

# California Transportation Plan Assessment (AB 285) Achieving transportation-related GHG state reduction goals through alignment of the California Transportation Plan and Regional Sustainable Communities Strategies

Presentation of Draft Findings

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# Research approach

- SGC contracted with UC -- Berkeley as lead, subawards to UCLA and UC Davis; established subawards, hired students, Human Subjects protocols for the study (to enable interviews) approved (May 2021)
- Reviewed history of transportation planning in California and analyzed state and regional plans, funding, and legal issues (June – August 2021)
- Completed >80 interviews with current and former elected officials, advocates, academic researchers, and staff of state agencies, transit agencies, local jurisdictions, MPOs. (August – October 2021)
- Drafted 5 working papers and a report that combines them plus a summary report (Aug. – Oct. 2021)
- Reviews of the drafts (October – November 2021)
- Final report reflecting comments received will be submitted December 2021
- TODAY: present draft findings from UC work

# Finding #1: There is a gap between the climate-friendly state vision for transportation and the reality that investments at the state and regional levels continue to emphasize automobility.

AB 285 calls for:

- a review of transportation plans and programs at the state and metropolitan level, including Sustainable Communities strategies.
- An assessment of how the implementation of the CTP and regional plans “will influence the configuration of the statewide integrated multimodal transportation system.”
- A “review of the potential impacts and opportunities for coordination” of key state funding programs,” to be conducted in consultation with the administering agencies.
- Calls out several programs for special attention:
  - the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program
  - the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program
  - the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program, the Transformative Climate Communities Program
  - the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program.

*We found:*

- *The programs referenced in AB 285 represent ~2% of the state transportation spending*
- *A large share of state, regional and local transportation expenditures goes to maintaining, rehabilitating, and operating the mature and extensive highway system*
- *Highway capacity is being added at the state, regional and local levels to address congestion, safety, and goods movement concerns and will likely increase VMT*
- *Funds for bike, ped projects are oversubscribed*
- *Transit is an important strategy in the state and regional plans, but has been hit hard by COVID and faces funding shortfalls, maintenance needs*

# Finding #2: The institutional structure for transportation is decentralized across many agencies and levels of government, requiring a high level of cooperation to reach decisions and fund projects and making changes in direction a complex matter.

## Federal



## State of California



California  
Transportation  
Commission



CALIFORNIA  
STRATEGIC  
GROWTH  
COUNCIL



CALIFORNIA  
High-Speed Rail Authority

## Regional/Local





# Finding #3. California's large number of transportation organizations and the plans they produce add to the complexity as goals expand and new priorities emerge.

18 MPO Plans

City and County Plans

## CALTRANS AND OTHER STATEWIDE PLANS AND RESOURCES

<p><b>Climate Change, Emissions, and Resiliency</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change Scoping Plan</li> <li>• Mobile Source Strategy</li> <li>• SB 150 Report</li> <li>• California's 4<sup>th</sup> Climate Change Assessment</li> <li>• California's Climate Future: The Governor's Environmental Goals and Policies Report</li> <li>• Climate Action Program Reports</li> <li>• Integrated Energy Policy Report</li> <li>• State Implementation Plan</li> <li>• Caltrans District Vulnerability Assessments</li> <li>• Safeguarding California</li> </ul>
<p><b>Natural Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• California Water Plan</li> <li>• Water Resilience Portfolio</li> <li>• Statewide Wildlife Action Plan</li> <li>• California Essential Habitat Connectivity Studies</li> <li>• SWAP Transportation Planning Companion Plan</li> <li>• Advanced Mitigation Guidelines</li> </ul>
<p><b>Quality of Life and Public Health</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• California Statewide Plan to Promote Health and Mental Health Equity &amp; California Wellness Plan</li> <li>• Smart Mobility Framework, Active Transportation, Complete Streets, and Main Street reports</li> </ul>
<p><b>Housing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• California Statewide Housing Assessment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Freight and Rail</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Freight Action Plan</li> <li>• High Speed Rail Authority Business Plan</li> </ul>
<p><b>Safety and Operations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Highway Safety Plan</li> <li>• Highway Safety Plan</li> <li>• Highway Safety Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Traffic Operations Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Commercial Vehicle Safety Plan</li> <li>• Transportation Asset Management Plan</li> <li>• California Transportation Infrastructure Priorities: Vision and Interim Recommendations</li> </ul>

