Regional Long-Term Financial Plan

Guidance and Submission Requirements

Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP)

1. Purpose and Background

The Long-Term Financial Plan requirement was established as part of the SB 125 (Chapter 54, Statutes of 2023) accountability program, which governs the distribution of $4 billion in formula-based TIRCP funds and $1.1 billion in Zero-Emission Transit Capital Program (ZETCP) funds to RTPAs statewide. CalSTA is responsible for administering the accountability program and approving Long-Term Financial Plans submitted pursuant to this requirement.

The Long-Term Financial Plan builds on the Regional Short-Term Financial Plan previously submitted by each RTPA as part of the SB 125 Initial Allocation Package process. Where the Short-Term Financial Plan demonstrated near-term operational solvency through FY 2025-26, the Long-Term Financial Plan must demonstrate how the region will sustain its transit operations over the next five years absent additional discretionary or non-formula state funding, and how it will pursue ridership growth, service quality, and regional coordination.

This document is intended to provide guidance for what type of information, at a minimum, should be included. This is not intended to be a prescriptive template. Applicants are only required to submit plans that meet the statutory intent of SB 125 with the minimum level of information provided as outlined in this guidance.

2. Who Must Submit

All 49 Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) that received SB 125 formula-based TIRCP funding are required to submit a Long-Term Financial Plan.

Each RTPA is responsible for developing and submitting the plan on behalf of its region's transit operators. The plan must reflect regional-level analysis and coordination. It should address the transit funding landscape, operational outlook, and rider experience for the region as a whole.

3. Submission Requirements

3.1 Deadline

Long-Term Financial Plans were originally set to be due no later than June 30, 2026. However, disbursements for the SB125 funding in FY 2025-26 will be made on a rolling basis as the financial plans are submitted and approved. Plans submitted past June 30th will still receive their approved funding after CalSTA reviews and approves the plans in the order they were received.

3.2 Format and Submission Method

Plans should be submitted electronically via the CalSTA SB 125 email inbox: SB125Transit@calsta.ca.gov. The narrative component should be submitted digitally as a PDF document (not scanned). The five-year operating funding forecast, as explained in Element 2, may be submitted in the CalSTA-provided Excel template (or a substantively equivalent format approved in advance by CalSTA staff). Supporting documentation may be submitted as attachments.

3.3 Authorized Signatory

The Long-Term Financial Plan must be signed by the RTPA's Executive Director or equivalent authorized officer. The signature constitutes certification that the information provided is accurate and complete to the best of the signatory's knowledge.

4. Required Plan Elements

Each Long-Term Financial Plan must, at minimum, include the following three elements to meet the statutory intent.

Element 1: Regional Transit Funding and Fiscal Context

This element must provide a concise assessment of the region's current transit funding landscape, including:

- The principal funding sources supporting transit operations in the region (federal formula funds, state formula funds, local measure revenues, fare revenues, and other sources), with approximate annual amounts for FY 2025-26 or the most recent complete fiscal year available.
- A description of any significant funding changes anticipated over the five-year plan horizon (FY 2025-26 through FY 2029-30), including expiring local measures, anticipated federal formula reauthorization impacts, or changes in SB 1 funding levels.

An identification of the primary fiscal risks the region's transit operators are likely to face over the plan period, with a qualitative assessment of their severity and likelihood. Element 2: Five-Year Operating Funding Forecast

This element is the quantitative core of the Long-Term Financial Plan. RTPAs must complete the CalSTA-provided Excel template (or equivalent) projecting regional transit operating revenues and expenditures for each of the five fiscal years FY 2026-27 through FY 2030-31. The forecast must:

- Be presented on a consolidated regional basis, aggregating across all transit operators within the RTPA's jurisdiction.
- Distinguish between formula-based funding (federal and state), local dedicated revenues, discretionary revenues, and fare revenues.

- Identify any funding gaps and specify how the RTPA and its operators plan to address them.
- Details regarding any new local or regional funds being pursued.
- Updates regarding the progress and improvements implemented since last short-term financial plan.
- Include a brief narrative (two to four pages) describing key assumptions, methodology, and significant risks or uncertainties in the forecast.

Element 3: Ridership and Service Quality Strategy

This element must describe the region's strategy for sustaining and growing transit ridership over the five-year plan horizon. The strategy must address:

- Current ridership levels relative to pre-pandemic baselines, including a brief analysis of which routes or service types have recovered most and least fully.
- Specific initiatives or service changes the RTPA and its operators plan to pursue to increase ridership, improve on-time performance, or enhance the rider experience.
- How the region is coordinating among transit operators to reduce barriers to multi-operator travel (e.g., fare integration, schedule coordination, wayfinding improvements).

  A description of coordination between transit operators, such as schedule coordination, operational management, and site sharing, to improve rider experience.
- Measurable targets for ridership or service quality improvement over the plan period, with a description of how progress will be tracked.
- A description of policies, actions or improvements to safety and cleanliness
- Description of the region's plan on maintaining or improving GTFS data quality and how GTFS data quality has changed since baseline year.
- See the provided excel template for the preferred data fields to include. Additionally data may include; stop-level ridership, changes to bus stop amenities.
- Updated California Air Resources Board (CARB) Greenhouse Gas Quantification Methodology Tool.

5. Other Information

- Template Financial Spreadsheet: CalSTA will provide an optional Excel template for the five-year operating funding forecast (Element 2) to assist RTPAs in organizing their financial data in a format consistent with CalSTA's review expectations. Agencies should use this template or an equivalent document with similar level of detail.
- Reference Materials: RTPAs should refer to their previously submitted Short-Term Financial Plan, NTD ridership data, General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data, and the Transit Transformation Task Force Final Report (2025) for analytical

context. If NTD or GTFS data is referenced, RTPAs must identify where the referenced data can be located and verified (hyperlink to NTD report, authoritative website, or agency published sources).

Peer Learning: CalSTA encourages RTPAs to coordinate with peer agencies in developing their plans and may facilitate peer exchanges upon request.

6. Contact Information

Questions regarding this guidance or the Long-Term Financial Plan requirement should be directed to:

CalSTA SB 125 Program Contact

California State Transportation Agency

SB 125 Program Team

Email: SB125@calsta.ca.gov

Website: www.calsta.ca.gov/sb125

RTPAs are encouraged to submit questions in writing to ensure a complete and documented response.