



**Steve Cohn Presentation on  
Sacramento City/County  
Transportation Ballot Measures**

**SacMoves Meeting**

**Friday, August 15, 2025**

Visit our Website:

**<https://www.sactosmart.org>**

# INTRODUCTION

## **About SMART**

Sacramento Advocates for Rail and Transit (SMART) is a broad-based coalition of business, labor, transportation, environmental, neighborhood, faith-based, and community leaders and organizations founded in 2019 and incorporated as a 501(c)(3) in 2024.

## **SMART Mission**

As the premier regional voice for smart growth, responsible climate action, and sustainable transportation, SMART's mission is to educate, organize, and advocate for expanded and improved rail and transit services for the Sacramento region; and to support equitable mobility options, smart growth, clean air, and sustainability.

# SMART Vision

The Sacramento region should have an innovative, seamless, and diversified transportation network offering a wide range of accessible, affordable, and efficient mobility choices coupled with supportive land uses. The transportation network should also strengthen and diversify our economy, improve our air quality, and reduce carbon emissions and vehicle miles traveled by minimizing single occupancy vehicle trips, expanding and improving public transit and shared mobility services, and providing safe access for bicyclists and pedestrians. All community members, and particularly those from underserved communities, should have access to sustainable and affordable mobility options that facilitate positive community outcomes for public health and safety, livability, and economic vitality. In short, virtually all residents and visitors in the Sacramento region should have the option of living, working, and playing within walking distance or a transit stop from everything they need.



## Sacramento Advocates for Rail and Transit

A 501(c)(3) of transportation, business, and community leaders working for new and improved rail and transit in and around Sacramento.

**"All residents and visitors of Greater Sacramento should live, work, and play within walking distance, or a transit stop, of everything they need."**

-Steve Cohn, SMART President and Co-Founder



### SMART wants to:

**Transform transportation** from our outdated, car-dependent system to a smart, modern, multi-modal network that broadly improves quality of life.

**Maintain existing infrastructure** with a fix-it-first approach, before expanding outward or building new.

**Prioritize safety** as fundamental to transportation—we all, including pedestrians, deserve a safe trip.

**Promote equity, accessibility, and ease of use** by investing in communities that need it most.

**Improve air quality** by offering cleaner alternatives to car traffic, helping Calif. achieve climate goals.

**Set up sustainable, smart growth** to improve the places we already live, rather than further sprawl.



**Embrace innovation** in tech and operations to move people faster, more reliably, and more affordably.



**Open up economic opportunity** by connecting more people to schools, workplaces, and businesses.



**Make Sacramento a world-class city** with a transportation system to match its growing profile.

**Close the funding gap** (Sac's local funding is below that of similar areas) to sustainably attract matching federal and state program dollars.

### Safer streets. Less traffic. Cleaner air.

The mission of SMART is to educate, organize, and advocate for expanded and improved rail and transit services in the six-county Capital region around Sacramento.

**Enhancing rail and transit** is necessary for a comprehensive and quality transportation network. Making strategic improvements to how and where our communities are served by buses, trains, light-rail, and roadways will make our **roads safer**, our **air cleaner**, and **travel cheaper**—all while moving **more people**.

**Better rail and transit is to everyone's benefit.**



#### Did you know?

Sac's transportation funding comes from Measure A—a half-cent sales tax, one-third of which funds SacRT passed by voters in 1988 and renewed (till 2039) in 2004.

## SMART Board of Directors



**Steve Cohn (President)** is a co-founder of SMART and the SacMoves Coalition. He served on the Sacramento City Council from 1994 to 2014, and was chief assistant general counsel for SMUD until retiring in 2010.



**Emel Wadhvani (Vice President)** is chief counsel at CalRecycle and a commissioner on the City of Sacramento Active Transportation Commission. She uses bikes and transit for transportation in Sacramento.



**Frank Teran (Secretary)** is a seasoned professional with a deep passion for creating accessible and sustainable transportation solutions for Sacramento's high-density commuters.



**Kay Crumb (Treasurer)** is a lifelong Sacramentan and community engagement enthusiast. She works in purchasing and finance for the State of California, with a special interest in city budgeting and its impacts.



**Dwayne Crenshaw** is president and CEO of the Greater Sacramento Urban League, helping Sacramentans to further their educations, gain meaningful employment, and strengthen their financial well-being.



