

California Rural Counties Task Force
May 10, 2024
Zoom/Teleconference

Draft Minutes

A. Introductions (All)

Chair Nephele Barrett, Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) called the meeting to order.

New or infrequent members introduced themselves: Michael Errante, Inyo County Public Works, Neil Dixon Caltrans Headquarters, Roberta Jensen, Caltrans Headquarters, Suresh Ratnam Caltrans Headquarters, Douglas Kean, Council of San Benito County Governments, Abhijit Bagde, Caltrans Headquarters, Steve Pendergast, Caltrans District 2,

B. Approve Minutes (N. Barrett)

There were no comments on the meeting minutes. The March 15, 2024 meeting minutes were approved.

C. Election of Officers (N. Barrett)

Chair Barrett, MCOG, announced that her two-year term as RCTF Chair is coming to an end. She nominated Aaron Hoyt and Heather Adamson for the incoming Chair and Vice Chair positions, respectively. Chair Barrett also nominated Beth Burks, Humboldt County Association of Governments for Secretary. She also opened up nominations to all members for any other nominations. Maura Twomey, AMBAG, seconded Chair Barrett's slate of nominations. There were no other nominations. The RCTF officers were agreed upon and will begin their positions in July 2024.

D. Information Sharing/Topics of Significance (All)

Chair Barrett, MCOG, had a couple of items. First in relation to SB 125, Chair Barrett reached out to CalSTA to provide an update on the future of SB 125 funding. Unfortunately, they were unable to attend today's meeting but she's hoping that more information will be provided at the CalSTA's budget briefing later today. Second, Chair Barrett also mentioned that at a previous RCTF meeting she proposed drafting a letter to request an increase in RPA funding available statewide for rural counties. She has not drafted a letter but has developed initial numbers based on past annual average CPI increases of \$9,025,000 annually statewide. Chair Barrett also proposes that the allocation is increased annually based on annual average CPI. Chair Barrett asked for feedback on this proposed amount and approach. RCTF members discussed the proposal.

E. CSIS– Identify Projects for Scoring (N. Barrett)

Chair Barrett, MCOG, stated that Caltrans is currently scoring projects for SB 1 Programs Cycle 4 using the CAPTI alignment metrics. A small working group met with Caltrans to discuss the scoring process and Caltrans agreed to test score two more projects selected by the RCTF so we can have a clear idea of how rural projects score using those metrics. Chair Barrett asked RCTF to submit suggestions for potential projects to be considered. Ivan Garcia, Butte County Association of Governments (BCAG), suggested Highway 70 as a potential project. Chair Barrett encouraged RCTF members to send project ideas via email.

F. CTC Updates

1. Legislative Update (J. Behrens)

Justin Behrens, CTC, provided a brief legislative update. Mr. Behrens stated that an item to support SB 934 (Gonzalez) will be going to the CTC next week. CTC staff is not recommending positions on other bills but there are some that they are tracking very closely that may have impacts on our programs, including AB 2535 (Bonta), AB 2290 (Friedman), and AB 1216 (Blakespear). Mike Woodman, Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC), stated that they took oppose positions on AB 2290 and AB 1216. Chair Barrett, MCOG, also mentioned that her Board took “oppose unless amended” positions on those two bills as well.

2. Active Transportation Program (E. Changizi)

Elika Changizi, CTC, announced that they have started their call for evaluators for the 2025 ATP. Ms. Changizi stated that they are looking for more rural evaluators so she encouraged RCTF members to sign up. Ms. Changizi also announced that staff are presenting the 2023 ATP benefits report at the May CTC meeting highlighting the Cycle 6 projects. Laurie Waters, CTC, commented that this report is important in highlighting how the ATP projects are critical to meeting the state’s goals.

3. SB 1 Programs (N. Habib)

Naveen Habib, CTC, provided an update on the development of the SB 1 programs. Ms. Habib announced the SB 1 Programs Cycle 4 workshops for guidelines development will be held on May 22, 23, and 24. Registration information for these workshops is on the CTC web page. The draft guidelines for the SB 1 Programs are scheduled to be presented at the June CTC meeting. The final guidelines are scheduled to be adopted at the August 2024 CTC meeting.

4. Local Streets and Roads (A. Sequeira)

Alicia Sequeira, CTC, stated that the initial eligibility period for the FY24-25 project lists submittals is open and is due on July 1, 2024.

5. STIP (K. Ruggerio)

Kacey Ruggerio, CTC, reminded RCTF members that all projects programmed in the current fiscal year need to be allocated by the June 2024 CTC meeting. If projects are not going to be allocated this fiscal year, then make sure to get your time extension request in by the June CTC meeting to prevent your project from lapsing.

6. LTCAP (R. Light)

Rebecca Light, CTC, stated that the draft guidelines for the LTCAP Cycle 2 will be presented at the May CTC meeting. There is \$90.7 million available in Cycle 2 and the draft guidelines eliminated the project nomination funding caps that were included in Cycle 1. Ms. Light also announced that today is the last day to submit projects to SCRIPT. For more information on the SCRIPT Intake Form at: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning/division-of-transportation-planning/air-quality-and-climate-change/state-climate-resilience-improvement-plan-for-transportation>.

