



MONTHLY SBCCOG TRANSPORTATION REPORT

A summary of recent federal, state, regional and local
developments and trends in transportation

COVERING MAY 2025

Edited by Anne Tsai

Federal

EPA Hails Congressional Disapproval of Biden EPA's California EV Mandate Rule

On May 22, 2025, the U.S. Senate passed three Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolutions disapproving California's vehicle emission waivers that will now move to President Trump's desk for signature. In February, EPA Administrator Zeldin announced alongside President Trump and the newly created National Energy Dominance Council, that the EPA would transmit to Congress three waiver rules granted by the Biden Administration – California's Advanced Clean Cars II, Advanced Clean Trucks, and Heavy-Duty Engine Omnibus NOx.

Similarly, in March, Administrator Zeldin announced the agency will reconsider the Model Year 2027 and Later Light-Duty and Medium-Duty Vehicles regulation and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standards for Heavy-Duty Vehicles that were put in place during the Biden Administration.

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy Announces Federal Funding to Get America Building Again with Expansion of Bus Manufacturing, Strips DEI Requirements

On May 15, 2025, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced the availability of approximately \$1.5 billion in competitive grant funding for projects that expand bus manufacturing. This new federal funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will help create jobs within the industry by building and renovating bus facilities and expanding accessibility for American families utilizing commuter transit.

This year's Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) strips DEI requirements related to climate change, sustainability, environmental justice, and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) applied under the Biden Administration.

FTA's Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program supports transit agencies in buying and rehabilitating buses and vans and building bus facilities. FTA's Low or No Emission Program helps transit agencies buy or lease buses made in America, purchase equipment, and maintain facilities. The twin programs are announced together, although each has different requirements and funding amounts. In Fiscal Year 2025, approximately \$400 million is authorized for the Buses and Bus Facilities Program and \$1.1 billion is authorized for the Low or No Emission Program.

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) focuses on strengthening U.S. bus manufacturing, which can stabilize the cost of new buses and accelerate delivery to the transit agencies that need them. Transit agencies competing for funds are encouraged to consider strategies to

avoid customization, as procuring more standardized bus models will shorten manufacturing timelines and result in more American-built buses getting on the road faster.

State

California Invests Nearly \$1.7 Billion to Improve Safety, Increase Mobility and Bolster Resiliency on the State Highway System

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) has allocated nearly \$1.7 billion to help improve safety, increase mobility for all users and strengthen the state highway system. In addition to these proactive, long-range efforts, the CTC allocated \$86.5 million to repair vital roadways and other transportation infrastructure damaged during recent wildfires and storms in Southern California.

Among the many projects funded by the commission are \$55.1 million in response to the devastating January wildfires in Los Angeles County and the strong Pacific storms that followed, battering charred hillsides and unleashing massive debris flows. Those include:

- \$30.6 million to replace a retaining wall and rebuild a slope drapery protection system near Big Rock Drive in Malibu and reconstruct hillsides above Pacific Coast Highway/State Route 1 (PCH/SR-1) near Mulholland Drive, all of which were impacted by the Palisades Fire and rainstorms.
- \$16.9 million to repair damaged state assets on PCH in the cities of Los Angeles, Santa Monica and Malibu, including slopes, drainage systems, signs, retaining walls and guardrail; and additional measures to prevent debris flows and mudslides on PCH from Entrada Drive to Sweetwater Canyon Drive following the rainstorms.
- \$4.8 million to provide traffic control within the cities of Los Angeles, Santa Monica and Malibu, where residents were forced to evacuate from the Palisades Fire.
- \$2.8 million to make repairs caused by the Franklin and Palisades fires near South Topanga Canyon, including new traffic signals, roadside signs, drainage systems and erosion control.

Of the total statewide allocation this month, nearly \$651 million came via Senate Bill (SB) 1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017 and approximately \$536 million from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (IIJA).

In District 7, that includes \$150.9 million in SB 1 funds for 30 projects and \$196.6 million in IIJA funds for six projects in Los Angeles and Ventura counties.

Region

LA Metro Opens Rail to Rail Active Transportation Corridor, Connects Communities in Inglewood, South Los Angeles

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) hosted a “rolling dedication” and community fair on May 17 to celebrate the grand opening of the Rail to Rail Active Transportation Corridor, a 5.5-mile multi-modal path and public green space in Inglewood and South L.A. The path, a first-of-its-kind project for Metro, removed unused and blighted railroad tracks to connect the communities serviced by the Metro K Line Fairview Heights Station, the Metro J Line Slauson Station and the Metro A Line Slauson Station via biking and walking paths.

