

# Chapter B: Policy Element

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# POLICY ELEMENT

## INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The Policy Element identifies transportation goals, objectives, and policies that will help meet the needs of the region. These goals, objectives, and policies are established to determine specific courses of action to guide Tulare County toward implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan and the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

## GOVERNING POLICIES

### ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- GOAL** Ensure that transportation investments do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.
- OBJECTIVE** Require regional transportation planning that is consistent with Title VI and Environmental Justice Federal Requirements.
- POLICY** 1. Assure that transportation project benefits and burdens are not inequitably distributed throughout the region.
- OBJECTIVE** Include targeted outreach to environment justice communities in transportation planning.
- POLICY**
1. Provide environmental justice communities opportunities for input into transportation plans, programs, and projects in a manner consistent with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, including the prohibition of intentional discrimination and adverse disparate impact regarding race, ethnicity, or national origin.
  2. Provide outreach to various environmental justice communities within Tulare County, including, but not limited to, the Tule River Tribe and primarily Spanish-speaking communities.
  3. Avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
  4. Ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process

## AIR QUALITY AND GREENHOUSE GASES

- GOAL** Promote the improvement of air quality and greenhouse gas reductions through congestion management coordination of land use, housing, and transportation systems; provision of alternative modes of transportation; and provision of incentives that reduce vehicle miles traveled.
- OBJECTIVE** Encourage coordinated development to achieve an improved jobs-housing balance in the regional plan.
- POLICY**
1. Encourage mixed-use developments in urbanized areas.
  2. Encourage provision of an adequate supply of housing for the region's workforce and adequate sites to accommodate business expansion to minimize interregional trips and long-distance commuting.
- OBJECTIVE** Plan for and implement coordination of land use and alternative modes of transportation that would reduce vehicle miles traveled by providing urban and rural residents with transportation options in multiple modes.
- POLICY**
1. Support coordinated alternative modes of transportation including transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and rideshare and vanpool programs.
- OBJECTIVE** Prioritize projects that contribute to improved air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
- POLICY**
1. Support the implementation of alternative fuel and other power sources for surface transportation, such as Compressed Natural Gas and electricity.
  2. Achieve United States Environmental Protection Agency National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) by required attainment dates, or earlier if practicable.
  3. Promote the equitable adoption of clean, renewable energy technologies to ensure a reliable energy supply, enhance the region's economy, and improve air quality locally and regionally.
  4. Expand awareness of the need to reduce greenhouse gases to both agencies and the public and incorporate the latest scientific information into planning efforts.
  5. Support and participate in efforts and coalitions promoting use of Cap-and-Trade funding for projects that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Tulare County.

- POLICY (CONT.)
6. Actively seek out Cap and Trade and other funds, if available, for various projects in Tulare County that will contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
  7. Add “missing links” (streets) to roadway network that reduce out of direction travel and provide a free flow traffic connector that will improve air quality by reducing stop and go truck travel on local arterials.

## PUBLIC HEALTH

**GOAL** Promote public health in the region by providing opportunities for residents to bicycle and walk to destinations such as home, work, school, medical facilities, and commercial and service businesses.

**OBJECTIVE** Consider effects on public health when investing in the transportation system, giving specific attention to bicycle and pedestrian projects.

- POLICY**
1. Support investment in bicycle and pedestrian systems, giving attention to projects and networks that will allow residents to walk and bicycle to frequented destinations and key service providers, including transit stops.
  2. Provide outreach to employers regarding the benefits of active transportation and suggest measures employers can use to encourage its use.