## CALTRANS MODAL PLANS



<p><b>INTERREGIONAL PLAN</b> Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Provides guidance for identifying and prioritizing interregional transportation improvements to be funded in the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP).</p>
<p><b>FREIGHT PLAN</b> California Freight Mobility Plan</p>	<p>Identifies freight routes and transportation facilities that are critical to California's economy. The CFMP includes a three-tiered freight project priority list.</p>
<p><b>RAIL PLAN</b> California State Rail Plan</p>	<p>Establishes a new framework for California's rail network and sets the stage for new and better rail and community connections in the State for the next 20 years and beyond.</p>
<p><b>AVIATION PLAN</b> California Aviation System Plan</p>	<p>Provides a basis for implementing the State Aeronautics Act and identifies the Division of Aeronautics' role in Caltrans' mission, vision, and values.</p>
<p><b>TRANSIT PLAN</b> Statewide Transit Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Helps the state and its partners gain a better understanding of present and future roles and responsibilities to support public transportation.</p>
<p><b>BIKE &amp; PED PLAN</b> California Bicycle &amp; Pedestrian Plan</p>	<p>A policy plan to support active modes of transportation and create a framework that increases safe bicycling and walking for enhanced connectivity with all modes of transportation.</p>

## Other Plans

2018 California State Rail Plan  
Connecting California

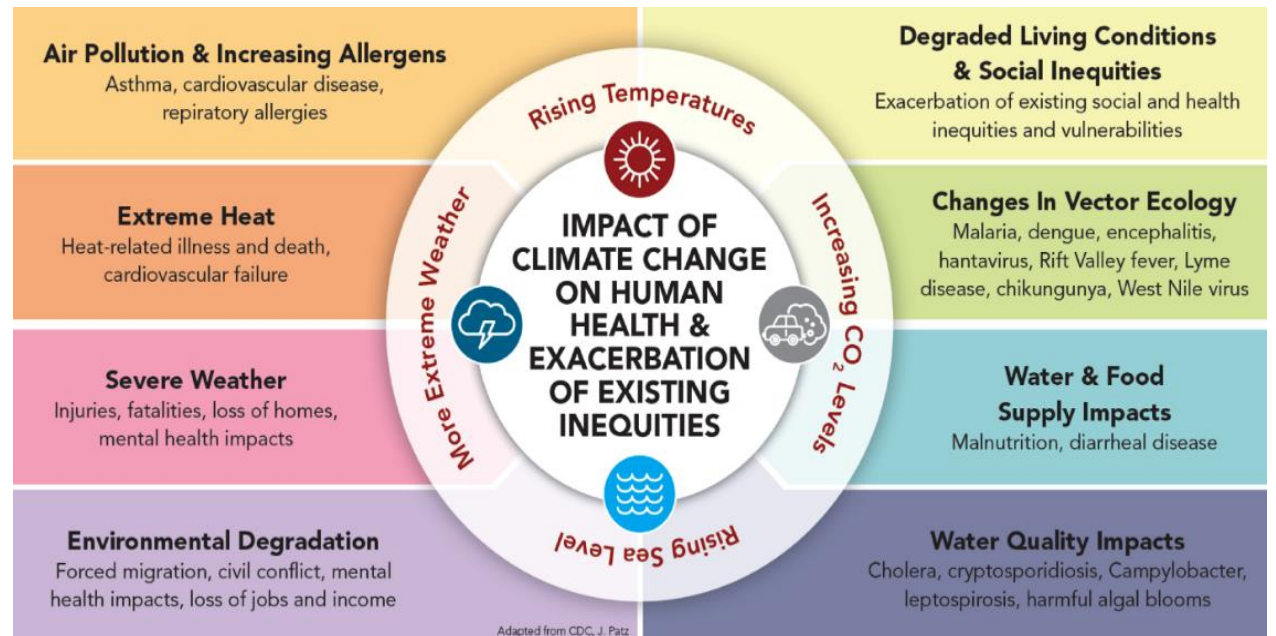
2019 State Highway System Management Plan

