

**California
Rural Counties Task Force**

January 21, 2022

Teleconference/Webcast

DRAFT MINUTES

A. Introductions

All

Chair Woody Deloria called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

New or infrequent members introduced themselves: Robin VanValkenburgh, Nevada County Transit Services; Kimi Taguchi, Trinity County; Rick Carter, PCTPA; Jennifer Tendick, CALCOG; Rebecca Light, CTC (on rotation from Caltrans); Jennifer Blunkall, Tehama CTC; Daniel Burke, Div of Local Assistance; Tom Obrien, Cal State Long Beach (LTAP); Scott Jakovich, LTAP; Jim Graham, Plumas CTC; Mary Gilber, San Benito COG; Gary Arnold, Dist. 3 Planning.

B. Approve Minutes of November 19, 2021

W. Deloria

No action. The minutes had not yet been distributed to the group.

C. Information Sharing/Topics of Significance

All

Tamera reported in the chat that RPA was last adjusted in 2012. Erin Thompson commented that a meeting invite will go out next week to discuss this topic. She mentioned that the total hasn't gone up in about 10 years. The tendency of some agencies to carryover complicates the matter.

Lisa Davey-Bates noted that Rick Tibbits had been representative on the HSIP committee for RCTF, and she has been the alternate. Rick has retired, and she asked the group to appoint another member as the primary representative. She would continue serving as the alternate. Woody suggested appointments to committees at the next meeting. Lisa noted the next HSIP committee meeting is January 27.

D. Complete Streets Plan

T. Dang

Tony Dang, Deputy Director for Sustainability, provided a presentation on Complete Streets. The Complete Streets Policy is about establishing a priority to maximize walking, biking, transit and passenger rail. All projects should provide comfortable, convenient, and connected complete streets facilities. There is a decision process to ensure that facilities are tracked and kept throughout the project development process. Exceptions might be made for some projects, such as limited scope projects (repair projects). The Complete Streets Policy is now a Director's Policy rather than a Deputy Directive. Now walking, biking and transit are default for a project

The policy underscores the Department's commitment to community and agency partnerships. Design flexibility and prioritization of underserved communities are key. Implementation will include contextual guidance to detail minimum expectations by place type, a complete streets decision process, and tracking process. They will launch a hub to facilitate cross-functional collaboration and develop an action plan and public-facing quarterly progress reports.

Rachel Moriconi expressed her appreciation for this effort.

Tony confirmed that bike and pedestrian facilities would be included by default in SHOPP projects, unless exceptions were made.

Performance metrics will likely come fully online for the 2024 SHOPP.

Nephele Barrett asked if the policy will include improvements beyond basics, such as planting strips or decorative lighting as part of bike/ped improvements. Tony said they need to establish the baseline first. However, they're committed to creating world class facilities, and improvements will depend on the community.

Jim Graham noted that maintaining facilities is difficult for local agencies.

Ivan Garcia asked if stand-alone projects would be considered. Tony confirmed that they would.

Caltrans Planning teams will coordinate applications for the upcoming ATP cycle.

E. CAPTI Update

E. Thompson

Erin Thompson reported that a rural counties workshop will be scheduled on CAPTI implementation with Caltrans and CalSTA. MIG will be facilitating that effort. The workshop will likely take place in early March. Tony noted that Caltrans wants to work with rural counties to craft how CAPTI implementation will look in a rural context. Caltrans will work with RCTF to develop the agenda. Woody noted the preference for a virtual workshop.

Woody asked that RCTF members email Erin with suggestions for workshop agenda topics. Erin asked that topics be provided by next Friday, January 28. They will work with a small group on agenda development.

F. Local Assistance Technical Assistance Program

D. Burke

Daniel Burke with Division of Local Assistance provided a presentation on the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP). He introduced Tom O'Brien with Cal State Long Beach and other team members who gave an overview of the program. Services include training and equipment loans. Compliance training includes the federal aid series and RE academy. Technical training provided through UC Berkeley includes topics such as safety, traffic synchronization.

They would like to expand the range of training for local agencies. They are working on a training for grant applications which could include best practices on compiling applications and avoiding common pitfalls.

They would like feedback from RCTF on how they can support and assist member agencies. They provide a list serve that people can join.

Rachel suggested Local Assistance Engineers as a good source for information on common challenges of local agencies.

Tamera Leighton noted that virtual trainings/meetings are much easier for rural agencies.

G. Proposed ITSP Addendum

Hanley/Sauer

Kathleen Hanley provided a presentation on the ITSP addendum. They are looking at sea level rise, wildfire hazard potential, etc. They are currently reading existing planning documents. In March and April, 11 stakeholder meetings will be held. A draft addendum will be released in July/August. The addendum should be finalized by December. Kathleen will send the meeting list to Woody to distribute. They are scheduled to be 90 minutes each and are by corridor.

