Network
3. Develop Multimodal Performance Measures
4. Collect Data/Monitor System Performance
5. Analyze Congestion Problems and Needs
6. Identify and Assess Strategies
7. Program and Implement Strategies
8. Evaluate Strategy Effectiveness

As part of performance management, recipients of federal-aid highway funds, such as StanCOG, would make transportation investments to achieve performance targets that make progress toward the following national goals:

- **Congestion Reduction:** To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System (NHS).
- **System Reliability:** To improve the efficiency of the NHS.
- **Freight Movement and Economic Vitality:** To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

Congestion Management Program. The Congestion Management Program (CMP) is the state-mandated program (Government Code 65089) aimed at reducing congestion on highways and roads in California. The congestion management process establishes a designated roadway network of regional significance, roadway service standards, multi-modal performance standards, and a land use analysis element to identify and mitigate multi-jurisdictional transportation impacts resulting from local land use decisions. Federal, state and local transportation funding is contingent upon local agency compliance with the congestion management process. StanCOG is the designated Congestion Management Agency for Stanislaus County. StanCOG’s congestion management process is currently in development to satisfy both state and federal requirements.

Goals and Objectives

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) summarized Federal and State goals and objectives in its *2017 Regional Transportation Guidelines for Metropolitan Planning Organizations* publication (referred to as the Guidelines), which provides guidance for preparing an RTP/SCS. In the Guidelines, “Chapter 7 – Transportation Performance Management” outlines goals and objectives that should be considered for incorporation into an RTP/SCS.

The following items are federal and state goals presented in the Guidelines. There is considerable overlap between the two sets of goals.

Federal Goals:

- **Safety:** To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.
- **Infrastructure Condition:** To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair.
- **Congestion Reduction:** To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System.
- **System Reliability:** To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system
- **Freight Movement and Economic Vitality:** To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.

- **Environmental Sustainability:** To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
- **Reduced Project Delivery Delays:** To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies' work practices.

California Goals:

- Achieve SB 375 GHG reduction goals
- Preserve transportation infrastructure
- Improve mobility and accessibility
- Reduce GHG and improve air quality
- Improve public health
- Conserve land and natural resources
- Encourage sustainable land use patterns
- Increase supply of affordable housing
- Improve jobs and housing balance
- Improve mobility and accessibility for low-income and disadvantaged communities
- Support economic development
- Increase safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users

StanCOG 2018 RTP/SCS Goals

To assess how well the 2018 RTP/SCS meets the needs of the Stanislaus County region, StanCOG developed a set of goals, objectives, and performance measures, with stakeholder input, for evaluating the policies and strategies contained within the Plan.

The goals and objectives reflect the values and the vision of the residents of the Stanislaus region and are consistent with federal and state requirements. The performance measures, which are tied to individual goals and objectives, provide an unbiased way of quantifying the different elements of the Plan. They are also invaluable for the implementation of the Plan.

In collaboration with the Valley Vision Stanislaus Steering Committee, StanCOG compiled the following list of goals and objectives and associated performance measures. The Plan's goals and related performance measures are presented in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1 - Goals & Objectives

Goal 1. Mobility & Accessibility
Improve the ability of people and goods to move between desired locations, and provide a variety of mobility options.
Goal 2. Social Equity
Ensure all populations share in the benefits of transportation improvements and are provided a range of transportation and housing choices.
Goal 3. Economic and Community Vitality
Facilitate economic development and opportunities through infrastructure investments that support goods movement within and through the region.
Goal 4. Sustainable Development Pattern
Provide a mix of land uses and compact development patterns, and direct development toward existing infrastructure, to preserve agricultural land, open space, and natural resources.
Goal 5. Environmental Quality
Support infrastructure investments that facilitate vehicle electrification and the provision of electrification infrastructure in public and private parking facilities and structures.
Goal 6. Health & Safety
Operate and maintain the transportation system to ensure public safety, and improve the health of residents by improving air quality and providing more transportation options.
Goal 7. System Preservation
Maintain the transportation system in a state of good repair, and protect the region's transportation investments by maximizing the use of existing facilities.
Goal 8. Smart Infrastructure
Coordinate, monitor, and integrate planning and programming for intelligent transportation system (ITS), smart infrastructure, demand-responsive transportation, and automated vehicles.
Goal 9. Reliability & Congestion
Maintain or improve reliability of the transportation network and maintain or reduce congestion.
Goal 10. Project Delivery
Efficiently use available transportation funding to expedite project delivery of transportation improvements for the benefit of residents of Stanislaus County and the traveling public.

Together, the 2018 RTP/ SCS goals, objectives, and performance measures provided the necessary information to permit public and elected officials within the region to make informed decisions on the direction of the Plan based on an evaluation of the results. The performance measures were applied to compare the performance of the RTP/SCS scenarios for year 2035, and to further allow for comparisons between Scenario 2 (Preferred Scenario/Infill and Redevelopment) and Scenario 1 (General Plan Trend/Business As Usual). These performance measures showing comparisons between Scenario 2 and Scenario 1 are presented in Chapter 9 and **Appendix L**.