## COMPREHENSIVE

- GOAL** Provide an efficient, integrated, multi-modal transportation system for the movement of people and goods that enhances the physical, economic, and social environment in the Tulare County region.
- OBJECTIVE** Encourage and support a connected and multi-modal regional circulation network that is convenient, safe, and efficient.
- POLICY**
1. Encourage jurisdictions in Tulare County to consider bicycle lanes, public transit, transit-oriented and mixed-use development, pedestrian networks, rail, and other complete streets development during updates of general plans and other local planning processes.
  2. Implement a Complete Streets Program whereby agencies will prepare plans to accommodate all transportation users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motor vehicle operators and riders, and utilize existing revenue and other funding sources to coordinate with local agencies to implement those plans as aggressively as feasible.
  3. Provide for continued coordination and evaluation of the planned circulation system among cities and the county.
  4. Make existing road and bridge maintenance a high priority.
- OBJECTIVE** Support communities in developing walkable, bikeable, and transit-ready neighborhoods that work in tandem with motor vehicle facilities for a safe and comprehensive local circulation system for people of all levels of income and various availability of resources.
- POLICY**
1. Fund feasibility studies, complete streets studies, and community and neighborhood plans to evaluate and plan for transit readiness, walkability and bikeability, as funds are available.
  2. Fund the development of capital improvement programs for complete streets and active transportation-type plans, as funds are available.
  3. Provide funding as available for the implementation of complete streets and/or active transportation-type plans and related capital improvement programs as provided for in policies 1 and 2 above. Funding may include but is not limited to: Active Transportation Program (ATP) funds (including various safety, safe routes to schools, and transportation enhancement funds), Congestion

Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, Cap and Trade funds, and others.

4. Ensure equitable access to effective and viable transportation options for all, regardless of race, gender, income, national origin, age, physical ability with a focus on benefitting the regions' most vulnerable populations and closing existing unmet transportation gaps that are warranted.
5. Consider conducting barrier studies, consistent with state recommendations.
6. Improve first-mile/last-mile linkages near transit stops throughout the region, with special attention to disadvantaged communities.

**OBJECTIVE** Coordinate with transportation agencies across county borders to ensure an efficient flow of people and goods along key trade and interregional corridors.

- POLICY**
1. Support coordinated transportation planning and programming.
  2. Participate in multi-regional efforts and organizations such as the California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) and the Self-Help Counties Coalition.
  3. Coordinate with adjacent counties and transit service providers to connect Tulare County residents with the locations and destinations needed, such as, airports, colleges and universities, and employment sites.

## RELIABILITY AND CONGESTION

- GOAL** Maintain or improve reliability of the transportation network and maintain or reduce congestion.
- OBJECTIVE** Follow TCAG's established Congestion Management Process (CMP) to monitor the performance of the street and highway network within Tulare County to ensure safe and efficient movement of people and goods and to maintain or improve reliability of the transportation network and maintain or reduce congestion
- POLICY**
1. Encourage alternative transportation solutions over roadway expansion to reduce congestion including Transportation Systems Management (TSM), Transportation Demand Management (TDM), Transportation Control Measures (TCMs), and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) strategies as contained in the CMP.
  2. Evaluate and consider current and future congestion conditions on the regional road network when investing in the transportation system.
  3. Encourage non-single occupancy and lower/zero emission vehicle as preferred alternatives.
  4. Implement the recommendations from completed transportation planning studies when appropriate and feasible.
  5. Prioritize and program the "gap closure" related capital improvements for highways, regional roads, and interchanges for the RTP planning period, consistent with adopted goals and policies and the project eligibility requirements for each funding program. Example – SR 99 widen from four to six lanes as a gap-closure measure.
  6. Enhance the development of a highway and street network which will relieve current and future congestion.
  7. Support improvements of critical segments and interchanges along the State Highway System
  8. Encourage frontage roads along state highways, where appropriate.
  9. Support improvements on regional roads to include safe accessibility for active modes of transportation.



