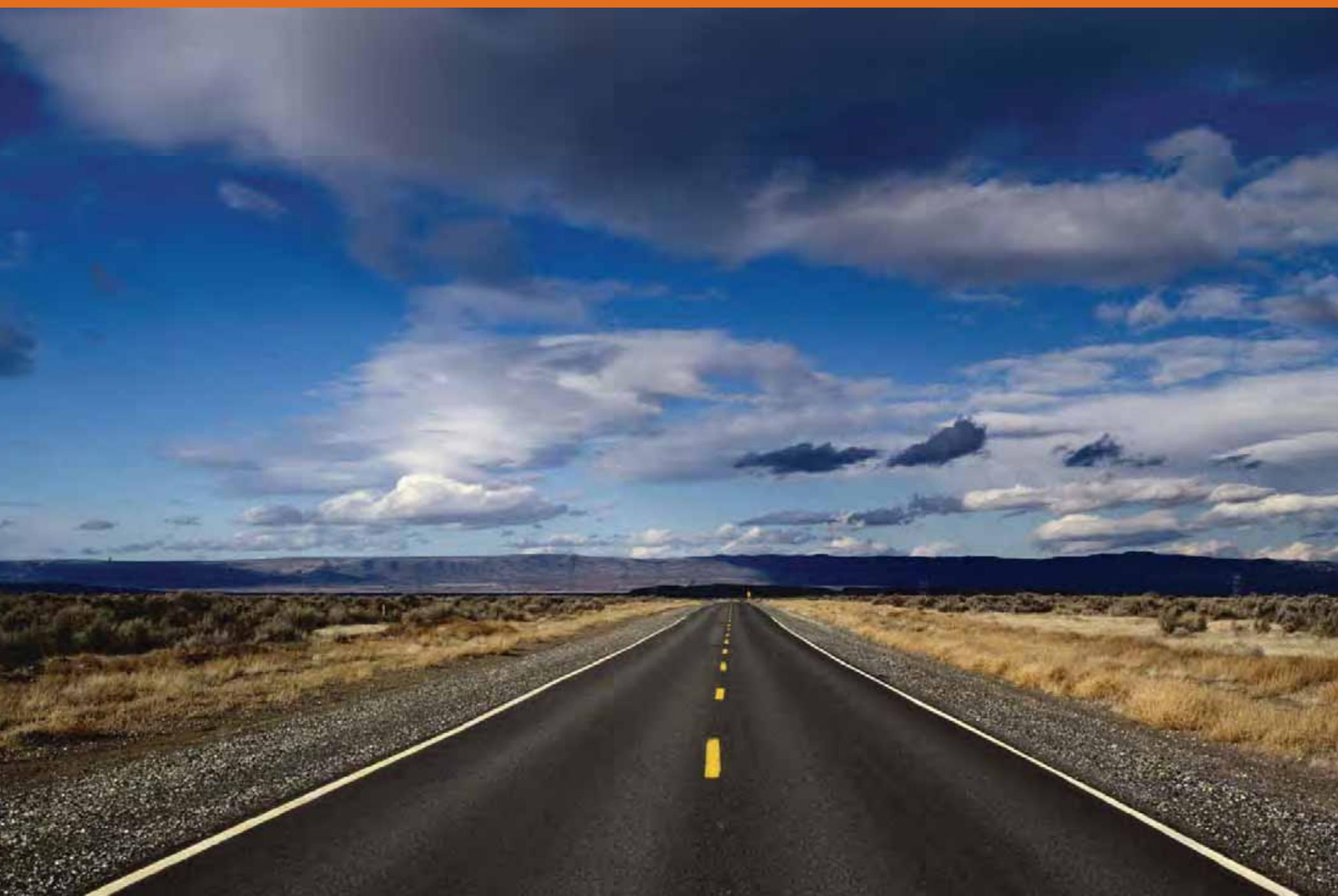


## VII. FUTURE CONNECTIONS: THE STRATEGIC PLAN



**T**he RTP strategies discussed in Chapter III represent the region's collective vision for addressing our transportation needs within the constraints of committed, available, or reasonably available revenue sources. Despite the substantial commitments contained in the RTP, this level of investment does not meet the overall needs identified through the RTP development process. If we truly want to address the needs set forth in this RTP, then we must look toward additional strategies and investments to get us there. Often this will entail controversial and difficult choices that will push the envelope and test the boundaries of what is politically acceptable. For now, these elements are contained in the Strategic Plan with the recognition that they merit further study and that, over time and with further consensus building, these programs and policies may move forward into the constrained RTP.

This chapter provides a brief illustrative overview of the additional strategies and investments that the region would pursue if additional funding were to become available, and after further consensus building to solidify commitment around specific projects and policies. It is envisioned that future updates or amendments to the RTP would draw from the projects contained in the Strategic Plan; exceptions would be handled on a case-by-case basis. While there is no funding strategy attached to the Strategic Plan, this chapter discusses additional potential funding sources that merit further study and evaluation.

## **Unfunded System Preservation and Operations Needs**

Beyond the investments proposed in the 2008 RTP, there is a shortfall of \$24 billion in highway system preservation, and a shortfall of \$8 billion in arterial and transit system preservation, through 2035. With the recognition that the costs of deferred maintenance could grow exponentially over time, investment in preservation should be given priority for new funding sources beyond those identified in the 2008 RTP.

Additionally, SCAG identified a shortfall of approximately \$6.7 billion in highway operations needs, and \$1.3 billion in regionally significant arterial and transit operations needs, through 2035. SCAG, Caltrans, and our transportation planning partners will continue to evaluate corridor-level performance, develop corridor system management plans, and incorporate the resulting recommendations into future Plans and Programs.

