

2024 SJCOG FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Overview

Created in 1968, the San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG) is a joint-powers authority comprising the County of San Joaquin and the cities of Stockton, Lodi, Manteca, Tracy, Ripon, Escalon, and Lathrop. The role of SJCOG is to foster intergovernmental coordination within San Joaquin County and with neighboring jurisdictions, other regional agencies in the San Joaquin Valley, the state of California, and various Federal agencies.

SJCOG is overseen by a Board of Directors which makes allocations of funding to build transportation improvements. The board also establishes regional transportation policies and programs. Citizens, special or community interest groups, and other agencies are involved in the planning and approval process. The mission of SJCOG is to partner with local governments, the private sector, and community groups as the forum, facilitator, and administrator of regional programs, and to advocate for regional and inter-regional issues in the development of a comprehensive strategy to achieve resolutions.

This 2023 Federal Legislative Platform provides direction to our Congressional Delegation and Agency officials with respect to the transportation, infrastructure and policy needs of San Joaquin County. The platform is organized by policy themes under which major projects and programs fall. These themes are **Equity and Accessibility, Transportation Sustainability and Resiliency, Innovation and Mobility and Economic Growth.**

Equity and Accessibility

The San Joaquin Council of Governments and its member communities are committed to developing and implementing strategies that improve transportation infrastructure and access, particularly in underserved and disadvantaged communities. SJCOG has included a Sustainable Community Strategy in its Regional Transportation Plan effort, and will foster coordinated planning with neighboring cities, counties, and other governmental entities to agree upon regional strategies and policies for dealing with the regional impacts of growth on transportation, housing, and the environment. SJCOG supports policies that will:

- Support economic development incentives and jobs training for economically hard-hit areas
- Develop and deploy strategies to improve infrastructure for non-motorized travel, public transportation access, and increased public transportation service in underserved communities. SJCOG will prioritize measures to increase road safety for all users and reduce single-occupancy vehicle travel and the associated air pollution, particularly in environmental justice-impacted communities
- Support local government authority to determine the types of development eligible for Opportunity Zone or similar investments in any regulations implementing the program
- Advocate for additional resources to improve the quality of life for residents.

Transportation Sustainability and Resiliency

San Joaquin County is part of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. Our district is one of the two areas of the United States with the most significant air quality challenges. To address our air quality challenges, SJCOG is tasked with examining programs and policies to reduce transportation emissions while at the same time improving transportation mobility options for our citizens. SJCOG and its member communities will undertake actions to prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change and continue to improve infrastructure networks that work for all users. SJCOG is taking steps to identify the barriers to, and opportunities for, clean energy deployment throughout the region.

As transportation agencies implement the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, SJCOG would encourage the adoption of policies and the promotion of programs and projects that would:

- Continue implementation of programs such as the Clean School Bus Program, Low- and No-Emission Transit Bus Program, and the Intelligent Transportation Systems Program for low and no emission vehicles (truck, bus, car, off-road) to spur adoption by government and private sector alike
- Ensure electric vehicle charging programs such as the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure program and the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Discretionary Grant Program applies to urban, suburban, and rural areas for the increased utilization of both private vehicles and public transit fleets

- Prioritize the efficient and effective movement of people through alternative fuel vehicle mobility programs (bus, autonomous vehicle (AVs), bike, scooter) that would improve first and last mile connectivity while also reducing emissions
- Continue implementing federal grant programs (at DOT, EPA, and DOE) for reducing emissions in on-road and off-road vehicles
- Support the introduction of air quality empowerment zone legislation
- Support Buy America requirements under FHWA that continue to promote domestic content and manufacturing and that reduce unintended consequences with respect to the procurement of energy efficient and emission reducing technologies/component parts in vehicles

Innovation and Mobility

San Joaquin Council of Governments supports the development of innovative technology in transit. SJCOG actively promotes forward-thinking approaches to improve transit financing, planning, system design and service, and supports innovative approaches to advance strategies that promote accessibility, including equitable and equivalent accessibility for all travelers.

SJCOG is working to foster innovative transit technologies, practices and solutions that advance the state of practice for public transportation in the region and leverage private sector investments in mobility for the benefit of transit.

- Support local authority over the integration of AVs and connected vehicles into the nation's transportation system. Regional organizations (such as Councils of Governments) should have the opportunity to guide the testing and adoption of AVs that makes the most sense for their community and region
- Expand opportunities for programs such as the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) grants program and the Advanced Transportation Technology and Innovation (ATTAIN) program to provide research projects on issues related to transit technology/clean corridor tracking/new technology/platooning
- As with Environmental Sustainability, continue to implement and improve mobility technology programs (for AVs, bikes, scooters, etc.), as well as test beds for new technologies that provide access and reduce congestion.

Economic Growth

San Joaquin County is an economic gateway for goods and services and is home to many people who provide support to economic activity in neighboring counties and the United States as a whole. SJCOG believes that commercial hubs and affordable housing infrastructure can be the tools to improve economic activity inside and outside San Joaquin County.

SJCOG supports the adoption of policies and the promotion of programs and projects that would:

- Support the implementation and expand eligibility of programs at DOT and HUD - such as the Thriving Communities program - that incentivize the development of commercial hubs that integrate transportation and housing in one central location
- Support strategic investments to improve goods movement for the agricultural supply chain and manufacturing logistics throughout San Joaquin County
- Support grant applications for the construction of managed lanes, particularly in corridors that serve as gateways between regions
- Promote grant applications for the rehabilitation or operational improvements to STAA routes
- Through programs such as the Bridge Investment Program and the Bridge Formula Program, support projects specific to off-system bridge preventative maintenance, rehabilitation, and replacement including, but not limited to, those within trade corridors
- Ensure that broadband programs providing reliable and affordable internet is accessible for all communities in the San Joaquin Valley, including proper mapping of areas that have little to no service
- Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, support communities that want to update regional plans to build community resilience and green workforce development