**Sarah Geraty** is a business development consultant and the owner of QHC Consulting. A native Sacramentan, she is an avid supporter of "access for all," including transit services and options for the Sacramento region.



**Sotiris K. Kolokotronis** is CEO of SKK Development and one of Northern California's most prolific in-fill developers, involved in mixed-use, mixed-income, transit-oriented projects over the last 20 years.



**Glenda Marsh** is a co-founder of SMART and has advocated for transit policy and investment since 2006. She believes the region's quality of life and economic growth relies on a high-quality transit and rail system.



**Sam Rice** is a senior union representative at SEIU Local 1000, with a background in labor advocacy, organizing, and management of intermodal transportation operations at one of the nation's largest container ports.



**Teresita (Chech) Sablan** is a Commissioner on the West Sacramento Planning Commission. Before the Planning Commission, she served on the West Sacramento Transportation, Mobility, and Infrastructure Commission. Chech works as an attorney for the State Water Resources Control Board.



**Darrell Steinberg** has served Sacramento residents for over 30 years. First elected to the City Council in 1992, he went on to serve in the state Assembly, lead in the state Senate, and serve as Sacramento's 56th Mayor. During his mayoral tenure, he championed preserving the RydeFreeRT program, providing fare-free transit for K-12 youth.



## Investing More in Rail and Transit in Sacramento

**Modern transportation—more than just cars—benefits everyone**

Modernizing transportation in Greater Sacramento means **more rail and transit**. A balanced network of buses, trains, light-rail, and roadways makes our **roads safer**, our **air cleaner**, and **travel cheaper**—all while **moving more people**.

However, **local funding** for transportation is **low in Sacramento**—below that of similar areas. We must **close this funding gap** to sustainably attract **matching federal and state** program dollars.

Sac RT gets approx. a 1/4 cent, BART in the Bay Area and San Diego Transit each get a 1/2 cent.

Transportation means **connectivity and opportunity**—more choices for more people to live, work, and play—promoting accessibility, equity, and **quality of life**.



People should have a choice of getting where they need to go without driving their cars.



A 2022 report found the Sacramento region **ranked 20th** in a list of **most dangerous U.S. cities for pedestrians**.



It's time for an **innovative, seamless, and diversified transit network**—boosting the economy, improving air quality, and connecting the community.

### A modern transportation network in Greater Sacramento would:

Move more people, more often, more efficiently, and more affordably.



Connect neighborhoods more closely.



Relieve car traffic.



Make travel on foot—walking, biking, skateboarding, scootering, roller-skating—safer.

Create more economic opportunity, activity, and growth.



Improve air quality and reduce climate-change causing emissions



Improve existing transportation infrastructure.

Set up long-term, regional sustainability.



Sac's transportation funding comes from Measure A—a half-cent sales tax, one-third of which funds SacRT (Sacramento Regional Transit)—passed by voters in 1988 and renewed (until 2039) in 2004.


## Quick Facts

 **C-** California's grade for **transit infrastructure**  
(American Society of Civil Engineers, 2025)



 **\$382 million**   
**tax revenue** per **\$1 billion** in transit investment  
(American Public Transportation Association, 2020)



 **6 billion gallons**  
of **gas saved** by using **public transit** in U.S. each year  
(Transit Cooperative Research Program)

 **50k jobs**   
created per **\$1 billion** in transit investment  
(American Public Transportation Association, 2020)

 **5-to-1**   
**economic return**  
in long-term public transit investment  
(American Public Transportation Association, 2020)

 **55% of CO<sub>2</sub>**   
**emissions saved** each time a person chooses **transit** over a car  
(Transit Cooperative Research Program)

  **# of U.S. rail systems grew from 61 in 2001 to 97 in 2021**  
(American Public Transportation Association, 2023)



# HISTORY OF FAILED BALLOT MEASURES

- In 2016, STA proposed a new countywide half-cent sales tax (Measure A) with a 70-30% roads/transit funding split. The measure lost by less than one percent in the November election.
- In 2020, STA incorporated elements of the SMART/SacMoves Policy Framework, with a compromise 60-40% roads/transit funding split. However, STA withdrew the measure after the outbreak of the 2020 COVID Pandemic.



