

CHAPTER 4

Vision for 2035

Goals and Policies

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (2014 RTP), through its goals and policies, sets forth a foundation for expanding options for residents and visitors to access their daily needs in a way that is safe, equitable, protects the environment and promotes investment in the local economy. This is advanced by designing and implementing a transportation system that serves our diverse travel needs and embraces the principle that transportation is intertwined with environmental, economic and social concerns.

As discussed in **Chapter 1**, driven by financial limitations, environmental concern, and demographic trends, the RTC voluntarily adopted a sustainability framework for the 2014 RTP that is based on the triple bottom line definition of sustainability. The triple bottom line concept of sustainability can be seen in every aspect of the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan starting with the goals (**Figure 4.1**) and policies (**Figure 4.2**). Systematically integrating sustainable principles into the 2014 RTP allows the RTC and the public to evaluate how well the long term plan upholds and maintains progress towards generating safe, equitable, and cost-effective access to daily needs, while at the same time generating economic benefits and protecting the environment.



Why Do Policies Matter?

Success in advancing goals relies upon policies that provide direction to the public and decision makers about what course of action will be required to realize the greatest benefit by 2035. The policies established for the 2014 RTP support outcomes, rather than specific projects or modes. The policies (**Figure 4.2**) are designed to focus future investments on the best-performing strategies which generate the desired results and work within financial constraints. They are broad enough to adapt to changing conditions and take advantage of new opportunities, and are not too specific to confine investments to one project or project type.

