

California Rural Counties Task Force
March 17, 2023
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: Steve Pendergast, Caltrans District 2, Danny Mossman, Caltrans Headquarters.

B. PROTECT Program & SHSMP (L. Fisher and M. Johnson)

Leah Fisher, Caltrans, provided a presentation on the implementation of the formula funds for the PROTECT Program. The State Transportation Infrastructure Climate Adaptation Program (60% of the PROTECT Program formula) will be integrated into the SHOPP. Due to the federal expenditure deadline, the biggest challenge to implementation of these funds is the requirement that projects are construction ready by summer 2026. Therefore, only projects with completed PIDs could be considered. All 12 Caltrans Districts reviewed and identified eligible projects and potential climate adaptation scope changes. Ms. Fisher announced that a competitive NOFO is expected to be released very soon. The NOFO Fact Sheet can be found at: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/promote.cfm>.

Mike Johnson, Caltrans, provided an overview of the 2023 State Highway System Management Plan (SHSMP) climate resiliency components. Mr. Johnson stated that the 2023 SHSMP has not quantified the wildfire evacuation route needs, extreme heat and excessive rainfall.

Ivan Garcia, BCAG, commented that he feels the process is being rushed and there is a lack of coordination with the regional agencies. Maura Twomey, AMBAG, has similar concerns as Ivan Garcia, what is the criteria that will be used to select the projects for the PROTECT funding? Ms. Fisher responded that SB 198 bill included some requirements such as the Caltrans Adaptation Priority Reports. Caltrans Districts prioritized and nominated projects and Caltrans Management is the process of reviewing and ultimately these projects will go to CTC for amendments. Ms. Twomey also asked what type of data is needed to quantify wildfires as part of the 2025 SHOPP and SHSMP? Mr. Johnson responded that it's a variety of things such as discussions with CALFIRE, federal partners and discussions with local partners on evacuation planning efforts. Woody Deloria, El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC), agreed that outreach from the Districts to the regional agencies would have been helpful. He's

concerned that a large portion of the \$1.7 billion funding will go to the six coastal communities and not to more of the inland areas. Mike Woodman, NCTC, acknowledges the tight timeframe in the PROTECT Program, however, given this funding will most likely be reauthorized for future years, we need to improve the engagement process with the regions in coordination with the Districts. He also stated that the updates to the statewide vulnerability assessments need to identify the impacts to mobility and safety of the traveling public. Mr. Woodman echoed Mr. Deloria's concerns as to not wait to identify and assess the entire state's wildfire evacuation routes to move forward as well as the focus on the six coastal areas in the SHSMP. Aaron Hoyt, NCTC, asked what is the process for moving forward with the statewide wildfire evacuation route needs assessment? The RCTF can help push Caltrans forward. Rick Carter, PCTPA, commented that he agreed with previous commenters but wanted to emphasize that the wildfire issues are too critical to wait for a statewide plan. Mr. Carter encouraged Caltrans to realize this urgency and to begin addressing it now.

C. Approve Minutes (N. Barrett)

There were no comments on the meeting minutes. The January 20, 2023 meeting minutes were approved.

D. Information Sharing/Topics of Significance (All)

John Clerici, EDCTC, stated that the North State Super Region is having a CTC workshop on April 12-13, 2023 in Redding, CA.

E. CTC Updates

1. Legislative Update/IIJA (J. Behrens)

Justin Behrens, CTC, gave a legislative update. He highlighted a few bills of interest to RTCF:

- AB 6 (Friedman) – Modifies the Sustainable Communities Strategy development and approval process and requires applicants to the Solutions for Congested Corridors Program to show how they would meet state GHG goals.
- AB 7 (Friedman) – Requires the project selection process for projects that are funded by a variety of funding sources need to include principles such as preservation of assets, enhancing safety, accelerating project delivery, accessibility, environmental impacts, climate resiliency, etc.
- AB 744 (Carrillo) – Requires CTC to acquire data and modeling tools for use by local agencies.
- AB 980 (Friedman) – Requires projects in the Active Transportation Program to report outcomes a year after the project is complete.

- SB 258 (Roth) – Requires CTC to conduct a needs assessment for the state’s general aviation airports.
- SB 695 (Gonzalez) – Requires Caltrans to provide project data for projects on the state highway system online and in the CTC’s published report.

Nephele Barrett, MCOG, asked a clarifying question if it was AB 6 or AB 7 that affected local transportation measures for transportation projects. Mr. Behrens responded that it was AB 7. Mike Woodman, NCTC, commented that he heard that Assemblymember Friedman was having small working group discussions regarding VMT and induced demand and wondered if CTC has been participating in that effort. Mr. Behrens responded that CTC has met with Assemblymember Friedman and stakeholders on her proposed legislation but not specifically on VMT/induced demand.

