

Caltrans System Investment Strategy

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Where does this plan come from?

The Caltrans System Investment Strategy plan fulfills a requirement of the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI), adopted by the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) in July 2021; and meets the goals set in the California Transportation Plan 2050 (CTP 2050) and in Governor Gavin Newsom's Executive Orders N-19-19 and N-79-20 in response to the climate crisis.

Does this plan increase funding for climate related projects?

No, but it can help make climate-related projects more competitive for state and federal funding. This plan will propose more effective ways to elevate the most beneficial projects to compete for state and federal discretionary transportation funds.

Does this plan shut out local partners?

Quite the opposite. The CSIS strategy depends on increasing local participation. It focuses on promoting public engagement, as well as partnerships with local agencies, and provides a strategy that all local agencies can implement to make their transportation projects more competitive for state and federal funding. With this plan in place, projects that reduce VMT and planet-warming pollution while expanding zero-emission and multimodal transportation options will receive a higher priority. Furthermore, the quantitative approach to project prioritization provides greater transparency and fairness to local partners competing for Caltrans project nomination support.

Is CSIS anti-car?

No. People using every mode of transportation will benefit with better data. The better the planning, the better the outcomes across all of our priorities of safety, climate, equity, economic prosperity, and mobility.

Is CSIS anti-rural?

No. We have worked closely with rural counties and transportation providers throughout the development of CSIS and are committed to identifying the projects that provide the most benefit to rural communities provided their local context and needs.

Is Caltrans using CSIS to deny projects?

No. CSIS will help projects win funding in competitive grant programs to identify and prioritize the most promising transportation projects that align with our climate, safety and equity goals. CSIS is a framework that Caltrans utilizes to prioritize projects that are highly competitive for specific state and federal discretionary programs and to align with state goals and policies. Projects not prioritized for nomination to competitive grant programs by Caltrans are still able to apply for funding as long as they meet program eligibility criteria.

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How is this plan different from how projects are currently evaluated?

The updated CSIS metrics improve project evaluation through a data-driven and transparent process.

What is Caltrans' commitment to reducing vehicle miles traveled?

Caltrans remains committed to reducing emissions while improving system reliability through lowering vehicle miles traveled. However, each project needs to be evaluated based on regional needs, program competitiveness, and alignment with State goals and policies.

Is there a difference between CSIS and CAPTI on VMT?

CSIS aligns with CAPTI in supporting projects that do not significantly increase vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and promotes projects that aim to reduce VMT, such as increasing multimodal options or employing demand management strategies. CSIS establishes metrics that reward projects that propose infrastructure improvements that reduce VMT, among other advancement of the CAPTI principles.