**Finding #4:** While the California Transportation Plan (CTP 2050) addresses many goals and sets an aspirational vision for transportation in CA, it directly shapes only a portion of investment decisions. Many key decisions rest with local and regional authorities.

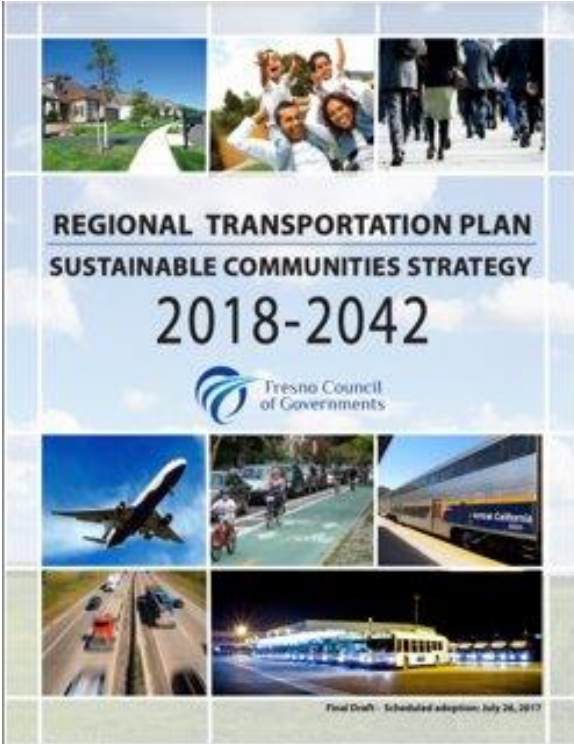
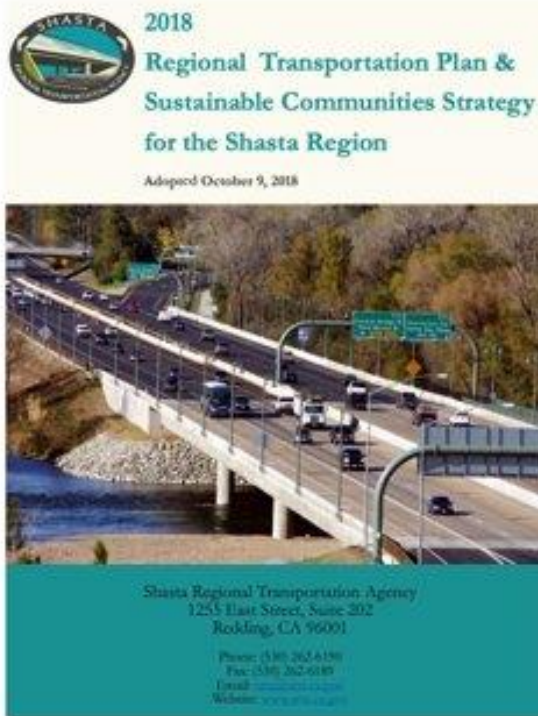
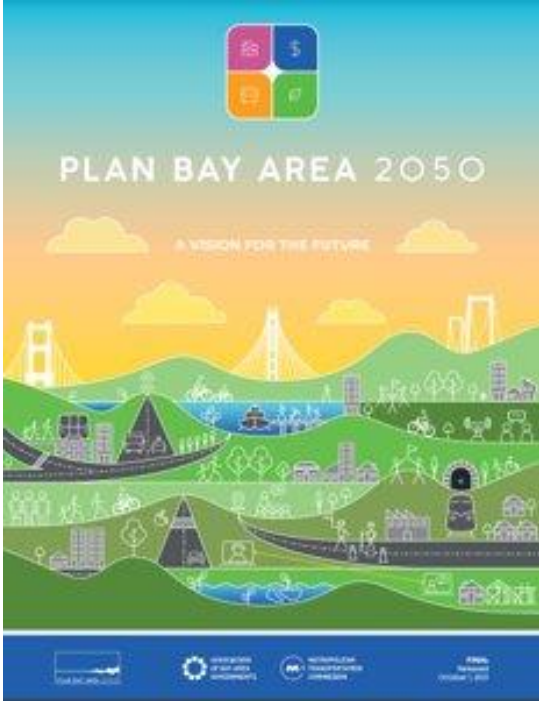