7. SB 1121 Needs Assessment (F. Dea-Sanchez)

Frances Dea-Sanchez, CTC, stated that there are two upcoming policy recommendations workshops scheduled for May 30th (LA) and June 18th (Sacramento). Registration links for both hybrid workshops will be available next week.

8. Equity Advisory Committee (S. Erasmus)

Sequoia Erasmus, CTC, announced that the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee (EAC) Executive meeting will be held on May 15, 2024. The meeting will focus on what the EAC has been doing, agency collaboration, and the outcomes of that collaboration. A new member will be recommended for the EAC at the May 2024 CTC meeting.

9. SHOPP Guidelines (J. Pray)

John Pray, CTC, announced that CTC is updating the SHOPP guidelines. Mr. Pray stated that a kickoff workshop was held in April 2024. Potential changes to the eligible improvements section and clarifying partnering with various funding sources for larger projects. Another workshop is being planned for June 2024. The draft SHOPP guidelines are expected to be presented to the CTC at its August 2024 meeting with approval scheduled for October 2024.

G. Caltrans Updates

1. Local Assistance (R. Jensen/A. Bagde)

Roberta Jensen, Caltrans, announced that the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Cycle 12 call for projects for \$300 million on May 6, 2024. The application submittal deadline is September 9, 2024. There will be a call for projects webinar on May 21, 2024. For more information, please visit: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/fed-and-state-programs/highway-safety-improvement-program/apply-now>.

Ms. Jensen announced a couple FHWA notice of funding opportunities including the Bridge Investment Program and Planning and Bridge Grants which closes in October 2024. The Safe Streets and Roads for All closes on August 29, 2024.

For the PROTECT Program for federal FY22 and FY23, Ms. Jensen announced that six projects, totaling \$58.8 million, were awarded to California. For the CFI Program, 10 projects, totaling \$168.6 million, were awarded to California. For the SMART Program, California was awarded six projects totaling \$10.3 million. For the MEGA Program, California was awarded one project for roughly \$283 million. California did not receive any projects under the RSTG Program. For the INFRA Program, California was awarded two projects for a total of \$480 million.

Abhijit Bagde, Caltrans, provided a quick update on OA project delivery. Mr. Bagde reported that OA project delivery has been very low this year. Due to this, local OA was opened on March 15th instead of the regular May 1st date, with the goal to enhance project delivery and optimizing potential for the August 2024 redistribution. Beginning in April 2024, Caltrans has been meeting with all of the MPOs, RTPAs, and local agencies to see if there is anything that Caltrans can assist them with to enhance project delivery.

2. State Budget Update (K. Duncan)

Keith Duncan, Caltrans, provided an update on the state budget including the May Revise that was just released. Mr. Duncan stated that the general fund revenues are down and the state has a multi-year budget deficit that they are trying to resolve. For TIRCP, the May Revise proposes funding swaps for general fund with GGFR. Mr. Duncan stated that the Department of Finance is expected to post more details on the May Revise proposal soon.

3. Planning (B. Caruso)

Brenda Caruso, Caltrans, stated that the OWP Quarter 3 progress and expenditure reports were due to Caltrans on April 30th. The deadline for formal OWP amendments was May 1st. Administrative amendments can be submitted up until the closeout and reconciliation process. For FY24-25, the final OWP packages are due to Caltrans on June 3rd.

Ms. Caruso reported that RPA discretionary funding provided an additional \$50,000 for the Rural Induced Demand Study and \$25,000 for the CARL Program. Both will be administered by NCTC. Seven applications were received and four were awarded funding totaling \$525 million. The conditions of approval are due on June 24, 2024 and RTPAs cannot begin work until the conditions of approval have been met, the funds have been programmed into the OWP & OWPA, and the agency has received the Notice to Proceed. All work must be completed by June 30, 2026.

Finally, Ms. Caruso stated that the FY24-25 Sustainable Transportation Planning grants awards will be announced in late June 2024. Awardees will receive a conditional award letter and non-awardees will receive an email. Non-awardees will have the option to schedule a debrief meeting to receive feedback on their grant application and how they can improve it for a future grant cycle. The FY25-26 Sustainable Transportation Planning grant application guide workshops will be held on May 14th and May 16th. Both workshops will be the same and the presentation will be available after the workshops. A 30-day public comment period is expected to be held in late June 2024 on the grant application guide. Following the public comment period, two additional workshops will be scheduled in August 2024. The FY25-26 Sustainable Transportation Planning grants application guide and call for applications is expected to be released in September 2024.

H. Miscellaneous (All)

Ivan Garcia, BCAG, asked if anyone had heard how the REAP 2.0 Program fared in the May Revise? Sabrina Bradbury, CALCOG, confirmed that the proposed \$250 million cut to REAP 2.0 funding is still in the May Revise.

John Clerici, Lassen County Transportation Commission, (LCTC), congratulated Aaron Hoyt on becoming RCTF Chair and thanked Chair Barrett for her past two years of serving as RCTF Chair.

I. Adjourn

Chair Barrett, MCOG, adjourned the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for July 19, 2024.