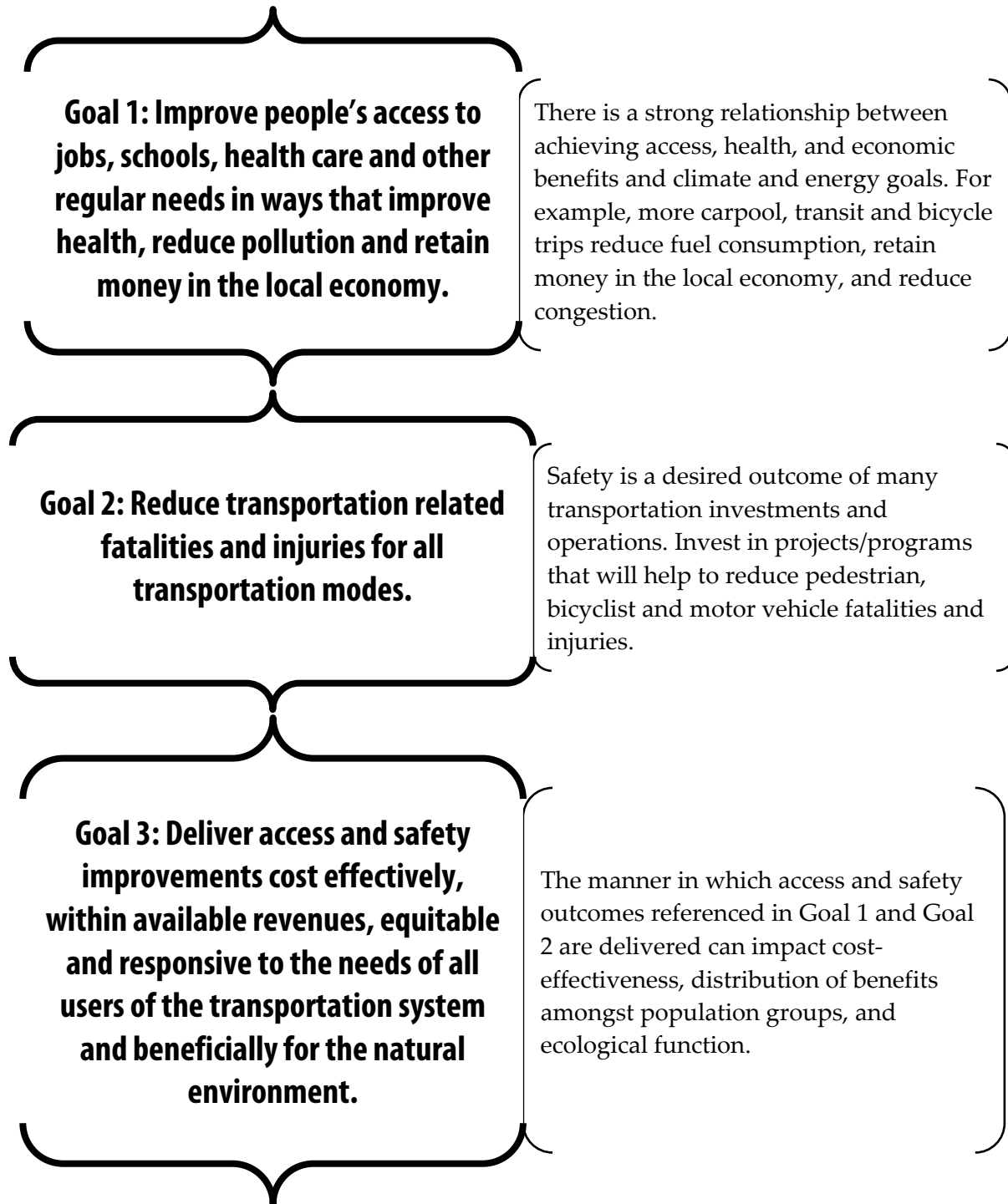


Figure 4.1 – Goals of the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan

Source: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

SUSTAINABILITY POLICIES	OUTCOMES ADVANCED							
	PEOPLE				PROSPERITY		PLANET	
	Access & Mobility	Health	Safety	Equity	Economic Benefit	Cost Effectiveness	Climate & Energy	Ecological Function
<i>Transportation System Management:</i> Implement Transportation System Management (TSM) programs and projects on major roadways across Santa Cruz County that increase the efficiency of the existing transportation system.	X				X	X	X	
<i>Transportation Demand Management:</i> Expand demand management programs that decrease the number of vehicle miles traveled and result in mode shift.	X	X			X		X	
<i>Transportation Infrastructure:</i>								
Improve multimodal access to and within key destinations.	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Ensure network connectivity by closing gaps in the bicycle, pedestrian and transit networks.	X	X	X		X		X	
Design system to reduce the potential for conflict between bicyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles.	X		X	X	X			
<i>Land Use:</i> Support land use decisions that locate new facilities close to existing services, particularly those that service transportation disadvantaged populations.	X			X		X		X
<i>Safety:</i>								
Prioritize funding for safety projects and programs that will reduce fatal or injury collisions.			X					
Encourage projects that improve safety for youth, vulnerable users and transportation disadvantaged.			X	X				
<i>Emergency Services:</i> Support projects that provide access to emergency services.	X		X		X			
<i>Cost Effectiveness & System Maintenance:</i> Maintain and operate the existing transportation system cost-effectively and in a manner that adapts the current transportation system to maximize existing investments.	X		X			X		
<i>Coordination:</i> Improve coordination between agencies in a manner improves efficiencies, and reduces duplication (e.g. paratransit and transit; road repairs; signal synchronization; TDM programs).						X		

SUSTAINABILITY POLICIES	OUTCOMES ADVANCED							
	PEOPLE				PROSPERITY		PLANET	
	Access & Mobility	Health	Safety	Equity	Economic Benefit	Cost Effectiveness	Climate & Energy	Ecological Function
<i>System Financing:</i> Support new or increased taxes and fees that reflect the cost to operate and maintain the transportation system.						X		
<i>Equity:</i> Demonstrate that planned investments will reduce disparities in safety and access for transportation disadvantaged populations.	X		X	X				
<i>Ecological Function:</i> Deliver transportation investments in a way that increases tree canopy, where appropriate, improves habitat and water quality and enhances sensitive areas.								X
<i>Public Engagement:</i> Solicit broad public input on all aspects of regional and local transportation plans, projects and funding actions.				X				

Figure 4.2 – Policies of the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan and Outcomes they Advance

Source: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

Sustainable Rating System

The RTC utilized a rating system called the Sustainable Transportation Analysis Rating System (STARS), which provides an integrated set of performance measures to support development of a sustainable transportation plan. Developed by the North American Sustainable Transportation Council (STC), the STARS framework for integrating sustainability served as a model for the RTC to better align policies with desired community outcomes. A key component of the STARS system is identifying primary performance measures that achieve many sustainability objectives. These measures are referred to as “heavy-lifters;” and often address multiple aspects of the Triple Bottom Line. The policies included in the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan have been carefully selected for their ability to simultaneously achieve multiple sustainability goals. The 2014 RTP goals and polices are consistent with state and federal transportation planning policies, guidelines and requirements including SB 375 required Sustainable Communities Strategy, Complete Streets, and the Smart Mobility Framework developed by Caltrans.