Finding #5. Many state and local funding programs do not explicitly address key CTP goals, such as combatting climate change and improving equity. This is in part because the projects were conceived before these goals were given heavy emphasis.

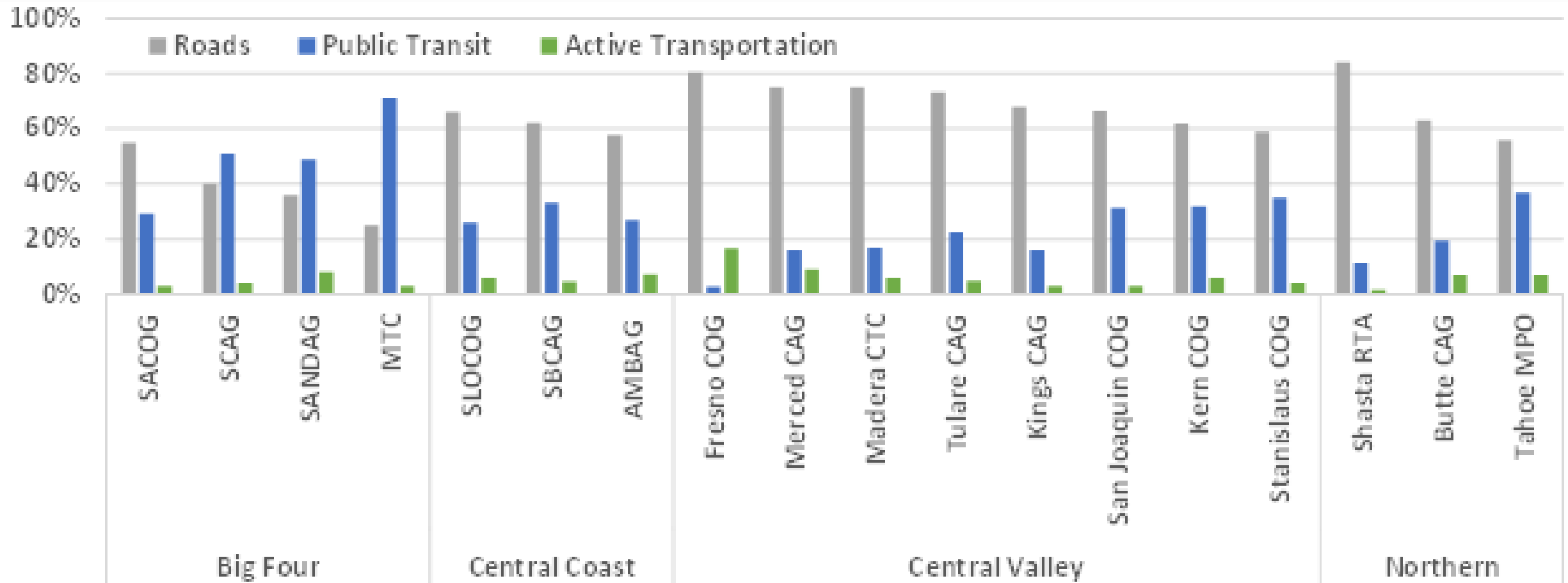


Finding #6: MPOs and their RTPs/SCSs have no choice but to bank on ambitious state and local action to achieve their mandated goals, since MPOs do not directly control many of the core components and assumptions of their plans, including local transportation spending and land use.