- GOAL** Achieve a safe transportation system for all motorized and non-motorized users on all public roads in Tulare County
- OBJECTIVE** Reduce the number of roadway fatalities and serious injuries, including pedestrian and bicycle fatalities and serious injuries.
- POLICY**
1. Develop regional implementation mechanism through funding processes to advance safety projects and achieve the safety targets.
  2. Encourage and support member agencies to prioritize transportation projects that address safety issues.
  3. Work with law enforcement and emergency medical service on developing strategies and programs to reduce accidents and casualties.
  4. Support and work with responsible agencies in educating the public about safe driving practice; support the development of an education program / plan to increase awareness of the risky driving behaviors
  5. Work with federal, state, and regional partners and stakeholders to establish annual safety targets that are based on safety conditions in Tulare County and contribute to the overall state safety targets.
  6. Assess the transportation system safety performance by collecting and analyzing historical collision data using official data sources.
- GOAL** Support more efficient use of the transportation system through the implementation of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technology.
- OBJECTIVE** Coordinate, monitor, and integrate planning and programming for intelligent transportation systems (ITS), smart infrastructure and demand-responsive transportation.
- POLICY**
1. Encourage the use of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technology by participating in the upkeep and implementation of the San Joaquin Valley Intelligent Transportation System Strategic Deployment Plan and the local Urban Area ITS Plan(s).
  2. Build upon ITS planning efforts in the San Joaquin Valley in conjunction with federal rules (ITS architecture and standards conformity and statewide and metropolitan planning) to expand ITS actions.

- POLICY (CONT.) 3. Build upon best practices from past and current transit ITS deployment experiences in the State of California.
- 4. Periodically update Tulare County Region’s Urbanized Area ITS Plan(s).
- 5. Support and update the San Joaquin Valley ITS Strategic Deployment Plan as needed.
- 6. Support Intelligent Transportation Systems for upgrading state highway interchanges from rural to urban standards.
- 7. Coordinate ITS improvements and infrastructure with public safety agencies.

TRANSIT

**GOAL** Provide a safe, secure, coordinated, and efficient public transit system that can reasonably meet the needs of residents.

**OBJECTIVE** Encourage and support the development of a safe, efficient, effective, and economical public transit system.

- POLICY 1. Encourage development of a transit system that interconnects and coordinates with other modes of transportation (e.g., passenger rail, intercity bus, multi-jurisdictional transit, bicycle facilities, pedestrian walkways, etc.).
- 2. Encourage the cities of Visalia, Porterville, Lindsay, Exeter, Farmersville, Dinuba, Woodlake, and Tulare to plan for and implement transit-oriented land use along the planned Cross Valley Corridor and its connections.
- 3. Require all transit plans to include evaluation and policies on transit safety and security.
- 4. Encourage transit agencies to annually review transit safety procedures.
- 5. Ensure transit agencies make use of all available federal, state, and local funding to sustain, expand, and improve local transit services, and ensure the timely and best use of those funds.
- 6. Encourage the consolidation of duplicate services within the region to make best use of funding and other resources.

- POLICY (CONT.)
7. Develop cohesion and cooperation among transit operators that will result in efficient and accessible transit service between and within communities.
  8. Develop a minimum acceptable response time for transit Dial-a-Ride service and maximum delay times for fixed route service.
  9. Support and encourage a network of fast, convenient, high quality transit services that are competitive with the cost and time to drive alone during peak periods.
  10. Utilize Cap and Trade funds available for transit, if available, for projects in Tulare County.
  11. Complete Triennial Performance Audits of all transit agencies and ensure that needed improvements are implemented as necessary as feasible.
  12. Encourage employers to offer incentives, such as awards, flexible hours, and financial incentives for employees who use transit for their work commute.
  13. Include transit networks and data in the Transportation Demand Model for use in evaluating the transit system.
  14. Coordinate Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies amongst transit agencies to ensure systems compatibility and to enable the use of uniform regional passes and other fare media.
  15. Encourage and support the transitions to an all-electric/zero-emissions transit fleet.

*OBJECTIVE* Support the increased coordination of all transit services in Tulare County.