# HISTORY OF FAILED MEASURES, CONT.

- In 2022, a special interest PAC with major funding from Cordova Hills Development Corporation and other suburban developers and endorsed by California Alliance for Jobs, California State Council of Laborers, and Sacramento Region Business Association (Committee for a Better Sacramento), bankrolled a pay-to-play campaign to pass a modified version of 2020 Measure A, with firmer guarantees for the Southeast Connector and watered down MTP/SCS and GHG compliance provisions. Despite spending \$3 million and needing only 50% to pass, the so-called Citizens Measure failed miserably by a margin of 55.62% (no) to 44.38% (yes).

# SMART/SACMOVES 2020 POLICY FRAMEWORK

- On Dec 12, 2019, the SMART/SacMoves Coalition submitted to STA a comprehensive Policy Framework (2020 SMART/SacMoves Framework), including a detailed transportation expenditure plan (“TEP”) and Guiding Principles for a half-cent countywide transportation sales tax ballot measure.
- In 2020, the STA Board voted to incorporate some elements of the SMART/SacMoves Framework into its 2020 Measure A proposal, but later withdrew the measure after the outbreak of the 2020 COVID Pandemic.

# 2020 Framework Vision

- Sac County should have a seamless transportation network offering a wide range of clean, safe, affordable, accessible, and efficient mobility choices, coupled with supportive land uses.
- All County residents should have the option of living and working within walking distance or a transit stop from everything they need.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Fix it First**
- **Relieve Traffic Congestion**
- **Improve Rail and Transit**
- **Activate Our Communities**
- **Align with Regional, State and Federal Laws and Policies that Protect the Environment and Address Climate Change**
- **Protect Health and Safety**

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES, CONT.

- **Build Equity and Access**
- **Commit to Growth Management**
- **Encourage Economic Opportunity**
- **Maximize Available Funding and Competitiveness**
- **Advance Performance, Technology and Innovation**
- **Guarantee Accountability, Transparency and Public Participation**

# ALLOCATION GUIDELINES & POLICIES

- STA should expend Measure funds in the proportions shown in Table.
- All projects must comply with proposed policies that:
  - Represent best practices from successful recent transportation sales tax measures, and
  - Ensure Sacramento's compliance with and competitiveness for state and federal funding requirements.

# FRAMEWORK EXAMPLES TEP ALLOCATION GUIDELINES & POLICIES

- **Vehicle Miles Traveled Policy** - No-net-increase in per capita VMT.
- **Growth Management** – Funded projects should support land-use patterns within Sacramento County that make more efficient use of the existing transportation system and support infill and reinvestment in existing urban areas.



# Public Transit & Rail Policy

- **Public Transit First: Recipients of funding promote increased transit use**
  - Reduce transit travel time, Increase transit frequency, Give transit vehicles priority
  - 30% of all trips by mass transit/pooled shared mobility by 2030; 50% by 2045
- **Make transit/shared mobility accessible & affordable**
  - Expand transit to low-income and underserved communities
  - Free/discounted fares for seniors, youth, veterans, low-income, disabled residents
  - Prioritize under-resourced communities for mobility hubs, 1<sup>st</sup>/last mile connections
  - Mobility strategies for suburban & rural communities
- **Develop Integrated Transportation Plan**
  - Provide guidance to all jurisdictions for planning, implementing seamless multi-modal transportation system
- **Transit & Rail projects shall reduce/mitigate VMT and GHG emissions**

# Complete Streets Policy

- All roadway projects should incorporate Complete Streets principles.
- Complete Streets are streets safe for everyone to use, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.
- STA should develop project development guidelines, including peer review, design standards and a Complete Streets checklist.