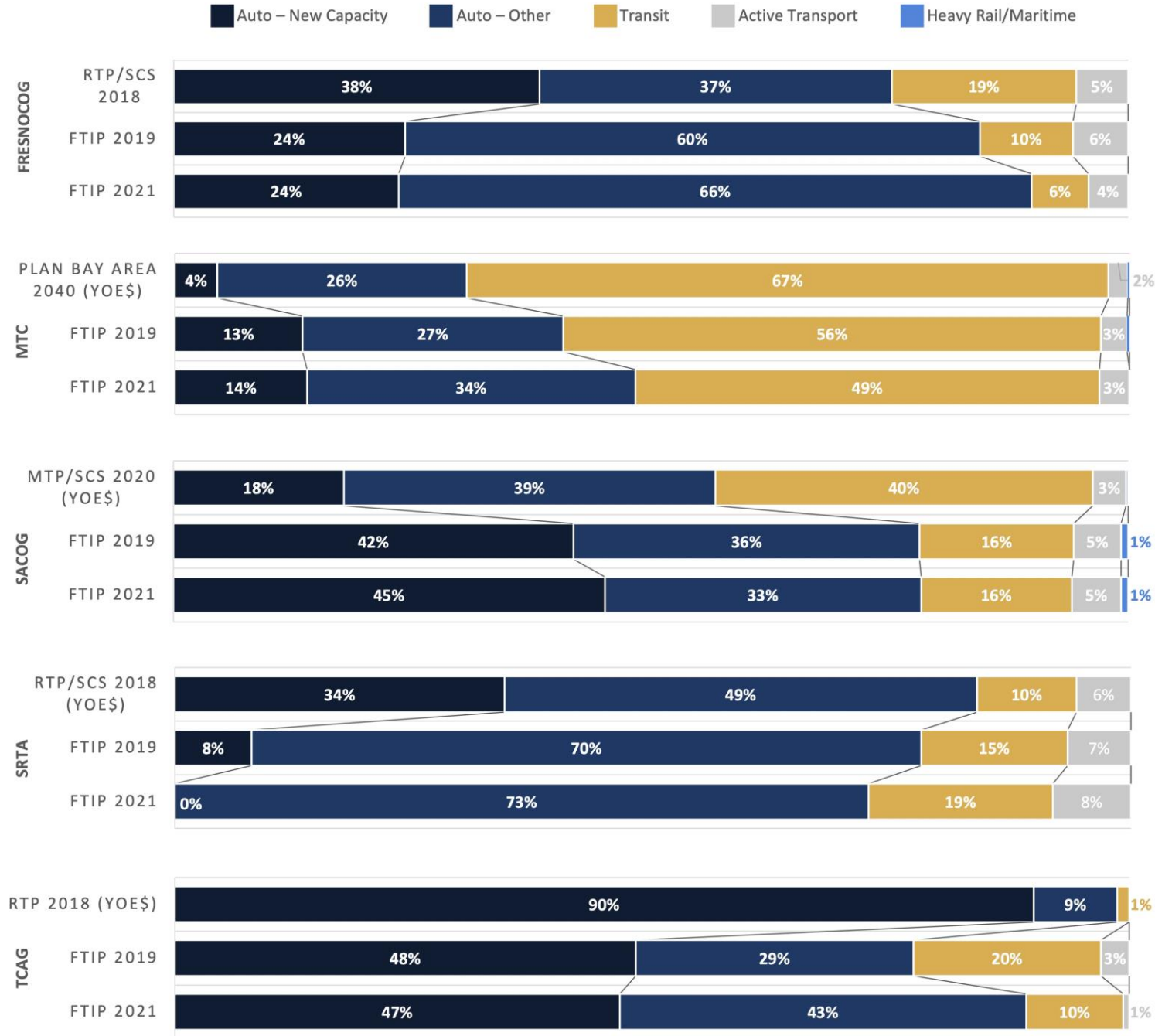


Finding #6 (cont.) : Most MPOs continue to devote the bulk of their total spending towards auto investments, both capacity expansion and road operations and/or maintenance.

