

Introduction



ABOUT SRTA

Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) is the federally-designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and state-designated regional transportation planning agency (RTPA) for the Shasta County region. SRTA studies the region’s transportation needs, identifies and programs transportation infrastructure improvements, and administers over \$24 million annually in state and federal funds for the planning, construction, operation, and maintenance of transportation infrastructure throughout Shasta County.

Precisely when, where, and in what manner these resources are allocated impacts personal mobility, environmental quality, economic opportunity, public health, public safety, and various other factors that collectively define quality of life. These choices affect both near- and long-term outcomes. Such benefits and foreclosed opportunities must be explored and weighed against community values as part of the planning process.

In the end, transportation planning, policy, and investment isn’t so much a clear choice as it is a balancing act between diverse community needs, priorities, and expectations. Transportation planning has become increasingly attentive to its far-reaching impacts, shifting away from a narrow focus on relieving traffic congestion toward personal mobility, destination accessibility, and a more holistic and community-minded set of objectives.

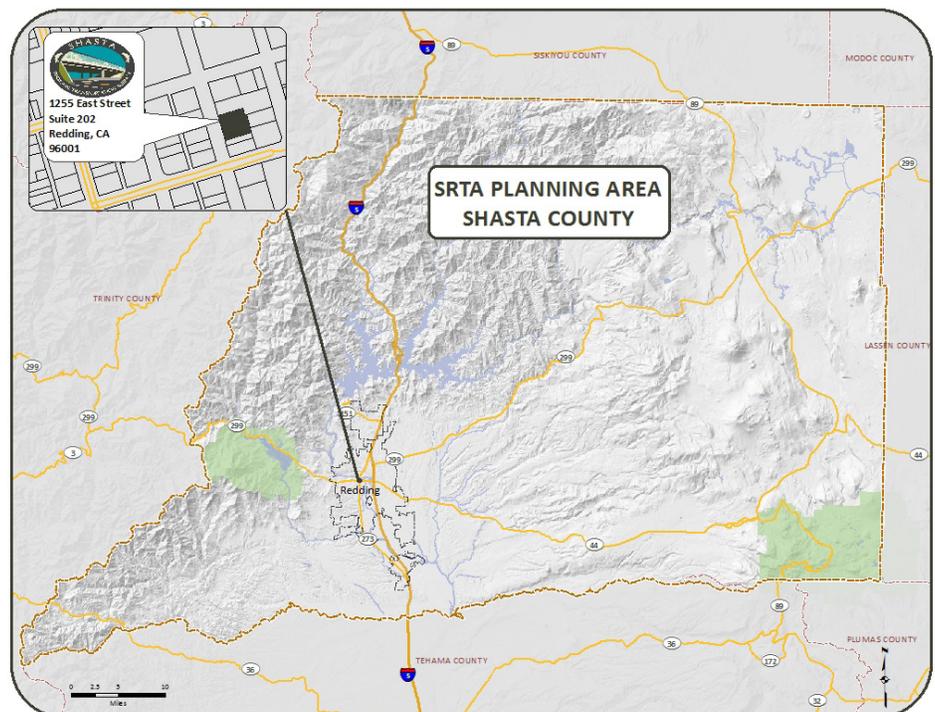


Figure 1 - SRTA Planning Area

SRTA's role in the region is unique because it shapes communities solely through investments and support. And because SRTA represents and regards all jurisdictions equally, SRTA provides a true regional forum for local government to work together with state and federal partners to meet regional needs – transportation or otherwise.

SRTA is governed by a seven-member board of directors, comprised of elected officials representing the City of Redding, City of Shasta Lake, City of Anderson, Shasta County, and Redding Area Bus Authority (RABA).

It is the SRTA Board of Directors' role to establish transportation policy and direct transportation investments on behalf of the region. Additional information regarding SRTA, the board of directors, staff, and regional plans and programs is available online at www.srta.ca.gov.

PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

As the designated MPO and RTPA for Shasta County, SRTA is required by federal law (Title 23 CFR 450.300, Subpart C) and state law (CA Government Code section 65080) to prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long range (minimum 20 years) Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP is updated every four years, adopted by the regional government, and submitted to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for review and comment.

The purpose of an RTP is “to encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of a regional intermodal transportation system that, when linked with appropriate land use planning, will serve the mobility needs of goods and people.” With limited exceptions, regional transportation projects must be included in an adopted RTP in order to be eligible for federal and state funding.

Key elements of the Shasta County RTP include:

- A regional vision and goals, supported by a

program of short and long-range objectives and course of action;

- An evaluation of regional mobility needs in light of population, housing, and job forecasts; and
- A list of specific transportation improvements, anticipated construction timeline, and a funding plan.

