

Rural Counties Task Force (RCTF) Meeting Minutes

Date: July 17, 2026

Time: 12:30 – 2:30 PM

Location: Zoom

A. Introductions

Presenter: All

Chair Heather Adamson called the meeting to order and welcomed participants. New attendees provided brief introductions, representing a range of rural transportation agencies. It was noted that this meeting marked Chair Adamson's first meeting as RCTF Chair.

B. Approval of Minutes

Presenter: Heather Adamson

The previous meeting minutes were presented for approval. Members reviewed the materials and, with no substantive corrections or objections raised, the minutes were approved by consensus.

C. Information Sharing / Topics of Significance

Presenter: All

Members shared updates from their respective regions, highlighting ongoing transportation challenges, including project delivery timelines, staffing capacity, and funding uncertainty. One member relayed a concern about having difficulty hiring consultants due to small contract sizes and asked the group for experience bidding an on-call contract rather than individual RFPs. Further discussion was had about an impending retirement, using planning grants for Street Saver updates, and updates to the administrative support manual for the RCTF. Woody Deloria, El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC), which manages the RCTF website, requested that partner agencies check the website for accurate changes and send any changes to them. Similarly, members should send any changes to the RCTF contact list to Chair Adamson. The item concluded with a reminder about dues being sent out, and a thank you to Aaron Hoyt for serving as RCTF Chair.

D. Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan (ITSP) Update

Presenter: Florigna Feliciano and Gus Alfaro, Caltrans

Florigna Feliciano and Gus Alfaro from Caltrans provided a follow up presentation to the May 2026 meeting where they presented an overview of the accelerated update to the Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan (ITSP), outlining a condensed schedule intended

to deliver the plan by early 2027. The timeline includes stakeholder engagement and data collection through mid-2026, followed by workshops in August, release of a draft plan in late 2026, and finalization in early 2027 before presentation to the California Transportation Commission.

Caltrans gave an overview of the four updates they are making to the ITSP; specifically aligning it with the new update of CAPTI, CTP, and other modal plans; addressing administrative errors/omissions; updating the Interregional Travel definition; and refining the ITIP project evaluation criteria to align with the updated California System Investment Strategy (CSIS).

The discussion focused primarily on the Interregional Travel definition update and the project evaluation criteria. The group was then invited to comment on the update of the interregional travel definition. Concerns were expressed about the definition changing to include interregional travel near borders and on the interregional road system, which could shift funding away from roads serving long distance trips. There were also concerns that such changes in definition would lead to funding more projects in urban areas vs. rural areas, when rural areas have fewer resources to implement interregional state highway projects. As in the last RCTF meeting, members also strongly expressed concerns about the proposed integration of CSIS criteria into the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) project evaluation process. Members noted that CSIS metrics appear to be oriented toward urban, multimodal contexts and may not appropriately reflect the characteristics or needs of interregional highway projects common in rural areas.

Caltrans overviewed the newly revised project evaluation questions and performance measures, which they stated were shaped by feedback from the RCTF and the Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPA) groups, as well as lessons learned from the 2026 ITIP process. Members raised questions and concerns regarding inclusion of projects not directly in a priority interregional travel corridor, and the inclusion of CSIS in the scoring criteria which could favor urban projects or projects with active transportation or mass transit components and negatively impact rural highway projects. There was also discussion about definition of emergency evacuation routes, and the bundling of bicycle and pedestrian projects with highway projects when funding is limited.

The item concluded with a summary of next steps and ways that members can engage with the ITSP team, including upcoming office hours, stakeholder workshops, and sending in feedback on Caltrans' website or by contacting Caltrans staff directly. The spreadsheet of ITSP project evaluation criteria will be sent out to the members.

E. CTC Updates

1. Legislative Update

Presenter: Sasha Linker

Sasha Linker provided an overview of current legislative activity relevant to transportation. She highlighted that the Legislature is on summer recess but will return in August for one month before adjourning after August 31st. Bills will head to the Governor's desk in September. She also noted that Governor Newsom signed the FY 26-27 state budget package which largely leaves transportation funding intact, though negotiations will continue in August regarding transit and responses to recent regulatory changes affecting the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. Governor Newsom also signed an Executive Order directing state transportation agencies to accelerate deployment of new technologies and strategies to improve transit and passenger rail service statewide. She concluded with an update on five legislative bills that were discussed in the May 2026 RCTF meeting, including AB 2679 (Hadwick), SB 1423 (Stern), AB 2059 (Wilson), AB 2168 (Wicks), and SB 1087 (Cabaldon).

2. Active Transportation Program (ATP)

Presenter: Anja Aulenbacher

Anja Aulenbacher provided an update on ATP Cycle 8, noting that applications were due June 22, 2026, and that the program received 317 applications totaling an ATP request of \$2.99 billion. The total amount of funding available is \$619 million, meaning the total requested ATP funds is five times the amount available. The largest requested amount was \$53.8 million. 90% of applications are for infrastructure projects and/or combination infrastructure/non-infrastructure projects; while 4% were for non-infrastructure projects and 6% were for plan projects. Staff recommendations will be released for the statewide and small urban/rural components by November 2nd.