Approved by voters with the passage of Measure M and Measure R, this \$166-million investment represents a significant improvement to the communities in and around South L.A. while positively impacting quality of life and public health. It is the seventh of twenty-eight projects Metro will complete by the ‘28 Olympic and Paralympic Games (28 X ‘28), the Rail to Rail Active Transportation Corridor will serve the communities near the Intuit Dome and SoFi Stadium, two key venues for the Games.

The Rail to Rail Active Transportation Corridor improves community connectivity and encourages active transportation, which can help reduce transportation costs, support the local economy, enhance quality of life, promote public health and decrease greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion. Beginning at the intersection of 67th Street and 11th Avenue near the Fairview Heights Metro K Line Station, the path moves east to its current terminus at Slauson Station on the Metro A Line. A total of 17 Metro bus lines, three DASH bus lines and five Metro Bike Share stations provide service along the alignment. It offers rest areas with benches and new shade trees and is located within walking distance of several neighborhood schools, parks and other community amenities.

The project includes improvements that help protect the safety of cyclists and pedestrians moving along and across the Slauson corridor.

Construction of the project included planting 472 new trees, all indigenous species, which will improve air quality, increase the tree canopy and reduce heat absorption. New sustainable landscaping features, such as a new bio-swale, bioretention planters and bio-infiltration planters, manage stormwater and filter pollutants.

Metro is piloting the deployment of community interventional specialists (CIS) along the alignment between 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. CIS provide a friendly and familiar presence on the path and are specifically trained to diffuse and de-escalate issues. Core to the CIS program concept is a local hire initiative, resulting in the positions being filled by members of the community personally invested in its success.

A total of 52 security cameras are strategically placed along the alignment and continuously monitored at the Metro Security Operation Center. Additionally, there are nine emergency telephones installed along the alignment.

Phase two of the project, currently referred to as Rail to River Active Transportation Corridor, will extend the path from the A Line Slauson Station approximately four miles east along Randolph Street through the cities of Bell, Maywood, Huntington Park and the unincorporated Florence Firestone community, terminating at the Los Angeles River. It is expected to open in 2027.

Trends

Low-stress roads and bike lanes improve safety, not just comfort

Low stress roads make biking more comfortable, especially for people who are more risk-averse. But do they make biking safer? A new study suggests they do, countering concerns from some transportation officials that these facilities might encourage unsafe riding.

The level of traffic stress (LTS) is used to rate how comfortable streets are for biking. It categorizes roads from LTS 1 (low stress) to LTS 4 (high stress), which are often associated with four types of cyclists, ranging from “no way no how” to “strong and fearless.” Since more than half of people fall into the “interested but concerned” group, the second out of the four categories, low-stress networks are often designed with them in mind.

Comfort and safety don’t always go hand in hand, though. People often drive safer on roads perceived as complex or dangerous. That could explain why some officials worry that adding bike lanes might lure people into unsafe conditions. U.S. Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy recently voiced that concern, saying at the Work Economy Summit: “If you drive in a congested area where there are bike lanes, it seems to be really dangerous for bikers.”

Fortunately, the evidence points in the opposite direction. A new study of eight metropolitan areas in Arizona from 2015 to 2021 found that lower-stress roads had fewer bike crashes, and when crashes did occur, they were less severe if there was a bike lane.

In that study, the safest roads were those rated LTS 1, which have two lanes or fewer, 25 mph speed limits or lower, and traffic volumes under 750 vehicles per day. The researchers explain, “a cyclist is at an increased risk of being struck by a motorist on roadways in Arizona’s metro regions as the road segment’s perceived stress rises.”

The study also found that each contributing factor—more lanes, higher traffic volumes, and higher speed limits—added to the risk.

Interestingly, although roads classified as LTS 2 also have fewer crashes, the ones that occurred were often more severe, with severity increasing further on LTS 3 and LTS 4 roads. Conventional bike lanes significantly reduce that risk.

Regarding the concerns echoed by Secretary Duffy about bike lanes, the researchers noted: “While the selection of an appropriate design should be made with additional corridor-level considerations, the provision of separated bike facilities on high-speed roads with increased

motor vehicle volumes or further improvements to critical links in the regional bike network that lower LTS may hold promise in unlocking a latent demand for utilitarian cycling that has been suppressed amongst individuals with higher aversions to traffic safety and comfort risks when cycling.”

In plain terms: better bike infrastructure can make biking safer and more comfortable, creating more opportunities for people to ride, while reducing the risk of serious crashes.

The SBCCOG’s Local Travel Network prioritizes low-stress roads and may serve as a preferred route for lower-risk riders.