

2025 Blueprint Major Project Categories

It can be informative to examine the 2025 Blueprint's investment priorities across broad categories (see "Major Project Categories" in Table 1 of the staff report) to gain a greater perspective on regional spending. A brief explanation of each of the major project categories is provided below.

Maintenance and Rehab

The region is currently facing a growing backlog of maintenance and rehabilitation needs. The draft 2025 Blueprint revenue forecast aims to slow or reverse this trend by prioritizing some existing and new sources of funding to support local maintenance programs. These funding sources could include new sales taxes which have already signaled that maintaining roads will be a high priority. SACOG's regional funding programs are another important potential source for supporting state of good repair investments. However, even with these funding sources, the preliminary budget of nearly \$14 billion is unlikely to fully meet our needs as a region for maintenance and rehab. New sources of funding, such as road usage charges or mileage-based fees, are needed to modernize the way we pay for transportation by replacing existing fuel taxes that cannot keep pace with rising costs while fuel consumption continues to decline over time.

Road and Highway Capacity

In total, the draft transportation project list adds over 775 lane miles to the region's road and highway system. Roughly 50 percent of the road and highway capacity investments included in the draft transportation project list are on existing streets and roads, with a focus on serving the areas of the region where growth is expected and where congestion exists today or is likely to occur based on future growth patterns. More than 40 percent of this budget category is comprised of projects that are already moving through various phases of project development today but still have a large funding gap needed to cover full construction. These projects represent \$3.3 billion dollars in future expansions but face a combined \$2.3 billion funding gap that will require future grant or local funding. The plan's draft budget prioritizes securing sufficient funding to get these projects over the finish line before introducing additional expansion projects.

Transit (Capital)

The transit capital budget includes infrastructure investments to support new and improved connections and station improvements for fixed-route bus, shuttles, bus rapid transit, and light rail along with vehicles to support an expanded regional transit system. Many of the region's existing bus and rail vehicles will need to be replaced, potentially multiple times, during the life of the plan. Much like funding for road and highway maintenance, existing funding streams are insufficient to fully cover the cost of the region's need for transit vehicles and facilities.

Presenting an additional challenge for transit operators is California's Innovative Clean Transit regulation, which sets out to transition the statewide fleet of buses to electric, hydrogen, or other zero-emission technologies by 2040. Beginning in 2029, all new transit vehicle purchases will be zero-emission and transit agencies are already beginning the transition. The implications of this regulation are significant. At full deployment, a statewide zero-emission transit fleet stands to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 19 million metric tons between 2020 and 2050 – the equivalent of taking 4 million cars off the road. However, this shift comes with a price. At a premium of 30 to 40 percent more than a typical bus today, zero-emission buses are not cheap. While prices are already starting to come down as technology improves and supply increases, these vehicles will require significant investment by transit operators and local governments around the state.

Transit (Operations and Maintenance)

The draft transportation project list for the 2025 Blueprint provides for more and new types of transit in areas where development is dense enough to accommodate it. For example, we're planning for a 194 percent increase in transit service hours by 2050. Providing additional transit service allows for higher frequency service on corridors with high ridership potential, broader coverage during weekdays (e.g., more evening service), and more service during weekend hours. We are projecting a significant increase in the number of homes and jobs near high-frequency transit, with such jobs increasing by 230 percent and homes by 450 percent. Over 60 percent of all jobs in the region will be near high-frequency transit by 2050.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

In addition to committed sources of funding such as the state and regional Active Transportation Programs, the draft 2025 Blueprint budget aims to preserve funding to invest in bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including trails, to create a complete transportation system that supports healthy living and active communities where bicycling and walking are viable and popular travel choices in a comprehensive, safe, and convenient network. Additionally, the draft 2025 Blueprint prioritizes implementation of the Regional Trail Network to connect communities throughout the region with a comprehensive trails system that can support economic development, health, and overall quality of life. As mentioned previously, many bicycle and pedestrian investments occur as part of larger capital projects. This budget category primarily captures the spending that could occur outside of those other investments but does not represent the full suite of investments the region makes in supporting active transportation.

Programs, Safety, System Management, and Operations

This major project category captures air quality, transportation demand, safety, and operational programs and improvements. These types of investments, whether they provide support for transit riders like guaranteed rides home in case of emergency or operational improvements to streets and roads such as signal timing, are aimed at getting more out of existing infrastructure to connect residents with options and services that will allow them to

leave their cars at home and reduce the need for expensive road and highway expansion. This broad category is focused on squeezing the most out of investments in the existing transportation system, improving safety, and ensuring that the many travel options available to residents are convenient and reliable as possible.