



**2026**

**STATE AND FEDERAL  
LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM**

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### OVERVIEW

SunLine Transit Agency (SunLine) was established in 1977 to provide public transportation to the Coachella Valley. SunLine offers a range of services including fixed-route buses, paratransit, and micro-transit. SunLine serves the cities of Desert Hot Springs, Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Indian Wells, La Quinta, Indio, Coachella, and six unincorporated communities (Thousand Palms, Bermuda Dunes, Thermal, Mecca, Oasis, and North Shore) within Riverside County.

SunLine's mission is “connecting people and improving life by taking you from where you are to where you want to be”. As a trailblazer in hydrogen fuel cell technology and clean energy transit solutions, SunLine leads the industry in sustainability. SunLine’s services significantly reduce traffic congestion, promote environmental health, and ensure mobility for residents and visitors alike, fostering stronger, more connected communities.

### SUNLINE’S LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The purpose of the Legislative Program is to advocate for policies and secure funding that enhance the safety, efficiency, sustainability, and accessibility of public transportation in the Coachella Valley, including regional efforts. Through strategic partnerships and proactive engagement with local, state, and federal stakeholders, the program advances initiatives that align with SunLine’s commitment to community connectivity, job creation and economic vitality, and innovation. By focusing on these priorities, the Legislative Program enables SunLine to effectively respond to emerging transportation trends and address regulatory challenges, strengthening SunLine’s position as a leader in sustainable transit.

#### Key elements of the Legislative Program include:

- Secure dedicated funding sources
- Advocate for legislation that supports transit needs
- Identify funding opportunities to support workforce development initiatives that strengthen the transit industry
- Remove statutory and regulatory barriers to implementing innovative and environmentally responsible transit solutions

Through strong relationships with policymakers, SunLine can shape policies that support efficient transit operations while addressing community goals such as economic growth and environmental awareness. This approach ensures that SunLine remains adaptable to the evolving needs of the Coachella Valley, maintaining public transportation as a safe, reliable and universally accessible resource for all residents.

## STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

This program focuses on key priorities which include advocating and protecting allocations from the State Transit Assistance (STA) program, Local Transportation Funds (LTF), and Cap-and-Invest revenues, while also pursuing additional funding opportunities through various state programs. SunLine will actively monitor regulatory changes and funding trends to identify emerging opportunities that could positively impact funding allocations and support SunLine's operational goals. The program will also focus on advancing legislation that improves transit access for underserved communities, fosters clean transportation infrastructure development, and enhances partnerships with state agencies to address mobility needs, reduce emissions, and strengthen the efficiency and sustainability of transit services in the Coachella Valley.

### i. **Transit Funding and Sustainable Transportation Initiatives**

- a. Reform the Transportation Development Act (TDA) to improve the metrics and distribution of TDA funds.
- b. Oppose legislation that seeks to divert TDA funds from transit-supported purposes beyond those allowed by current statute.
- c. Work to ensure committed funds are appropriated and available in a timely manner and not withheld or diverted to other purposes.
- d. Strategically apply for state grants to improve and expand transit facilities, such as bus stops, maintenance yards, and transit hubs.
- e. Pursue dedicated funding for zero-emission transit vehicles and facilities.
- f. Advocate for additional Cap-and-Invest funding dedicated to transit capital and operations.
- g. Advocate for additional funding for paratransit operations and transit accessibility capital improvements.
- h. Monitor and engage on legislation influencing the price of hydrogen fuel cell electric buses, as well as hydrogen and electricity as fuel sources for transit agencies.
- i. Support legislation to enhance transit-oriented development, integrating public transportation with affordable housing projects.

### ii. **Equitable Access and Affordability**

- a. Support legislation that ensures all communities, including rural and underserved areas, have access to reliable transit services.

iii. **Public Safety and Health**

- a. Advocate for policies that prioritize the safety of riders and employees, including anti-harassment measures, higher penalties for assaults on transit workers, stronger trespass prohibitions, and improvements in lighting and security at transit stations.
- b. Support policies that recognize public transit as a critical contributor to community health by improving access to care, employment, and active transportation options.
- c. Oppose legislation or regulations that would have an adverse impact on transit agencies' ability to provide safe transportation.

iv. **Economic and Workforce Development**

- a. Encourage legislation that supports the creation of jobs in the transit sector, including training programs for new technologies.
- b. Support increasing resources to recruit, retain, and train transit employees.
- c. Pursue dedicated funding opportunities for workforce development programs to address industry labor shortages and advance employee skills.
- d. Support measures that promote transit as a key component of economic development in the Coachella Valley, attracting businesses and tourism.

**FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM**

This program focuses on securing funding and advancing policies that support safety, agency priorities, and improve public transportation services. Key priorities include advocating for continued federal funding and incentives that reduce the costs of domestic energy fuel and infrastructure.

**Transit Funding and Sustainable Transportation Initiatives**

- a. Support current investment levels for transit services through a re-authorization of a federal transportation act following the expiration of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) on September 26, 2026.
- b. Advocate for a year-long FY27 Appropriations bill that ensures funding levels at or above historic levels.

- c. Work to ensure committed funds (discretionary and formula) are available in a timely manner and not withheld or diverted for other purposes.
- d. Strategically apply for federal grants to improve and expand transit facilities, such as maintenance facilities, fueling stations, job training centers, and transit hubs.
- e. Monitor developments related to PEPRA and Section 13(c) and support actions that ensure the preservation of transit funding for transit agencies.
- f. Advocate for transit agencies to serve as direct recipients of federal grant funding and minimize unnecessary bureaucratic processes.
- g. Advocate for funding and policies supporting technology innovation and development.
- h. Promote legislation and streamlined regulatory mandates that support common sense infrastructure development for meeting operational needs.
- i. Advocate for increased local control and flexibility in project delivery.
- j. Support efforts to address the long-term stability of the Highway Trust Fund to ensure continued, reliable funding for public transportation programs.
- k. Advocate for a renewed alternative fuels excise tax credit.
- l. Support legislation that incentivizes the use of public transit.
- m. Support legislation to enhance transit-oriented development, integrating public transportation with affordable housing projects.

ii. **Universal Access**

- a. Support legislation that ensures all communities have access to reliable transit services.

iii. **Public Safety and Health**

- a. Advocate for policies and funding that prioritize the safety of riders and employees, including anti-harassment measures, higher penalties for assaults on transit workers, and improvements in lighting and security at transit stations.
- b. Support policies that recognize public transit as a critical contributor to community health by improving access to care, employment, and active transportation options.

- c. Oppose legislation or regulations that would have an adverse impact on transit agencies' ability to provide safe transportation.

iv. **Economic and Workforce Development**

- a. Encourage legislation that supports the creation of jobs in the transit sector, including training programs for new technologies.
- b. Support increasing resources to recruit, retain, and train transit employees.
- c. Pursue dedicated funding opportunities for workforce development programs to address industry labor shortages and advance employee skills.
- d. Support measures that promote transit as a key component of economic development in the Coachella Valley, attracting businesses and tourism.

**STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND ADVOCACY**

To achieve the goals of SunLine Transit Agency's Legislative Program, the following advocacy activities and resources will be utilized.

- i. Continue to develop relationships with local, state, and federal legislators and administration officials who can champion transit issues.
- ii. Collaborate with local governments, community organizations, environmental groups, and business leaders to build a broad base of support for transit-related legislation and administrative actions.
- iii. Strategic travel to meet with federal and state legislators and agencies.
- iv. Monitor and track relevant legislation at the state and federal levels, identifying opportunities for advocacy and bring relevant legislation to the Board of Directors for feedback, support, or opposition.
- v. Active participation in the California Transit Association's and CALACT's State Legislative Committees.
- vi. Active participation in the American Public Transportation Association's Legislative Affairs Committee.
- vii. Active participation in the Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce Legislative Committee.
- viii. Proactive outreach to legislators to sponsor transit-friendly legislation.

- ix. Collaboration with media outlets to publish transit-supportive materials.
- x. Ongoing communication with SunLine's state and federal legislative advocates.
- xi. Review of legislative updates from trade organizations and transportation agencies.
- xii. Coordination with regional transportation agencies to strengthen local advocacy efforts.
- xiii. Attendance at relevant seminars and conferences to stay informed of current developments.
- xiv. Launch initiatives to raise public awareness about the importance of public transit, focusing on its environmental, economic, and social benefits.