

California Legislature

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

DAVE CORTESE
CHAIR



STAFF DIRECTOR
MANNY LEON
PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT
MELISSA WHITE
ASSISTANT CONSULTANT
ISABELLE LASALLE
COMMITTEE ASSISTANT
PAULINA RODRIGUEZ

STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 405
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
TEL (916) 651-4121

VICE CHAIR
VACANT
MEMBERS
BOB ARCHULETA
JESSE ARREGUÍN
CATHERINE BLAKESPEAR
SABRINA CERVANTES
MEGAN DAHLE
LENA GONZALEZ
TIMOTHY S. GRAYSON
MONIQUE LIMÓN
CAROLINE MENJIVAR
LAURA RICHARDSON
KELLY SEYARTO
THOMAS J. UMBERG
SUZETTE MARTINEZ VALLARDES

Background Paper for Senate Transportation Committee INFORMATIONAL HEARING

TRANSPORTATION IN CALIFORNIA: AN OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Introduction

The purpose of this hearing is to provide an overview of the State's transportation system. Specifically, panelists will include government entities from the state, local, and regional level responsible for building, maintaining, and operating the State's transportation system. Additionally, a panel with private sector partners will discuss their role working with public entities in maintaining the State's transportation system and also discuss the federal outlook as it relates to federal reauthorization. Below is a brief overview of a number of imperative state and local transportation departments and agencies.

State Transportation Departments:

The California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) develops and coordinates state transportation policy and programs to achieve safety, mobility, equity, and environmental sustainability objectives. The agency oversees eight state organizations responsible for delivery of transportation-related programs and services, including the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the California Transportation Commission (CTC), the California Highway Patrol (CHP), the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), the High-Speed Rail Authority, the Office of Traffic Safety, the Board of Pilot Commissioners, and the New Motor Vehicle Board.

CalSTA's work includes coordination and management of various issues related to funding, air quality, and mobility, including, but not limited to, the Autonomous Vehicles Strategic Framework planning document, the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI), the SB 125 Transit Transformation Task Force, State Rail Assistance and the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TICRP). The agency also oversees implementation of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and jointly leads the Transportation and Housing Coordination Workgroup with the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is responsible for planning, developing, building, maintaining, and operating the state highway system (SHS), which comprises more than 50,000 lane miles of highway and various multimodal facilities and infrastructure. The department also oversees the allocation and administration of certain funds that are available to more than 600 cities, counties, and regional agencies for infrastructure improvements and transportation services.

The department is responsible for the interregional component of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), a multiyear capital program of transportation projects on and off the SHS. It also administers the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP), a four-year program of projects prioritized to address maintenance and rehabilitation of state-owned transportation infrastructure and assets.

Caltrans also is responsible for the state's long-range transportation plan, the California Transportation Plan, as well as six modal plans addressing interregional investment, freight, rail, aviation, transit, and active transportation. The department also provides intercity passenger rail services in cooperation with three regional joint powers authorities, and permits more than 400 public use airports and special use hospital heliports.

Caltrans' current annual budget of nearly \$18 billion includes more than \$8 billion from state transportation taxes and fees and \$6.4 billion in federal funding. The department has approximately 22,600 staff, nearly half of which (10,100) support capital project development. More than 7,000 employees are responsible for maintaining the state's transportation infrastructure and facilities.

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) oversees state investment in transportation infrastructure improvements through the programming and allocation of funding. In addition, the commission advises the secretary of CalSTA and the Legislature in formulating and evaluating state policies and plans for California's transportation programs.

The commission is responsible for review and adoption of major state funding programs, including the STIP and SHOPP. The STIP is composed of an interregional component prepared by Caltrans, and regional transportation improvement programs (RTIPs) prepared by each regional planning agency. The commission's oversight responsibility includes approval of time extensions for, or significant cost increases to programmed projects.

The commission also administers various competitive funding programs, including the Active Transportation Program (ATP), the Solutions for Congested Corridors Program (SCCP), the Local Partnership Program (LPP), the Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP), and the Local Transportation Climate Adaptation Program (LTCAP).

Pursuant to SB 1121 (Gonzalez, Chapter 508, Statutes of 2022), the commission is required to prepare a 10-year needs assessment of the costs to operate, maintain, and prepare for the growth of state and local transportation systems. The assessment must include cost projections, revenue forecasts, and recommendations to address expected shortfalls. The first completed assessment was due January 1, 2025, with updates every five years thereafter.

The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is responsible for licensing drivers, registering vehicles, and regulation of the motor vehicle industry. The DMV's core programs include the Driver's

License and Identification Card Program, the Driver Safety Program, vehicle titling and registration, Occupational Licensing for the vehicle industry, and Autonomous Vehicle Regulation.

The DMV is staffed by more than 8,600 employees and operates more than 220 facilities. It maintains registrations of more than 35 million vehicles and more than 34 million driver's licenses and ID cards. For 2023, the department reported that it processed more than 74 million transactions through all service channels. The department's approximately \$1.4 billion budget is funded primarily by driver's license and motor vehicle registration fees deposited in the Motor Vehicle Account (MVA).

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) is responsible for ensuring the safe, convenient and efficient transportation of people and goods on the state's highway system. The department operates various enforcement, education, and outreach initiatives, including but not limited to, commercial vehicle regulation, impaired driver enforcement, school bus operator training, motorcyclist and vulnerable road user safety training, and programs to enhance safety and mobility for youth and seniors.

Headquartered in Sacramento, the CHP has eight divisions statewide and nearly 11,000 employees. Its \$3.2 billion annual budget is funded primarily through the MVA.

Regional / Local / Transit:

On top of state transportation departments, regional and local transportation public agencies provide a variety of transportation functions. From metropolitan planning organizations to regional transportation planning agencies to transit agencies to congestion management agencies, these regional and local agencies are critical in ensuring people, goods, and the public are efficiently moving to and from their points of destination. Several types of key public agencies include, but not limited to:

Transit agencies are organizations that provide public transportation services to a specific region or community. These public agencies operate various modes of transport such as buses, trains, light rail, and ferries. Among their primary goals are to ensure that residents and visitors have access to affordable, reliable, and safe transportation options. Examples of transit agencies in California are Omnitrans in San Bernardino County, Water Emergency Transportation Authority (ferry service) in the Bay Area, and Sacramento Regional Transit in Sacramento County. Funding for transit agencies is derived from various revenue sources including sales tax on diesel fuel at the state level to local sales tax revenue as components of county sales tax measures.

Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPA) are organizations responsible for overseeing transportation planning and funding within specific regions of the state. RTPA's play an important role in developing comprehensive transportation plans that address the needs of the region, including roadways, public transit, bike paths, and pedestrian walkways. Several core responsibilities of RTPA's include, but are not limited to, developing regional transportation plans, allocating transportation funds to projects, and coordinating efforts with local public agencies (e.g. cities).

Private Sector:

Another key component to maintaining the State's transportation system is the partnership between public agencies and private sector. In certain / specific cases, public transportation departments and agencies will

contract with private entities to carry out a variety of functions for which they may not have adequate resources or necessary expertise. This includes, but is not limited to, construction of major infrastructure projects, and services involving maintenance, planning, modeling, engineering, information technology, etc. These partnerships are integral in managing and operating the State's entire transportation system. Panelist will provide testimony on their partnerships and engagement with public entities as it pertains to operating and maintaining the State's transportation system.

**The Senate Office of Research contributed to this report.*