- POLICY
1. Support transit agencies in the coordination and consolidation of transit operations, which may include but is not limited to provision of transit service, administration, facilities management, procurement procedures, fare structures, reporting, grant management, etc.
  2. Support expansion and improvement of transit service between jurisdictions in Tulare County and connectivity with adjacent counties and services alongside the continued development of jurisdiction-specific transit service.

- OBJECTIVE** Provide information and receive input from residents regarding transit needs within the region and work to implement feasible transit improvements.
- POLICY**
1. Encourage each transit agency to further their citizen involvement processes, as well as participate in Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC) and Transit Forum meetings.
  2. Update and adopt unmet transit needs definitions at least every five years and seek increasing public participation in the transit unmet needs process.
  3. Work with local transit agencies to improve public outreach concerning the use of transit as an alternative to automobile travel.
  4. Work with social services agencies on the development of the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan.
  5. Coordinate the provision of Mobility Management and On-Demand services in the Tulare County region.

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

- GOAL** Improve, enhance, and expand the region’s bicycle and pedestrian systems and connectivity to those systems, while keeping them safe and convenient.
- OBJECTIVE** Encourage bicycle usage in Tulare County by providing safe and convenient bike routes and facilities.
- POLICY**
1. Update the Regional Active Transportation Plan every five years or as appropriate to support the competitiveness of local proposals in the Active Transportation Program application cycle and to identify bicycle routes that are appropriate for commuter, recreational, and student riders.
  2. Convene public outreach and implement strategies for Share the Road concepts.
  3. Designate and design regional bicycle routes that reduce conflicts with motor vehicles.
  4. Encourage local agency review of bicycling needs with all new development.

- POLICY (CONT.)
5. Encourage local agencies to support implementation of bicycle support facilities such as bike racks, showers, and other facilities during the project review process.
  6. Coordinate bicycle planning and implementation with other modes of transportation, particularly with transit.
  7. Support development of designated regional bicycle paths adjacent to or separate from commute corridors, connecting cities and communities.
  8. Support implementation of local bicycle and trail plans.
  9. Utilize Cap and Trade funds along with other sources of funds for bicycle and pedestrian projects, if available, for projects in Tulare County.
  10. Support the closure of gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian systems to improve connectivity and attractiveness of these modes of transportation.
  11. Include active transportation modes in the Transportation Demand Model, when feasible.
  12. Utilize SB-1 planning funds to continue completion of Complete Streets Plans for rural communities, when funds are available

*OBJECTIVE* Educate, incentivize, and enable residents to utilize active modes of transportation.

- POLICY
1. Encourage employers to offer incentives, such as awards, flexible hours, and financial incentives for employees who utilize active modes of transportation for their work commute.
  2. Promote the placement of compatible land uses near each other and design them to provide for a high-quality environment where residents will enjoy walking and/or bicycling to their destinations.
  3. Encourage and support maintenance and enhancement of existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
  4. Encourage utilization of highway, streets, and road shoulders for bicycle use and pedestrian access when safe.
  5. Develop collaborative partnerships with irrigation districts, rail companies, and other agencies to utilize canals, waterways, abandoned right of ways, and other land/corridors as multi-use trails.

POLICY (CONT.) 6. Monitor key corridors for bicycle usage and develop strategies for improvement.

*OBJECTIVE* Support safe pedestrian walkways within the transportation network in Tulare County.

- POLICY
1. Encourage removal of barriers (walls, fences, etc.) for safe and convenient movement of pedestrians. Special emphasis should be placed on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.
  2. Encourage cities and county agencies to consider needs of pedestrians and people with disabilities including greater accessibility within the multi-modal system as envisioned in the 2018 RTP/SCS during the project review process and policies in their general plans

## GOODS MOVEMENT

**GOAL** Provide a transportation system that efficiently and effectively transports goods to, from, within, and throughout Tulare County.

*OBJECTIVE* Encourage the interaction of truck, rail, and air freight transportation.

- POLICY
1. Work with Caltrans and adjacent regions in the development of intermodal corridors.
  2. Include comprehensive goods movement planning in the RTP.
  3. Implement the San Joaquin Valley Goods Movement Plan.