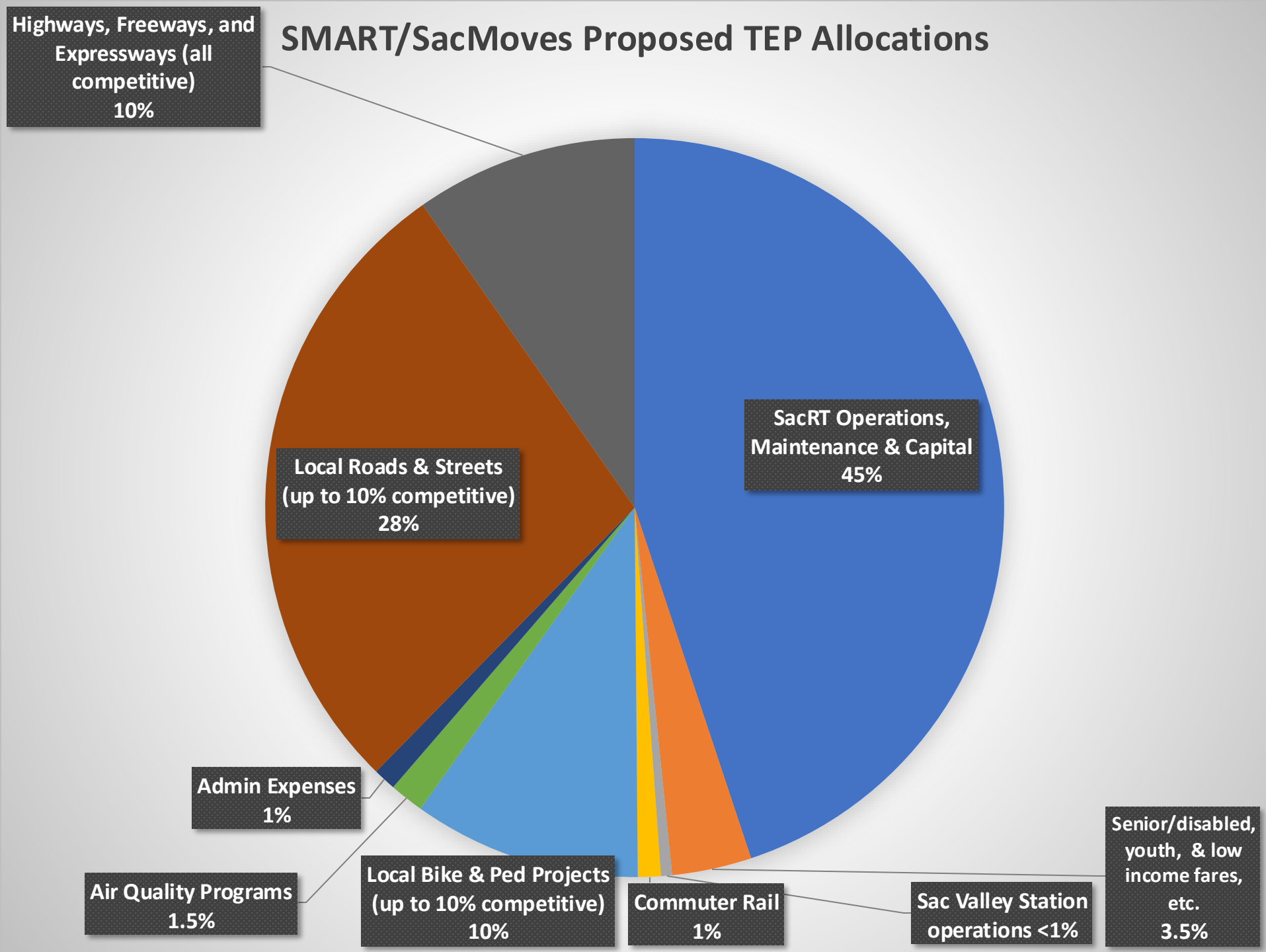
# Health & Safety Policy

- Eliminate roadway-related deaths and severe injuries within Sacramento County
- Individual mobility and accessibility is a fundamental right of every resident and transportation system users
- Reduce community, societal and economic costs
- “Vision Zero” approach to transportation planning and engineering
- Safe routes to schools, libraries, parks and recreation centers for children and seniors

# Taxpayer Safeguards & Public Accountability

- Existing ITOC's oversight limited to an auditor role focused on past transactions.
- Better practice from recent successful measures in California enlarges role of public oversight to include a forward-looking review that allows greater public input into decision-making process and provides governing board with policy advice in advance of major allocation and policy decisions.