## **Unfunded Capital Improvements**

There are approximately \$273 billion in additional capital investment needs above what are identified in the financially constrained RTP. These projects address important transportation corridor needs in the region, but still face significant challenges in terms of local consensus on a preferred strategy, funding priority, or both, before potential inclusion in the RTP. For example, the proposed Orangeline project faces significant challenges in terms of right-of-way availability, funding commitment, and stakeholder consensus. In recognition of the regional benefits the project may provide, it is being included in the Strategic Plan until such issues have been resolved.

Regionally significant major corridor improvements in the Strategic Plan are identified in Table 7.1. A more complete list is contained in the RTP Project List report available at [www.scag.ca.gov/rtp2008](http://www.scag.ca.gov/rtp2008).

## **Strategic Finance**

Recognizing that new sources of revenue over and above those already identified in the RTP are required to help fund these unmet needs, SCAG will initiate a comprehensive study of congestion pricing strategies over the next year. A regionwide congestion pricing strategy can be structured to help the region meet its transportation demand management and air quality goals while providing a reliable and dedicated revenue source. The pricing mechanism could allow users of the transportation system to know the true cost of their travel, resulting in informed decision-making and more efficient use of the system. Potential pricing strategies can include a regional vehicle-miles-traveled fee



and/or a regional high-occupancy toll lane network. While promising, these strategies still face a number of significant hurdles—there is currently no legislative authority to implement such strategies, and there is no regional entity that exists to administer or implement such a comprehensive program. SCAG’s study will attempt to address some of these hurdles by evaluating the feasibility of these strategies and coalescing regional consensus for potential input into the next update of the RTP.

In addition to SCAG’s regional congestion pricing initiative, a number of local efforts to study additional transportation revenues are underway or may be in the near future. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is evaluating the feasibility of a Congestion Mitigation Fee as part of a proposed restructuring of its Congestion Management Program (CMP). If enacted, the fee would be imposed on new development and would generate new revenue to assist MTA in addressing congestion caused by growth. In 2004, the voters in Ventura County were asked to approve a local sales tax measure

**TABLE 7.1 MAJOR STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECTS**

Strategic Plan Project Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated Lanes for Clean-Technology Trucks on an East-West Corridor connecting the Ports of LA/LB to and through the Inland Empire (I-710 to I-15)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated Lanes for Clean-Technology Trucks on I-15 (East-West Corridor to Barstow)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US-101 HOT Lanes (SR-23 to SR-134/SR-170)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CETAP Riverside County to Orange County (Corridor B from I-15/Mid-County Pkwy to SR-133/SR-241)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purple Line Extension to Century City and Santa Monica</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gold Line Extension to Ontario Airport</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metrolink and LOSSAN Strategic Plans</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Santa Paula Branch Line</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-Speed Regional Transport - system extensions to Palmdale, Victorville, Coachella Valley, Imperial, Orange County, San Diego</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-Speed Regional Transport - California High-Speed Rail Authority (serving the SCAG region beyond the Union Station-Anaheim segment in the financially constrained RTP)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-Speed Regional Transport - California-Nevada Maglev - Ontario Airport to Nevada State Line</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orangeline High-Speed Transit (Orange County - Union Station - Santa Clarita - Palmdale)</li> </ul>

for transportation. While the voters did not approve the sales tax increase, it remains a popular option for the region’s counties to generate a significant amount of revenues dedicated to transportation. All of the other counties in the SCAG region have a local sales tax measure dedicated to transportation.

## Corridor Preservation

For those corridor projects identified in the Strategic Plan, right-of-way preservation should be undertaken to begin laying the groundwork for advancing these long-range improvements. The SCAG Region is pursuing an innovative, environmentally sensitive approach to considering future development and transportation projects. This approach envisions that transportation options

will be developed with consideration for environmentally sensitive land uses and habitat issues as part of the planning and design criteria. It would involve early and active involvement by all stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels.

This approach draws on the Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP) undertaken in Riverside County, which serves as a template for other agencies and jurisdictions seeking to preserve rights-of-way for long-range transportation needs. The four CETAP corridors, two intra-county corridors—the Mid-County Parkway and the Winchester-Temecula Corridor—and two inter-county corridors—the Riverside County-Orange County Corridor (Corridor A) and the Moreno Valley-San Bernardino Corridor—are included in the financially constrained RTP.

As Riverside County has shown, it is important to identify and preserve transportation corridors needed to expand or enhance transportation for future generations. Local governments will find it difficult to obtain optimal locations for these corridors unless efforts to preserve them are made early. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Report on Corridor Preservation states that early efforts provide the following benefits:

- prevent inconsistent development
- minimize or avoid environmental, social and economic impacts
- prevent the loss of desirable corridor locations
- allow for the orderly assessment of impacts
- permit orderly project development, and
- reduce costs

Planners and policy-makers should start preparing strategies for preserving corridors now to prevent losing rights-of-way needed for transportation beyond the year 2035. Rights-of-way preservation is a reasonable concern, particularly in areas where development may block a long-range corridor. More opportunities to capitalize on preservation are available in less-urban areas,



where local governments have an opportunity to obtain available land for new transportation facilities.

The first step in this kind of planning is to identify potential long-range corridors and determine if there is a need to preserve them. This will require intergovernmental coordination and should include a funding component. Next, criteria to evaluate and prioritize the selected corridors must be developed. Once a corridor is selected, environmental studies will be needed. Traditional preservation techniques include purchasing land or using government statutes to place a corridor alignment on a general plan land-use map. Other state and federal funds can be used to assist in acquiring land for long-range corridors.