**GOAL** Improve goods movement within the region to increase economic vitality, meet the growing needs of freight and passenger services, and improve traffic safety, air quality, and overall mobility.

*OBJECTIVE* Increase the use of freight rail transportation.

- POLICY
1. Restore and maintain freight rail service in Tulare County as a significant transportation mode, providing service to commerce and industry.
  2. Coordinate with other agencies to restore and enhance rail service to existing facilities to attract new industries to Tulare County.
  3. Coordinate with regional partners to extend track in west Visalia Industrial Park and promote the development of an inter-modal yard to transition from truck to freight rail.

POLICY (CONT.) 4. Support the concept of an Inland Inter-modal Port(s) in the San Joaquin Valley that would increase rail capacity at the LA ports while alleviating truck congestion and thereby achieving a zero-emissions freight system using electric trucks to deliver goods to the state's metro areas from centralized inland ports.

**OBJECTIVE** Support an efficient truck transportation system.

- POLICY**
1. Give special consideration to transportation projects that improve air quality and the operational efficiency of goods movement.
  2. Explore the possibility of a zero-emission freight corridor on SR 99 utilizing a catenary hybrid-electric system through a Valley-wide feasibility study

## RAIL

**GOAL** Promote safe, economical, convenient rail systems and schedules that meet the needs of passenger and freight services in the region.

**OBJECTIVE** Support the growth of passenger rail systems that serve residents of Tulare County.

- POLICY**
1. Support the development, extension, and maintenance of passenger rail service, including, but not limited to, Cross Valley Rail, High Speed Rail, and Amtrak.
  2. Ensure that the high-speed rail system supports Tulare County in achieving its economic, environmental, land use, and mobility goals.
  3. Determine potential Bus Rapid Transit alignments and undergo feasibility analysis, as practicable.
  4. Participate in and support the activities of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority in improving services on the San Joaquins Amtrak route.

**OBJECTIVE** Support the maintenance, preservation, and expansion of freight rail systems in Tulare County.

- POLICY**
1. Support continued improvement of freight rail service and freight transfer points within Tulare County.
  2. Coordinate with the Public Utilities Commission to notify Tulare County of any rail line abandonment proposals to evaluate possible impacts on the transportation system and consider preservation possibilities or alternative uses for such facilities.
  3. Advocate for maintaining freight rail lines in the Tulare County region and prevent rail abandonments when feasible.
  4. Utilize Cap and Trade funds for goods movement rail projects, if available, for projects supporting freight rail systems that benefit Tulare County.
  5. Partner with owners and operators of all types of rail systems to result in safe, efficient, and beneficial rail systems for all users.

## AVIATION

**GOAL** Support development of a regional system of airports that meets the air commerce and general aviation needs of the county.

**OBJECTIVE** Include aviation connectivity in planning for region-wide transportation.

- POLICY**
1. Encourage efforts to ensure that compatible land uses adjacent to airports are consistent with the Tulare County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan or the respective city's certified Airport Master Plan.
  2. Coordinate airport planning with other components of the circulation system.



## EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

**GOAL** Support the development and implementation of emerging technologies in the Surface Transportation System.

**OBJECTIVE** Monitor and support, as applicable, developing transportation technologies.

- POLICY**
1. Support electric vehicle and facilities conversion in public transportation and for general public use.
  2. Monitor the emergence of autonomous vehicles and evaluate potential impacts to the transportation system.
  3. Support technologies that enhance the safety of the transportation system.

**OBJECTIVE** Adapt and plan for significant and potentially rapid changes in transportation technology.

- POLICY**
1. Plan for electric vehicle infrastructure and implementation.
  2. Evaluate effects of autonomous vehicles on infrastructure and technology and assist agencies in planning and developing policies to accommodate this technology, as appropriate.
  3. Explore the possibility zero emissions freight corridor on SR 99.

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