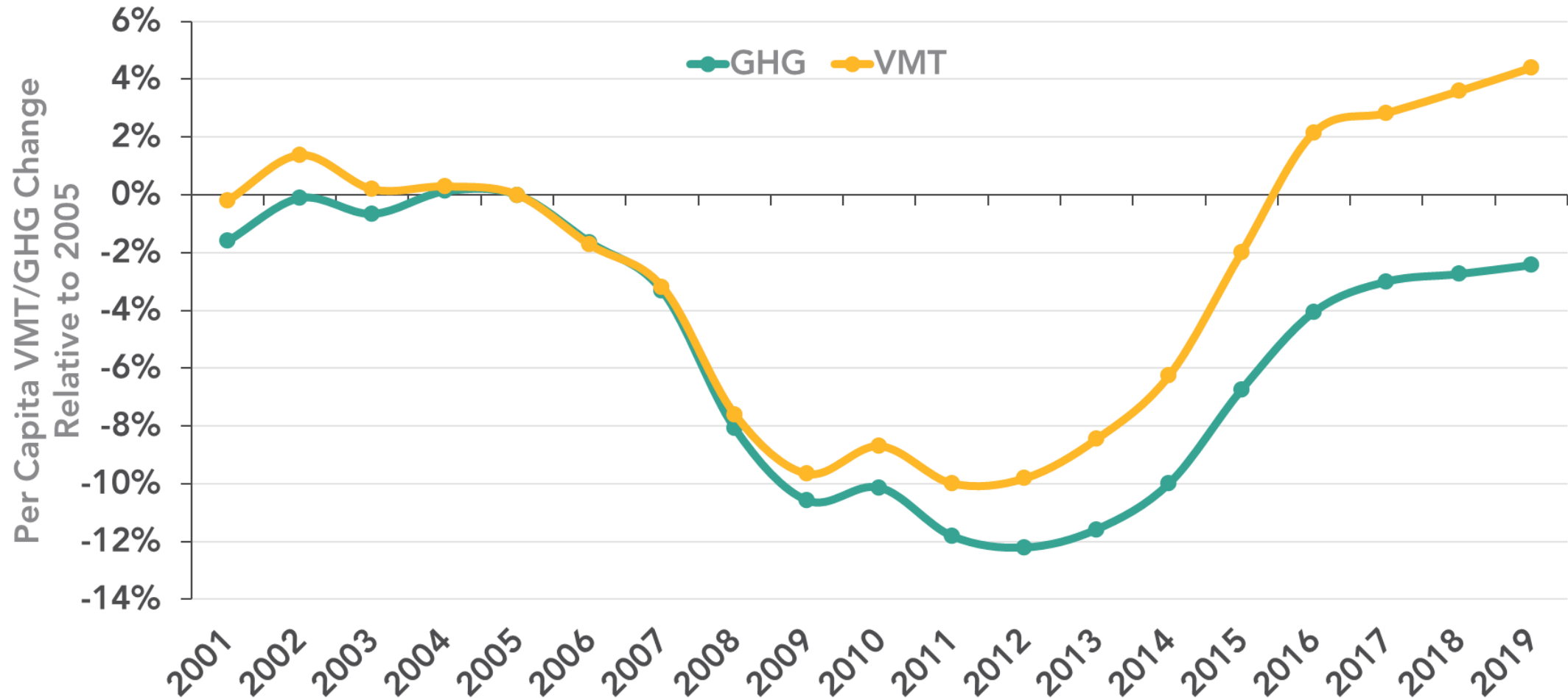


(cont'd finding #6)  
 Expenditures programmed in TIPs are generally less multimodal than expenditures planned in RTP/SCSs.

These results indicate that despite multimodal ambitions in some RTP/SCSs, MPOs tend to frontload auto infrastructure and backload transit when funding projects.