3. SB 1 Programs

Presenter: Matthew Yosgott

Matthew Yosgott outlined the timeline for SB1 Cycle 5 programs, including the recent release of draft guidelines at the June CTC meeting. He also noted that two workshops were held after the June CTC meeting to discuss the delivery method section: or more specifically alternative delivery methods, as well as some new language on housing and land use in the evaluation criteria (working together with the Dept. of Housing and Community Development). The workshop was recorded and is available on YouTube. The guidelines were also revised to comply with a new Executive Order signed by Governor Newsom in late June. SB 1 program guidelines will be going to the August CTC meeting for adoption along with the call for projects for LPP, Trade Corridors Enhancement Program

(TCEP), and Solutions for Congested Corridors (SCCP). \$1.7 billion is available across all three programs and project recommendations will be adopted in June 2027. He concluded the item noting that the Local Partnerships Program (LPP) formula allocations were recently posted to the CTC website. Follow up questions and discussion were had on the two workshops.

4. Local Streets and Roads

Presenter: Alicia Sequeira

Alicia Sequeira reviewed key deadlines for the Local Streets and Roads program, including the July 1, 2026, deadline for eligibility submittals and project lists that recently passed. 508 submittals or agencies were approved while eight were deemed non-compliant. These eight are on track to re-submit and remain eligible. A number of agencies will be submitting by the end of this month. Initial eligibility is scheduled to be approved at the August CTC meeting, with subsequent eligibility closing on September 30th. LSR is expected to have \$1.8 billion available this year.

5. State & Local Transportation System Needs Assessment

Presenter: N/A

Chair Adamson noted that there is no update on this item.

F. Caltrans Updates

1. Local Assistance

Presenter: Tanzeeba Kishwar

Tanzeeba Kishwar shared updates in the chat feature regarding an upcoming call for projects for HSIP Cycle 13, the federal BUILD grant award announcements, and Federal Earmark Repurposing Program (FERP). There was also an update regarding the DBE program and a return to goal setting for DBEs. Current Obligation Authority (OA) statewide was noted at \$738 million, or about 50% delivery out of the total \$1.51 billion for the current federal fiscal year, trending below OA at this time last year. Members are encouraged to submit their RFA packages for projects viable to deliver this fiscal year.

2. Obligation Authority Presenter:

Tanzeeba Kishwar

Current Obligation Authority (OA) statewide was noted at \$738 million, or about 50% delivery out of the total \$1.51 billion for the current federal fiscal year, trending below OA at this time last year which was 60%. Members are encouraged to submit their Request for

Authorization (RFA) packages for projects viable to deliver this fiscal year.

3. State and Federal Budget Update

Presenter: Keith Duncan / Garrett Franklin

Keith Duncan noted that the state budget has been adopted and signed by the Governor with no changes to current transportation funding levels. Once the Legislature is back in session, he noted that it's expected that changes to the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) will be discussed, particularly to the Low Carbon Transit Operation Program (LCTOP), and the Transit Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP). He also noted that there is a proposal by the Newsom administration to provide incentives to refineries to produce cleaner aviation fuel through discounts on excise taxes. This could produce less funding for transportation.

4. Planning

Presenter: Erin Thompson / Brenda Caruso

Planning staff shared several updates, including that final year end packages for FY 25-26 OWPs are due August 31st. They also noted deadlines regarding OWPs for FY 26/27 and those that were awarded planning grants. FY 27-28 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Guide and Application are in development and likely to release the application in mid-August with the deadline in October. It was noted that Rural Planning Assistance (RPA) formula allocations are \$2.5 million higher with an expected surplus of \$585,000 from this year. EDCTC made a request to utilize a small portion of these funds for evacuation preparedness projects in response to the Mosquito Fire. A formal proposal will be brought to the next RCTF meeting. There were also discussion and consensus about funding three participants from the RCTF members to participate in the California Academy for Regional Leaders (CARL) program through the California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG).

5. Division of Mass Transportation

Presenter: Josh Pulverman

Josh Pulverman provided an update on various programs in the Division of Mass Transportation. Rural Transit Day occurred recently, and Caltrans has been highlighting the importance of rural transit agencies for overall mobility. He also noted that FTA 5311 and 5311F applications are now open and any questions should be directed to James Haskell. TIRCP awards are expected to be announced in September. He also noted that AB 169 if approved would extend the COVID era suspension of farebox penalties and STA efficiency standards. Caltrans districts are each preparing their own transit plans for transit supporting infrastructure along the state highways. Lastly, he noted that CalSTA has a new

Deputy Secretary for Rail and Transit, and that there is a new California Transit Advisory Committee starting up.

G. Miscellaneous

Presenter: All

During miscellaneous discussion, Chair Adamson reminded members to send updates to the RCTF contact list and send any website updates to EDCTC. There will be in-person training on Friday, September 18th with a time and location to be determined.

H. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the RCTF is scheduled for September 18, 2026.

I. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned following completion of all agenda items.