Mike Woodman expressed appreciation for the content in the addendum. He noted that the RTPAs are much more familiar with the corridors than Caltrans staff are. For meetings, it might be a good idea to have focused meetings for corridor segments/sub corridors. Kathleen confirmed that some smaller, follow-up meetings are likely.

Mike asked about the gap closure analysis requested by the CTC. Kathleen confirmed that this addendum was responding to a requirement in the STIP guidelines.

H. CTC Update

Various

Legislative Update/IIJA - Justin Behrens, CTC staff, reported on state legislation. There have not been many transportation related bills yet. The CTC has not taken any positions on bills so far.

IIJA will provide \$500 billion over 5 years. California is expected to get \$40 billion. Details of how funds will flow is being worked out by a CalSTA working group and sub-working groups. The budget includes a proposal to forego the annual excise tax inflation adjustment, which is estimated to result in a reduction of about \$523 mil in revenue. The State may backfill the local share of money with State Highway Account funds. The increase was expected to be about .03 per gallon.

Woody noted that some have asked if RCTF will take a formal position. However, RCTF doesn't traditionally take formal positions on legislation.

Active Transportation Program - Laurie Waters gave an ATP update. They're wrapping up a series of workshops. Draft guidelines will be presented at the meeting next week. The biggest change will be project size thresholds—small will be up to \$3.5 million, medium up to \$10 million, large over \$10 million. The February 2 workshop will cover changes to the application. They are doing virtual site visits that have gone really well, but all time slots filled quickly. They are trying to accommodate as many as possible, but can't schedule any more. Over 120 projects will be included in site visits. Laurie gave suggestions on how agencies can prepare for the site visits.

SB 1 Guidelines Workshop Update - Matthew Yosgott provided a report on SB 1 programs. Changes are being incorporated in the guidelines to incorporate equity improvements. An equity workshop was held in December. Key takeaways were to better involve community organizations, integrate multiple languages, and prioritize community visions. Challenges included funding constraints, localizing equity indicators, lack of data, inability to fund CBO participation, political support, suburban/rural inability to compete with urban areas, and duplication of efforts across an area. They are sensitive to these concerns, but don't believe they are insurmountable.

SB 1 office hours are available for prospective applicants to ask questions. Sign ups are available on program websites. Draft guideline revisions will come out in March-April, with final in June.

Local Streets and Roads - Alicia Sequeria Smith thanked the RCTF for their assistance working with local agencies to submit expenditure reports. A total of 539 reports were submitted, with 100% compliance for the third year in a row. The next round of eligibility submittals will occur in July.

2022 STIP and IIJA - Teresa Favila reported that STIP hearings will start next Thursday. The hearing book will be posted Monday. Proposals are below capacity, however, the first three years are over programmed. No recommendations will be made at the hearings. The guidelines requested regional perspective on highway and rail needs. Along with the hearing book, those recommendations will be posted. Requests to speak at the

hearings should be submitted to Kacey. Teresa noted concern with how the gas tax proposal in the budget will impact the STIP, which assumed a certain level of increases.

I. Caltrans Update

Various

Planning - Erin Thompson reported that FY 19/20 planning grants will expire at the end of February. Extensions are allowed in extenuating circumstances. FY 22/23 planning grant announcements are expected in March.

Draft OWPs are due March 1. Final OWP packages are due June 1.

IJJA includes new requirements, mostly for urban areas, such as housing coordination plans.

Local Assistance - Sujaya Kalainesan reported that they're operating under a continuing resolution, which ends in Feb. The December report shows 5% usage. AB 1012 reports are coming soon. OA Best Practices committee released a draft policy memo last week which was circulated to the RTPA group. Updates include added flexibility to open the OA pool earlier when usage is low and clarification regarding engagement with regions on redistribution.

The inactive list is posted on the website, with 8 projects on the list. Justification forms should be submitted for inactive projects. Project end dates have been updated. These need to be extended if applicable.

State Budget Update - Keith Duncan reported that the proposed budget has been released. Caltrans budget is a little over \$20 billion, the highest ever, due in part to new funding from IJJA/BIL. Keith will send info to Woody to distribute.

The Caltrans budget includes replacement of about 1500 pieces of equipment per year to move toward a clean fleet. The budget includes a program to investigate bike/ped incidents. Several proposals were also included in the last budget--\$500 million augmentation for ATP and \$400 million for climate adaptation projects (local and state). An additional \$100 million was included for the Clean CA local grant program. Two new programs are proposed for funding—Connecting Communities and Highways to Boulevards. Additional info will be shared with Woody for distribution. A supply chain/goods movement proposal includes \$1.2 bil for port infrastructure projects. Another proposal is to pause the inflationary increase to gas excise tax for the upcoming year. The CPI increase is estimated to be 5.6% increase. The pause will result in revenue reduction of about \$500 million. Current year revenues are higher than anticipated. Impacts to local agency direct revenue would possibly be backfilled. The STIP Fund Estimate adopted in August will still be used going forward.