**Finding #7:** At all levels of government, spending in transportation tends to be additive without revisiting past commitments to projects or programs. Yet without reconsidering these commitments, California will not meet climate goals or other goals in the CTP 2050.



Source: CARB analysis



**Finding #8: Existing funding programs have flexibility to adjust spending to meet current policy priorities.**

### **Strategies for flexibility**

- Search for alternative ways to achieve ends (alternative modes, new types of services, more effective operations, price signals, .....)
- Prioritize projects that meet policy goals for early action
- Provide matching funds to high priority projects

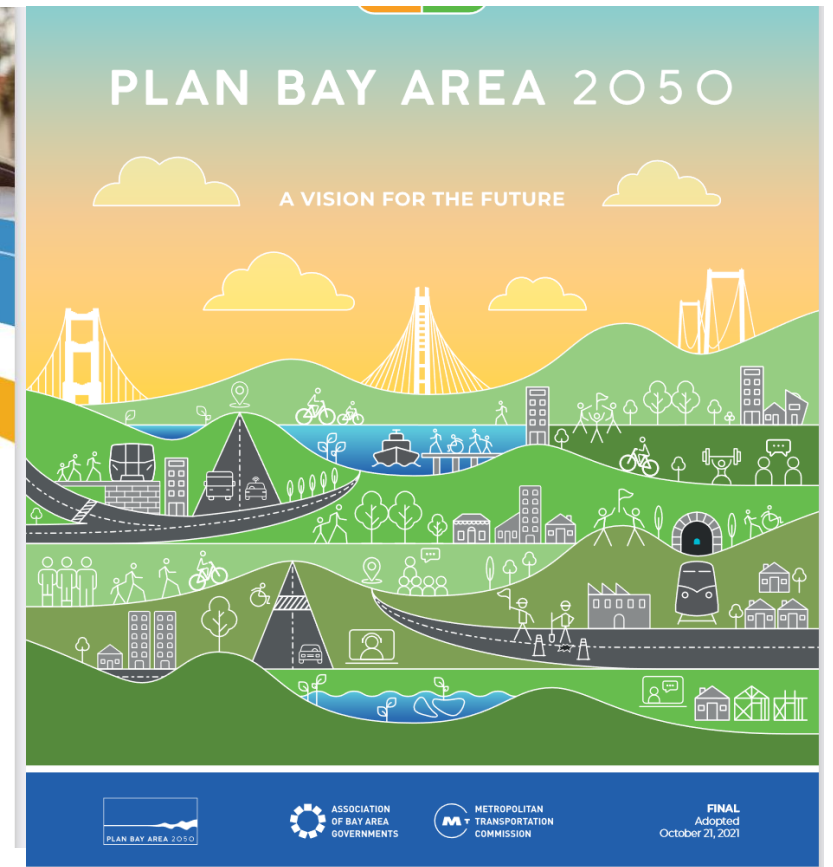
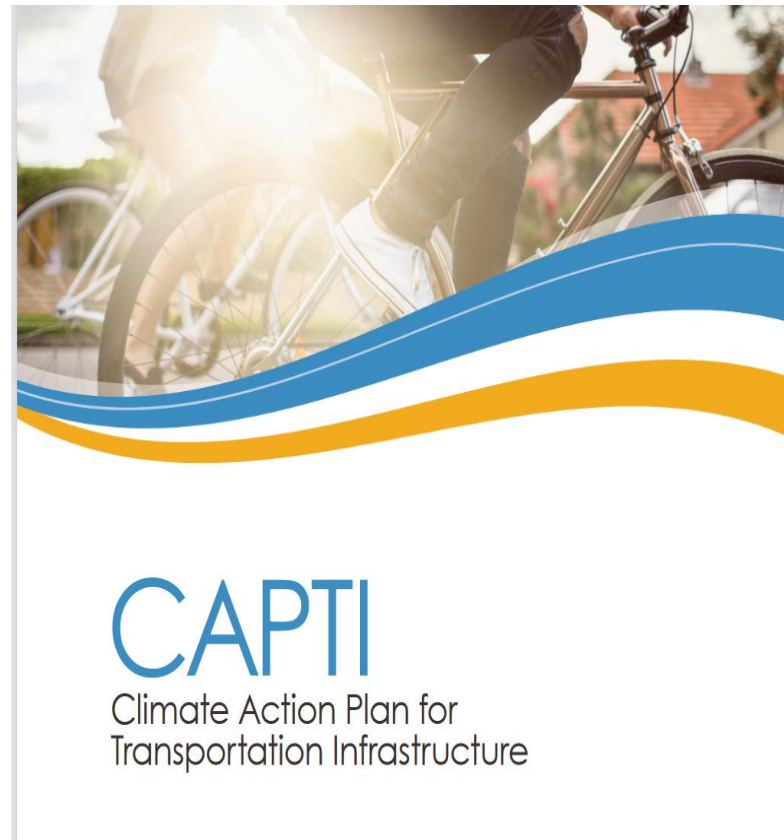
### **Concerns about flexibility**