# SMART/SacMoves Proposed TEP Allocations



TEP Categories/Proposed Allocation in \$Millions (% of Total) (unless otherwise stated)	STA Draft TEP	SMART/SacMoves Alternative
<b>Rail and Transit Subtotal</b> SacRT (Combined bus & rail/congestion relief, discounted fares for students, seniors, low income) Senior & disabled transportation services (*in SMART/SacMoves alternative, additional \$35M for student, senior, low income fare discounts) Sac Valley Station and Transit Center Operations Commuter Rail and Intercity Passenger Rail Matching \$	<b>\$3.4 Billion (41.5%)</b> \$3,001M (37%)  \$250M (3%)  \$40M (0.5%) \$80M (1%)	<b>\$4.1 Billion (50%)</b> \$3,675M (45%)  *\$285M (3.5%)  \$40M (0.5%) \$80M (1%)
<b>Local Street/Road Repair &amp; System Improvements Subtotal</b> (City/co shares based on population in both plans; in SMART/SacMoves alternative, *10% of total set aside for bike/ped and 10% of subtotal set aside for competitive funding)	<b>\$3,100M (38%)</b>	<b>\$3,100M (38%)</b> \$2,300M (28%) *\$800M (10%)
<b>Highways Subtotal</b> Interchanges and System Access Projects Highway Congestion Improvement Projects Regional Mobility Center	<b>\$1,465M (18%)</b> \$445M (5.4%) \$1,000M (12.2%) \$20M (0.2%)	<b>\$800M (10%)</b> (entire subcategory set aside for competitive funding)
<b>Air Quality</b>	<b>\$120M (1.5%)</b>	<b>\$120M (1.5%)</b>
<b>Administration</b>	<b>\$82M (1%)</b>	<b>\$82M (1%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8.2B (100%)</b>	<b>\$8.2B (100%)</b>

## ATTACHMENT 1. COMPARISON OF TEP ALLOCATION PLANS

TEP Categories/ Proposed Allocation in \$Millions (% of Total) <sup>1</sup>	STA Consultant Draft TEP (December 2019)	SMART/SacMoves Framework	STA Compromise 60/40 Plan 2/26/20 Agenda	Existing Meas. A Expenditure Plan STA 2004
<b>A. Local Roads Total<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>44.2%</b>	<b>41.5%</b>	<b>48.29%</b>	<b>41.0%</b>
Fix-It-First Maintenance, Complete Streets, ADA Transition and Bike & Ped Master Plan Implementation, ITS and Transformative System Improvement (formula \$)	38.2%	38.2%	39.57%	30%
Local Projects of Regional Significance (System Access, New Roads, Transit Centers and other transportation projects affecting regional connectivity) <sup>3</sup>	6.0%	3.2%	8.72%	6.0%
<b>B. Transit Total</b>	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>39.87%</b>	<b>43.35%</b>
SacRT O&M and Transformative System Improvements (including commuter rail and Sac Valley Station operations) <sup>4</sup>	23.6%	31.5%	23.55%	38.25%
Transit and Rail Congestion Improvement	14.6%	14.6%	13.3%	(included above)
Senior and Disabled Transportation	3.15%	3.5%	3.11%	4.5%
Neighborhood Shuttle	0	0	0	0.6%

<sup>1</sup> The 60/40 Plan takes Admin, AQ and Regional Mobility Center allocations off the top, so that the transit and road allocations are expressed as a percentage of the remaining funds.

<sup>2</sup> Interchange and System Access Projects and Sacramento Intermodal Transit Facility Operations were previously listed under Congestion Relief Category. In SMART/SacMoves Framework, agency formula funding not used for Fix it First must be used for complete streets, ADA, bike and ped projects, while new roadways compete in the Local Projects of Regional Significance subcategory.

<sup>3</sup> In existing Measure A, there is no subcategory for local projects of regional significance. Instead, there is a subcategory for Traffic Control and Safety Program. In addition, local freeway interchange projects were listed under the Congestion Relief category.

<sup>4</sup> In the existing Measure A, an additional \$30M is allocated to neighborhood shuttles and RT capital and O&M were combined in one category. In the SMART/SacMoves Framework, the SacRT category includes \$35M for low income fare assistance for senior, disabled, students, and low income passengers.



# MEASURE C 2023-24

- In 2023, SMART formed a leadership group to develop a half-cent sales tax for the City of Sacramento, dubbed Measure C the “Clean City” (or “Climate, Safety, and Affordable Housing”) Measure of 2024.
- In contrast to the failed ballot measures of 2016, 2020 and 2022 that allocated funds to increasing road and highway capacity, Measure C would have targeted affordable, transit, complete streets, and active transportation projects, climate mitigation, and affordable infill housing (“Green Means Go”) infrastructure to help the City mitigate and adapt to climate change, improve air quality, improve public health and safety, and compete for local, state and federal funds.