An environmental impact report (EIR) is prepared alongside the RTP in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Public Resource Code 21000) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

NEW PLANNING REQUIREMENTS FOR 2015

Guidelines regarding the preparation of the RTP are routinely updated to reflect evolving state and federal needs and priorities. New state and federal laws, policies, and programs may also affect the content and focus of the RTP. Such changes are usually an evolution of existing practice and easily incorporated.

Occasionally, a more comprehensive retooling of the RTP is required. Recent legislation affecting the 2015 RTP cycle includes the following:

- **Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21)** – The nation's surface transportation program is now a performance- and outcome-based program. This approach transforms the federal-aid highway program by refocusing federal resources on national transportation goals. MAP-21 encourages the metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes to incorporate performance goals, measures, and targets into the process of identifying needed transportation improvements and in the project selection process.
- **Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008** – More commonly known as Senate Bill 375, this California law adds a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) planning requirement to the RTP. The purpose of the SCS is to coordinate transportation and land use planning

¹California Transportation Commission, 2010 California Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines

in order to reduce vehicle miles traveled and associated greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles and light trucks. The SCS aims to meet region-specific targets set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). Should the region's SCS not meet the assigned target, an Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) is prepared, outlining what additional tools, strategies, and resources, if available, would help the region to do so.

TRANSPORTATION DECISION MAKERS

The planning, financing, construction, operation, and maintenance of the regional transportation system is accomplished by decision makers at all levels of government. Each partner has distinct responsibilities that must be coordinated to ensure long-term system performance. In general, these responsibilities can be divided into the following levels:

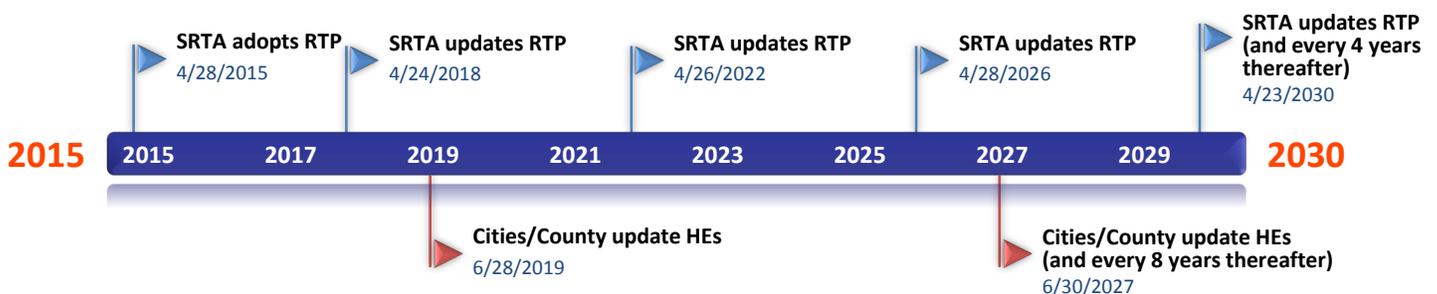
- Federal** – The President and Congress create national transportation policies and allocate funds to states through the federal transportation bill (MAP-21) and discretionary programs. Funding is administered by the United States Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT), which is comprised of multiple divisions. Caltrans and SRTA work primarily with regional offices of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
- State** – The California State Legislature institutes state policies resulting in transportation spending priorities and program initiatives. Each year the Governor and Legislature appropriate transportation funds through the annual budget. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) recommends policies and funding to the Legislature, provides project oversight for the state, adopts state transportation programs, and approves funding for transportation projects nominated by Caltrans and SRTA. Caltrans is responsible for planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining the state highway system. Caltrans nominates projects for funding to the CTC through the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP).

NEW FOUR-YEAR RTP PLANNING CYCLE

The RTP must be consistent with local housing forecasts. This has been a problem in federal air quality non-attainment regions where RTPs must be updated every four years while local housing elements needed to be updated every five years. Amendments to California state law as a result of Senate Bill 375 (Steinberg, Chapter 728, Statutes of 2009) allow local agencies to update their housing elements every eight years to correspond to every other four year RTP update.

As a federal air quality attainment region, SRTA is only required to update the RTP every five years. The RTP and local housing elements have shared a five year cycle; however, the timing of these processes was not conducive to coordination and consistency. In consultation and coordination with local agencies, SRTA elected to move to a four year RTP cycle commencing in 2018. Local agencies in turn moved to an eight year housing element cycle. The new schedule is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - New Regional Transportation Plan and Housing Element Update Cycle



- **Tribal Government** – Tribal governments establish plans and policies for tribal lands and prepare transportation projects by way of tribal transportation improvement programs.
- **Regional** – SRTA is responsible for planning, coordinating, and administering state and federal transportation funds for the region. In addition to the 20-year RTP, SRTA develops an annual overall work program (OWP) and nominates projects for funding to the CTC through the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).
- **Local** – Local governments have authority over roadways and land uses within their respective jurisdictional boundary. Local governments nominate all projects potentially having a state or federal funding component to SRTA for inclusion in the RTP.