- Too flexible: may not offer clear direction and may not meet all goals
- Promises made: May lead to changes that some see as upending previously agreed upon commitments, undermining trust

# Finding #9. The state and MPOs are beginning to establish guidelines and use matching funds and programming authorities to advance projects that help attain California priorities.

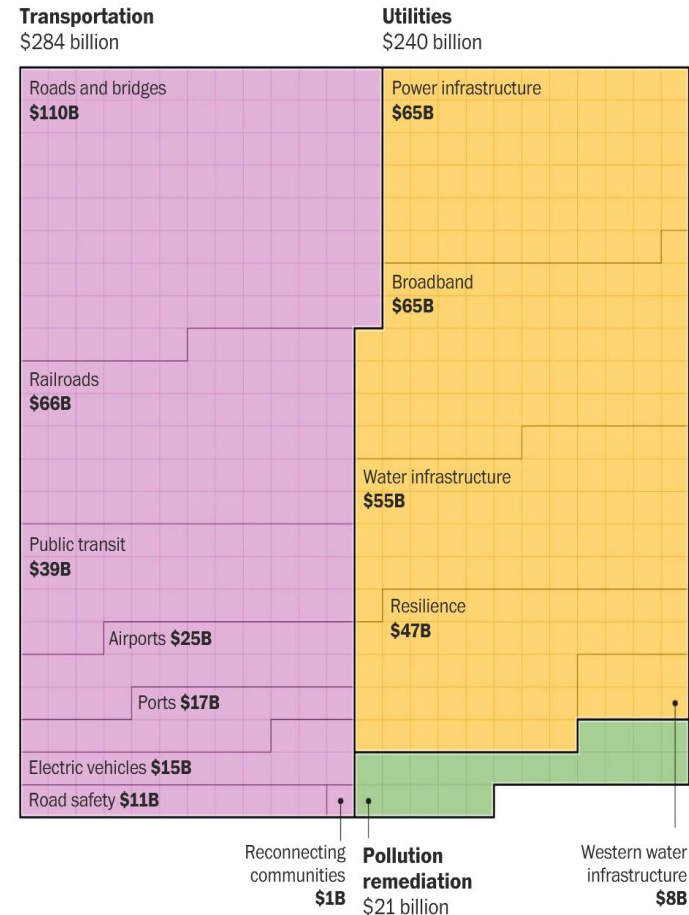
## Other important steps:

- State and regional agencies work with project sponsors to modify their projects so that they will score well when evaluated against state goals
- Pilot projects to test new strategies -- preferably with independent (3<sup>rd</sup> party) evaluations



# Finding #10: The new federal infrastructure legislation , together with new state funding, opens up opportunities for reimagining transportation in California.

\$550 billion  
in new  
spending  
over 5 years



Possibilities will be opened up to use funds strategically:

- Bring in federal funds for high priority projects
- Use additional funds / freed up funds to increase responsiveness to California priorities