Planning Process

StanCOG developed the 2018 RTP/SCS through extensive public outreach and involvement across the Stanislaus region's local jurisdictions (Ceres, Hughson, Modesto, Newman, Oakdale, Patterson, Riverbank, Turlock, Waterford and Stanislaus County). The overall approach in planning for the 2018 RTP/SCS was to promote an open, transparent process that encourages the ongoing and active participation of local governments and a broad range of residents and stakeholder groups.

StanCOG implemented an approach for civic engagement in accordance with the goals and procedures identified in the StanCOG's Public Participation Plan and the 2018 RTP/SCS Public Participation Plan presented in **Appendix P**. This Public Participation Plan (PPP) serves as a guide for the Stanislaus Council of Governments' (StanCOG) public involvement process as well as the continuing, comprehensive and coordinated planning process among the stakeholders to ensure effective coordination between public officials at all levels of government. The PPP also calls for the wide participation of all parties, public or private, at all stages of the transportation planning process to provide an ongoing opportunity for broad-based participation in the development and review of regional plans and programs managed and produced by StanCOG.

The four primary goals of StanCOG's public participation process are:

Goal 1: Strive for a balanced representation of all public groups, including those that are typically underrepresented in the planning process, while providing ample opportunities for public review and input with regard to all planning and programming documents.

Goal 2: Promote a culture of dialogue and partnership among residents, property owners, the business community, organizations, and public officials while educating local officials and the public in the transportation planning process.

Goal 3: Make both technical information and meeting notices involved in the planning process available in accessible formats, and provide communications and agency reports that are understandable and timely.

Goal 4: Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the planning and programming process while treating all interested participants fairly and respectfully.

StanCOG's RTP/SCS PPP includes the following public outreach strategies:

- Outreach efforts to encourage the active participation of a broad range of stakeholder groups in the planning process;
- Workshops throughout the region to provide the public with the information and tools necessary to provide a clear understanding of the issues and policy choices;
- Preparation and circulation of a Draft SCS not less than 55 days before adoption of a Final RTP and SCS;
- At least two public hearings on the Draft SCS, held in different parts of the region;
- At least two informational meetings within the region for members of the Board of Supervisors and City Councils on the SCS; and
- A process for enabling members of the public to provide a single request to receive notices, information and updates.

Forecasts

The 2018 RTP/SCS relies on regional forecasts of future demographics, travel demand, and transportation funding as key components of the planning process. Land use and transportation investment decisions are based on the region's growth forecasts. **Table 2.2** presents future forecasts between 2018 and 2042 for Stanislaus County.

Table 2.2 - Future Demographic Forecast

Year	Population	Households	Employees
2018*	558,039	181,087	187,781
2020	571,139	187,171	192,931
2025	605,040	199,071	203,337
2030	639,754	208,407	212,861
2035	674,019	221,186	222,414
2040	707,554	231,606	231,718
2042*	720,568	235,471	235,307

Source: Stanislaus County Forecast Summary, University of the Pacific, 2016.
*Year 2018 and 2042 estimates were interpolated.

Demographics

Growth forecasts were developed as part of a larger demographic forecast prepared for the three-county region encompassing Stanislaus, Merced, and San Joaquin counties. The forecasts were developed specifically for the preparation of the 2018 RTP/SCS in each respective county (per the Federal FAST-ACT MPO Planning Regulations and Senate Bill 375). The Stanislaus County Forecast Summary was prepared by the University of Pacific (UOP) Center for Business and Policy Research and completed in 2016. Demographic forecasts are presented in Chapter 4.

Transportation Demand

The travel demand model includes the three San Joaquin Valley Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs): Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG), San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG), and StanCOG. The three county travel demand model allows for generation of the region's future travel behavior, modal choices, transportation and transit network performance, and interregional travel demand.

A minor update to the three-county model known as Valley Model Improvement Project 2 (VMIP2) was performed in 2017. VMIP2 takes advantage of the 2010 Census, the most recent American Community Survey (2016), and 2012-2013 California Household Travel Survey data, and enhances the model structure

developed as part of the MIP model. Forecasted future transportation demand is presented in Chapter 4.

Financial

Revenue forecasts were developed through meetings and coordination efforts with StanCOG's member agencies and Caltrans. These revenue projections satisfy federal requirements to achieve a financially constrained RTP whereby total project costs were accounted for through available and expected funding over the life of the program.

The RTP provides projections for local, state, and federal funds, and distinguishes between formula and competitive funding sources. Formula funds were systematic and were provided by the funding agencies and projected based on previous funding cycles specific to each member agency, where the funding agency had not identified the proposed formulaic share. Competitive funding, such as grant programs, were less certain and were based on past performance by StanCOG's member agencies, program applicability, and an assumed capture rate based on Stanislaus County's proportion of state-maintained centerline miles of roadway. The 2018 RTP/SCS financial revenue forecast identifies several new funding sources, including: Measure L, SB 1, and SB 132. Through the passage of Measure L, Stanislaus became a Self-Help County, which will increase its ability to leverage additional federal and state discretionary funding. Future revenue projections are presented in Chapter 5.