Sustainable Transportation Analysis & Rating System

Key Considerations

GHG Emissions and Senate Bill 375

One of the key issues in developing the goals, policies and targets of the 2014 RTP was to address greenhouse gas emission concerns. The California Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375) requires each of the state's 18 metropolitan areas to reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks. A Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) is being developed by AMBAG as part of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan that coordinates land use and transportation planning to reach the greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target established for the tri-county region. The goals, policies and targets that were developed for the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan strive to reduce GHG emissions from transportation and are consistent with the AMBAG Sustainable Communities Strategy and the goals of Senate Bill 375.

GHG Emissions and California Transportation Plan

Senate Bill 391 (SB 391, 2009) requires the California Department of Transportation to prepare the California Transportation Plan by December 2015 to reduce GHG emissions. The CTP must demonstrate how GHG emissions from transportation will be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050 as described in AB 32 and Executive Order S-03-05. The upcoming CTP 2040 will demonstrate how the major metropolitan areas, rural areas, and state agencies can coordinate planning efforts to achieve critical statewide goals.

Complete Streets



Another key policy consideration in the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan is planning for complete streets. The California Complete Streets Act of 2008 requires cities and counties to identify how the needs of all users of the transportation system will be accommodated in the circulation element of their general plan. This includes pedestrians, transit riders, bicyclists, and motorists, regardless of ages and abilities. With the goal of creating roadways that safely and comfortably provide for all users, creating a network of complete streets will make progress towards every one of the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan goals. Complete Streets are equitable, healthy, cost-effective, good for environment, and improve access to goods and services.

Threading complete streets throughout the goals and policies creates a shift in planning primarily for cars to increasing focus on the movement of people using all modes. One way of looking at it is: if people are the lifeblood of a community, then streets are its veins and arteries. From the complete streets perspective, streets not only serve the traditional role of connecting people to important destinations quickly, but they can serve as destination themselves, as places to walk with friends, ride a bicycle, view public art or enjoy social interactions.

Health and Assembly Bill 441

Health and health equity concerns have also been incorporated into the goals, policies and targets of the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan. Assembly Bill 441, championed by local Assemblyman Bill Monning and signed by Governor Brown in September 2012, acknowledges that California and the nation are facing unprecedented levels of chronic disease, which now accounts for approximately 73 percent of all deaths in California¹ and 75 percent of all United States health care expenditures². The health of California's population is largely determined by the environments in which people live. These environments, including the transportation infrastructure, shape the choices that people make every day. Assembly Bill 441 requires the California Transportation Commission (CTC) to promote health and health equity as part of the Regional Transportation Plan guidelines. On the next revision to the RTP guidelines, the CTC is required to attach a summary of the policies, practices, or projects that have been employed by metropolitan planning organizations that promote health and health equity.



Social Equity and Environmental Justice

The inclusion of the entire range of community interests in the development of the RTP is a key element in the process and is required by both federal and state law. Providing more transportation and mobility choices such as increased transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, increases opportunities for all segments of the population at all income levels. Each region is required by federal regulation and state law to plan for and implement transportation system improvements that will benefit all residents. Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 11135 of the California Government Code, and Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice require planning agencies to be sensitive to how all residents, particularly low-income communities and communities of color, may be impacted by possible transportation and land use changes identified in the RTP. Existing federal regulations require the RTC to ensure that any planned regional transportation improvements do not have a disproportionate adverse impact on low income or other under-represented groups, and that minority and low-income populations receive equal benefits, on an equally timely basis, as other populations. Caltrans, as part of the statewide transportation plan, includes a policy to “Integrate health and social equity in transportation planning and decision making.” Social equity factors considered in development of the 2014 RTP include transportation affordability and access to transportation.

In accordance with Title 23 CFR Part 450.316(a)(1)(vii) the RTC has worked with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) to develop a public participation plan which describes explicit procedures, strategies and desired outcomes for seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services.

