



**November 2, 2020**

**To:** Regional Planning and Highways Committee

**From:** Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

**Subject:** Regional Planning Update

### **Overview**

Regional planning updates are provided regularly to highlight transportation planning issues impacting the Orange County Transportation Authority and the Southern California region. This update focuses on the Southern California Association of Governments' 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/ Sustainable Communities Strategy and the state's California Transportation Plan 2050.

### **Recommendation**

Receive and file as an information item.

### **Background**

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) regularly coordinates with other planning and regulatory agencies within the Southern California region. This coordination is conducted at many levels, involving the OCTA Board of Directors (Board), executives, and technical staff. Some examples of the regional planning forums in which OCTA participates include:

- Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Council, policy committees, and technical working groups,
- State Route 91 Advisory Committee,
- Regional Chief Executive Officers meetings,
- South Coast Air Quality Management District working groups; and
- Interregional planning coordination meetings (OCTA, SCAG, the San Diego Association of Governments, and the California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] districts 7, 11, and 12).

Staff most recently provided a regional planning update to the Board in May 2020. The status of items previously presented and other ongoing regional planning activities is recorded in a matrix that identifies lead agencies, a summary of each activity, key dates, as well as OCTA's interests and current involvement (Attachment A).

Since the May update, new activities have emerged concerning the SCAG 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) and the state's California Transportation Plan (CTP) 2050. A discussion of each of these new activities is provided below.

### ***Discussion***

#### **SCAG 2020-2045 RTP/SCS**

The RTP/SCS documents major transportation investments in the SCAG region over a 20-year horizon, at minimum, and is required to be updated every four years under state and federal law. On May 7, 2020, the SCAG Regional Council approved the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS for federal transportation conformity purposes only. SCAG postponed consideration to adopt the plan in its entirety in order to allow more time to conduct additional outreach with stakeholders on the challenges associated with the coronavirus pandemic and to engage with local jurisdictions to make refinements to the plan's growth forecast. On June 6, 2020, federal approval of the transportation conformity determination was issued. The SCAG Regional Council subsequently adopted the full 2020-2045 RTP/SCS on September 3, 2020.

Following adoption by the SCAG Regional Council, SCAG submitted the RTP/SCS to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) for a technical review of the SCS element. This review focuses on the strategies and assumptions used to demonstrate how the SCAG region's greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets can be met. The targets represent a per capita GHG emission reduction from 2005 levels and are currently set for the SCAG region at an eight percent reduction by 2020, and a 19 percent reduction by 2035. The RTP/SCS includes regional initiatives and strategies to demonstrate how the GHG emission reduction targets can potentially be achieved. The regional initiatives and strategies are in addition to the projects and plans submitted by the county transportation commissions and local jurisdictions. However, while there are incentives tied to SCS regional initiatives and strategies, they are not required to be implemented. It is anticipated that by November 2020, CARB will accept SCAG's determination that the SCS meets the state requirements for achieving the GHG emission reduction targets.

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CTP 2050

In late August, Caltrans released the Draft CTP 2050. Caltrans is required by statute to update the CTP every five years to identify Caltrans priorities, as well as strategies for reducing statewide transportation-related GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. Like the SCS discussed above, the CTP must analyze an example of how the strategies could be implemented to achieve the GHG emission reduction goal. The Draft CTP 2050 outlines 14 recommendations to achieve the vision of a “safe, resilient, and universally accessible transportation system [that] supports vibrant communities, advances racial and economic justice, and improves public and environmental health.” The CTP recommendations are:

1. Expand remote access to jobs, goods, services, and education,
2. Expand access to safe and convenient transportation options,
3. Improve transit, rail, and shared mobility options,
4. Advance transportation equity,
5. Enhance transportation system resiliency,
6. Enhance transportation safety and security,
7. Improve goods movement systems and infrastructure,
8. Advance zero-emissions vehicle technology and supportive infrastructure,
9. Manage the adoption of connected and autonomous vehicles,
10. Price roadways to improve the efficiency of auto travel,
11. Encourage efficient land-use,
12. Expand protection of natural resources and ecosystems,
13. Strategically invest in state of good repair improvements,
14. Seek sustainable, long-term transportation funding mechanisms.

The purpose of the CTP is to serve as a resource for policy makers and transportation planning agencies throughout the state, in the hopes that it will influence policy, legislation, and local and regional transportation plans. The CTP is not required to be fiscally constrained, but it is required to include a feasibility analysis. This feasibility analysis is currently missing from the Draft CTP 2050, which may result in setting unrealistic expectations of what can actually be implemented and achieved. Furthermore, the Draft CTP 2050 does not do enough to clarify that the scenarios described are merely examples of how the proposed strategies could be implemented to achieve the state’s goals, rather than a realistic action plan. These issues could result in misinformation and will reduce the CTP’s value as a resource for policy makers and transportation planning agencies going forward.

OCTA prepared a comment letter on the Draft CTP 2050 (Attachment B). To summarize, the comments address the importance of clearly articulating how this plan is different from RTP/SCSs, including the areas of financial constraint, scrutiny of planning assumptions, and lack of environmental review. Additionally, the comments recommend detailing the assumptions used in the Draft CTP 2050 to meet the GHG emission reduction goals and the CTP 2050's vision. The comments also call on Caltrans to commit to conducting a feasibility analysis of the strategies assumed in the CTP 2050 in a "cooperative process involving local and regional government, transit operators, congestion management agencies, and the goods movement industry" consistent with Government Code Section 65070(a). Finally, the comments request that the final plan include an analysis of the impacts of accelerating zero-emission vehicles as called for in Governor Newsom's recent Executive Order N-79-20 and revise the plan accordingly.

**Summary**

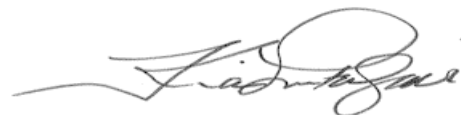
Staff continues to coordinate ongoing activities regarding transportation planning in Orange County and Southern California. As drafts of these planning documents are released, staff will review and provide comments as needed to protect OCTA's interests. Staff will continue to keep the Board informed on the status of these ongoing activities.

**Attachments**

- A. Regional Planning Activities, November 2020
- B. Letter to Ms. Jeanie Ward-Waller, Deputy Director of Planning and Modal Programs, California Department of Transportation, Dated October 22, 2020, Draft California Transportation Plan 2050

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