Rachel asked if STA funds would be impacted by the pause in fuel excise tax. Keith confirmed that it would, but that would be part of backfill. Clean CA will most be applied to a second cycle.

Woody reported on the FHWA corrective action issue. There's no response from Caltrans on the request to extend implementation. Currently, the deadline is Feb 15.

J. Adjourn

W. Deloria

The meeting was adjourned at 2:26 p.m.

Chat Panel Discussion:

From Rachel Moriconi, RTC to Everyone 12:36 PM

Getting some sort of summary from Erin of things Regions need to follow up on -- could be helpful ;)

From Tamera Leighton to Everyone 12:38 PM

Last meeting, I made a mistake in my statement. The last time the RPA was increased was in 2012 and not 2008. I just wanted to correct my error.

From Tamera Leighton to Everyone 12:43 PM

Yes, I want to participate in the conversation with CT and Erin. I don't understand how some RTPAs are keeping up with the RPA-funded requirements, keeping their communities eligible for funding, and still not using RPA. I don't know what regions routinely have carryover so I can't ask them.

From Rachel Moriconi, RTC to Everyone 12:56 PM

Is Caltrans planning to apply for ATP grants in Cycle 6?

From Laurie Waters to Everyone 12:58 PM

I've heard definitely yes.

From Nephele Barrett to Everyone 01:03 PM

I prefer virtual.

From Tamera Leighton to Everyone 01:12 PM

Virtual or in-person? Getting from Del Norte to Sac is a haul, no matter how I do it. And, look... we have 62 people attending this meeting.

Oh, shoot. I'm not done typing.

From Loretta Ellard to Everyone 01:15 PM

Some of our small agencies need tech assistance with various grant applications. Is that something you offer?

From Tom O'Brien to Everyone 01:16 PM

tom.obrien@csulb.edu

We'd love to be added to your outreach lists as we hope to develop sustained relationships between LTAP and RCTF.

From Scott Jakovich to Everyone 01:19 PM

Reach out to us for LTAP support and updates: scott.jakovich@csulb.edu or cpie-californialtap@csulb.edu. Thanks!

From Rachel Moriconi, RTC to Everyone 01:20 PM

Is there a feedback loop from district Local Assistance Engineers of challenges local jurisdictions tend to get stuck on?

From Loretta Ellard to Everyone 01:21 PM

Some of our small agencies need tech assistance with various grant applications. Is that something you offer?

From Tamera Leighton to Everyone 01:22 PM

Virtual or in-person? Getting from Del Norte to Sac is a haul, no matter how I do it. And, I can't do it without spending at least one night in a hotel so it's expensive in both time and direct cost. If I go home on Friday, I'm still driving at 11 p.m. if I push it. Sometimes, I just need to stop and get a hotel because I'm too sleepy. Alternatively, I don't want to still be away from home on Saturday morning. (Can you hear me whine?) And look, we have 63 people attending this meeting and hearing our topics. If the meetings are in person, I'll continue to do my best to show up in person. I do think that the virtual meetings makes access to the meetings more equal for all of us.

From Jeff Schwein to Everyone 01:22 PM

Felicia Haslem is a great reference for Local Assistance. She did a good presentation in November regarding project delivery and she's heard ALL the local jurisdictions challenges.

From Tamera Leighton to Everyone 01:23 PM

I prefer the virtual training. The recent 5310 training was excellent.

From JessicaRiske-Gomez to Everyone 01:24 PM

Well said John.

From Rachel Moriconi, RTC to Everyone 01:25 PM

Trainings or documents summarizing the latest/new requirements might be helpful from time to time. Overall the LAPM and LAPG is overwhelming - especially for really small jurisdictions that have almost no staff (e.g. 1-2 staff). Having a check list of key tasks tends to be really helpful. Recordings of trainings might be helpful (that they can look at when they need the info.)

From Daniel Burke to Everyone 01:38 PM

The Division of Local Assistance is updating the Training website, but please visit the link below for on-demand training and a sample of what is offered: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/training>

From Kathleen Hanley, CT HQ to Everyone 01:44 PM

ITSP Manager: Kathleen Hanley Kathleen.hanley@dot.ca.gov 916-917-3108

From Matthew Yosgott, CA Transportation Commission to Everyone 01:59 PM

If anyone is interested in registering for SB 1 Program "office hours" for Local Partnership Program, Solutions for Congested Corridors Program, or Trade Corridor Enhancement Program, feel free to send me a note at matthew.yosgott@catc.ca.gov and I will send you the appropriate sign-up form. Thank you!

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From HQ DLA Sujaya Kalainesan to Everyone 02:13 PM

Inactive Projects | Caltrans

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/projects/inactive-projects>

From HQ DLA Sujaya Kalainesan to Everyone 02:14 PM

Inactive Projects | Caltrans

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/projects/inactive-projects>

Project End Date <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/projects/projects-with-expiring-end-dates>

LTAP Training

<https://californialtap.org/index.cfm?pid=1077>