Targets

For the first time, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan identified measurable outcomes, called targets (**Figure 4.3**). Voluntarily establishing targets, each linked to a sustainability goal, utilizes performance-based planning to inform investment priorities to create the desired future. Striving to reach specific and measurable outcomes is consistent with the STARS recommended approach of backcasting. Backcasting allows communities to collectively focus on what they want to see happen, then select, evaluate and implement projects and programs that move the community toward these agreed upon outcomes.



The adopted targets were intended to be aggressive, but reasonably obtainable. Unlike more broadly scoped community plans, the adopted targets focus on areas that transportation policies can affect. The targets reflect community input received through surveys and multiple workshops (**Appendix A**). They were carefully crafted to be consistent with state and federal goals, and to work with available data and travel demand model outputs.

The adopted goals, policies and targets were used to prioritize projects for funding in the transportation investment program portion of the 2014 RTP. Incorporating targets into the goals and policies enables the Regional Transportation Commission to assess how well the long range plan will perform over time. More details on target development can be found in **Appendix C**. Details on how well this plan performs in advancing the targets is discussed in **Chapter 7 – System Performance**.

SUSTAINABILITY TARGETS	OUTCOMES ADVANCED							
	PEOPLE				PROSPERITY		PLANET	
	Access & Mobility	Health	Safety	Equity	Economic Benefit	Cost Effectiveness#	Climate & Energy	Ecological Function
GOAL 1: Improve people's access to jobs, schools, health care and other regular needs in ways that improve health, reduce pollution and retain money in the local economy.	TARGET 1A: Increase the percentage of people that can travel to key destinations within 30-minute walk, bike or transit trip by 20 percent by 2020 and 40 percent by 2035	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	TARGET 1B: Reduce per capita fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions by 1 percent by 2020 and 5 percent by 2035	X	X			X		X
	TARGET 1C: Reinvest in the local economy \$5 million/year by 2020 and \$10 million/year by 2035 from savings resulting from lower fuel consumption due to a reduction in vehicle miles traveled	X				X	X	X
	TARGET 1Di: Improve travel time reliability for vehicle trips	X				X		X

SUSTAINABILITY TARGETS		OUTCOMES ADVANCED						
		PEOPLE				PROSPERITY		PLANET
		Access & Mobility	Health	Safety	Equity	Economic Benefit	Cost Effectiveness#	Climate & Energy
	TARGET 1Dii: Improve multimodal network quality for walk and bicycle trips to and within key destinations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	TARGET 1E: Decrease single occupancy mode share by 4 percent by 2020 and 8 percent by 2035	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
GOAL 2: Reduce transportation related fatalities and injuries for all modes.	TARGET 2A: Reduce injury and fatal collisions by mode by 20 percent by 2020 and by 50 percent by 2035		X	X	X	X		
	TARGET 2B: Reduce total number of high collision locations		X	X	X	X		
GOAL 3: Deliver access and safety improvements cost effectively, within available revenues, equitably and responsibly to the needs of all users of the transportation system and beneficially for the natural environment.	TARGET 3A: Increase the average local road pavement index to 57 by 2020 and 70 by 2035			X		X	X	
	TARGET 3B: Reduce number of transportation facilities in "distressed" condition by 3 percent by 2020 and 5 percent by 2035			X		X	X	
	TARGET 3C: Reduce travel times and increase travel options for people who are transportation disadvantaged due to income, age, race, disability or limited English proficiency by increasing the percentage that are within a 30-minute walk, bike or transit trip to key destinations by 20% by 2020 and 40% by 2035	X	X	X	X	X		X
	TARGET 3D: Ensure transportation services (and impacts) are equitably distributed to all segments of the population	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	TARGET 3E: Maximize participation from diverse members of the public in RTC planning and project implementation activities				X			

Figure 4.3 – 2014 Regional Transportation Plan Performance Targets and Relationship to Triple Bottom Line

Source: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

Notes for Chapter 4

- ¹ “The Burden of Chronic Disease and Injury – California, 2013,” California Department of Public Health (2013), <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Documents/BurdenReportOnline%2004-04-13.pdf>.
- ² “Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed December 2013, <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease>.