# MEASURE C 2023-24, CONT.

- Measure C would have generated \$70 million in annual tax revenues with zero (0) funding for new roads, freeways, or highways, targeting instead the highest priority fix-it-first and complete streets projects, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit projects and operations to provide service and benefits to the City above and beyond SacRT's current budget.
- However, at the request of Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg, our transportation group merged efforts with an affordable housing coalition to work on a countywide housing/transportation measure for 2024 instead. Due to lackluster polling and voter apathy, the effort was halted in late 2024.

# MAYOR STEINBERG'S PROPOSED COUNTYWIDE HOUSING/TRANSPORTATION MEASURE 2024

**PROPOSAL: THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING, CLEAN TRANSPORTATION, AND CLIMATE ACTION ACT OF 2026**

**Measure Summary:**  
A county-wide half-cent sales tax would generate about \$225 million/year and \$9 Billion in revenues over 40 years, which would be distributed directly to the local agencies responsible for its implementation as follows:

- **A New Integrated Approach**
  - No funding for new road capacity projects
  - High labor standards
  - Direct distribution of funding by category to local agencies
  - Sustainability, Livability, Accountability, and Equity as guiding principles
- **Affordable Housing**

30% to the County and the cities within the County for affordable housing projects and displacement prevention and first-time homebuyer assistance;
- **Safe Streets**

30% to the County of Sacramento and the cities within the County for local street and road maintenance and improvements, bicycle and pedestrian (active transportation) projects, and innovative mobility programs;
- **Public Transportation**

30% to Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) to fund critical transit service improvements to expand and electrify the transit network, reduce travel times, increase accessibility, safety, and reliability, and improve connectivity;
- **Climate and Economic Development**

10% to local agencies to fund a number of climate mitigation and adaptation and innovation programs to improve air quality, address climate change, and support economic development.



# Education, Outreach and Engagement

- Over the past two years, SMART has partnered with SACOG, SacRT, and the City of Sacramento and Elk Grove to convene public forums to promote transit-oriented development on Stockton Blvd, Del Paso Blvd, and Elk Grove Blvd.
- Recently, SMART has stepped up its newsletter, education, outreach and engagement efforts with electeds and community leaders.
- SMART has also partnered over the past few months with SacRT and ECOS on a series of public Transit Idea Exchange workshops.

## 2025 COMPARISON OF TRANSPORTATION HALF-CENT SALES TAX ALLOCATION PLANS

TEP Categories/ Proposed Allocation in \$Millions (% of Total)	2026 SMARTer Alternative	2020 SMART/ SacMoves Plan	2022 Measure A/ STA 2020 Plan	Existing Meas. A Expenditure Plan STA 2004
<b>A. Local Roads/Safe Streets</b> Funds allocated directly to cities/county by Population+ Formula for local road maintenance and capital projects, safe and complete street conversions, bike & ped facilities, ADA, ITS, Traffic Control and Safety	<b>45.0%</b>	<b>41.5%</b>	<b>48.29%</b>	<b>41.0%</b>
<b>B. Local Transit</b> SacRT O&M and capital for 15-min frequent grid network, bus rapid transit, light rail upgrades, paratransit, late night service, shuttles, bus stops, etc.; Sac Valley Rail & commuter rail; Sac Valley Station operations	<b>42.0%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>39.87%</b>	<b>43.35%</b>
<b>C. Carpool Lanes and</b> <b>D. Highway Projects (SE Connector, interchanges, new capacity)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>11.84%</b>	<b>12.0%</b>
<b>E. Air Quality and Climate</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
<b>F. Housing, economic development, regional mobility, innovation, American River Parkway</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
<b>G. Administration/Independent Taxpayer Oversight (off the top)</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>0.75%</b>
<b>TOTAL TAX REVENUES</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>\$10 Billion</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>\$8.2 Billion</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>\$8.4 Billion</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>\$4.74 Billion</b>

# WHAT'S NEXT?

- We are awaiting polling results from STA and SacRT regarding voter attitudes towards future transportation investments in infrastructure and operations, as well as the prospects of a new transportation funding measure by either STA or SacRT.
- SMART stands willing to engage and take a leadership role in either an agency-sponsored or citizens-sponsored measure that is consistent with the SMART/SacMoves Policy Framework and Guiding Principles.

# Questions?

Call: Steve Cohn, SMART President at (916) 616-7003

Email: [sactosmart@gmail.com](mailto:sactosmart@gmail.com)

Visit SMART's Website: <https://www.sactosmart.org>

