

September 18, 2025

## Regional Reconnecting Communities Study

### Overview

The Reconnecting Communities Study is a region-wide study to understand where highway and rail transportation infrastructure has created barriers and negative impacts on communities. The study aims to identify strategies that will better connect communities in the region.

To identify impacted communities and establish areas of interest in the region, staff conducted an analysis to measure the level of disconnection and impact along major transportation networks. Working closely with the Social Equity Working Group (SEWG), staff defined “disconnected communities” and established key metrics that account for accessibility, safety, mobility, and social equity (environmental health, low-income, disinvestment).

### Key Considerations

Staff conducted best practice research from complete or near-complete projects that address the physical and social divisions caused by transportation infrastructure from around the nation. Best practices include leveraging public-private partnerships, engaging communities early on, and adapting projects to the local context.

Based on research and data analysis, staff established seven focus areas for the region based on the level of disconnect and types of transportation infrastructure. Potential solutions will be identified for each focus area and will serve as “typologies” that can be replicated in similar areas throughout the region.

Staff will present an update on the study, highlight the outcomes of the analysis, and provide an overview of next steps. The information presented will help facilitate a future workshop to get feedback on short-term and long-term project opportunities. Sustainable Communities Working Group (SCWG) members are asked to provide feedback on the types of information and discussion topics that would make the upcoming Joint Working Group most beneficial and productive.

### Next Steps

Staff will hold an interactive Joint Working Group in late fall 2025 to present the outcomes of the analysis and get input on project opportunities and strategies for the different focus areas. The Joint Working Group will include the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council, SEWG, Mobility Working Group, and the SCWG.

***Antoinette Meier, Senior Director of Regional Planning***

#### Action: **Discussion**

Staff will present an overview on the Reconnecting Communities Study and request feedback from Sustainable Communities Working Group members.

#### **Fiscal Impact:**

The Reconnecting Communities Study is funded through a Caltrans Planning Grant (Overall Work Program Project No. 3402300).

#### **Schedule/Scope Impact:**

The study is anticipated to be completed in June 2026.