2. Active Transportation Program (B. Newman-Burckhard)

Beverly Newman-Burckhard, CTC, did not have an update but stated that they’re started to think about Cycle 7 and will have updates for future RCTF meetings.

3. SB 1 Programs (M. Yosgott)

Matthew Yosgott, CTC, reported that one item on the March 22-23, 2023 CTC meeting agenda is an update on the Clean Freight Corridor Efficiency Assessment (SB 671). The presentation will be highlighting six of the top freight corridors by volume, as well as presenting initial scenarios for infrastructure planning. The draft Clean Freight Corridor Efficiency Assessment is scheduled to be presented to the CTC in June 2023 with final approval scheduled for October 2023.

Mr. Yosgott also reported that the Revised SB 1 Accountability and Transparency Guidelines are scheduled for adoption by the CTC at its March meeting.

4. Local Streets and Roads (C. Aceves)

Celeste Aceves, CTC, thanks RCTF members for their assistance in helping to get the final reports for the Local Streets and Roads program and that this is the 5th year of 100 percent reporting. As a reminder, FY23-24 eligibility period is due July 1, 2023 with the annual training scheduled for April 2023. Ms. Aceves announced that they would be holding discussion workshops to gather feedback on any proposed changes to the guidelines.

5. STIP (K. Ruggerio)

Kacey Ruggerio, CTC, provided a STIP update. Ms. Ruggerio stated the small work group concluded its work to discuss changes for the 2024 STIP Guidelines. The goal is to have the draft 2024 STIP Guidelines out in April 2023 with a workshop to discuss following the release of the draft guidelines.

Ms. Ruggiero also announced that if anyone has any unprogrammed STIP CRRSAA funds, the deadline for programming these funds into the STIP is May & June 2023, to have it allocated for next year. Ms. Ruggiero also commented that a lot of the agencies that have unprogrammed funds are in rural areas and asked if the RCTF could help to bring these agencies to the table and engage in discussions. Ms. Barrett, MCOG, asked if the CTC should share the list of rural agencies that still have unprogrammed STIP CRRSAA funds? Ms. Ruggiero responded that she could share the list and also confirmed that she would reach out to the Chair to confirm that these agencies were included in the RCTF meetings.

F. Caltrans Updates

1. Local Assistance (D. Mossman/R. Peterson)

Robert Peterson, Caltrans, provided an update on the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Cycle 11 call for projects. The awards were announced on March 9, 2023 and are listed on the HSIP website.

Bob Baca, Caltrans, provided an overview of the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP). The CRP apportionments are taking longer than expected and will be released within two weeks. For Cycle 1 (FFY 2022) funding, the application for CRP eligibility is on the CRP website with all funds for obligation. For Cycle 2 (FFY 2023) funding was apportioned to the States in October 2022, but are awaiting FHWA distribution to urban areas. The deadline to obligate CRP funding is September 30, 2025 (Cycle 1) and September 30, 2026 (Cycle 2). More information can be found at: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/fed-and-state-programs/carbon-reduction-program>. Mr. Baca also provided an update on the ER Program for disaster relief in FFY 2023.

Ivan Garcia, BCAG, asked if all the HSIP was federally funded or is there state only funded projects included? Mr. Peterson responded that in the previous Cycle 10, SB 137 allowed the exchange of funding. However, for Cycle 11, IIJA had special rules that applied in Cycle 11. Some larger projects will be federally funded. Mr. Garcia asked about the application for CRP. Mr. Baca responded that it wasn't so much an application as an eligibility verification for Caltrans. Mr. Garcia also asked if future year apportionments would be similar to the first year apportionment, can these years be advanced or exchanged? Mr. Baca responded that the future year apportionments should be similar and will be posted in two weeks. He stated that he'll need to look into the exchange issue. Ms. Barrett, MCOG, asked a clarifying question regarding the HSIP funding.

2. State Budget Update/IIJA/STIP Fund Estimate (K. Duncan)

Keith Duncan, Caltrans, provided a budget update. Both the Assembly and Senate are holding budget hearings. A variety of budgetary solutions are being proposed to bridge the funding shortfall. Following the release of the May Budget revise, negotiations will continue.

Mr. Duncan provided an update on the 2024 STIP fund estimate development process. An update on the 2024 STIP fund estimate was provided at the January 2023 CTC meeting. The draft assumptions for the 2024 STIP fund estimate will be presented at the March CTC meeting and are scheduled to be approved in May 2023. A draft fund estimate is scheduled for June 2023 with adoption in August 2023. A STIP workshop will be held in July 2023.

Mike Woodman, NCTC, asked a question regarding the ITIP presentation regarding outreach to regional agencies. Mr. Duncan responded that he will follow-up on this item and get back to the RCTF. Ms. Barrett, MCOG, asked if there was a chance that the current STIP estimate would need an adjustment due to declining revenues. Mr. Duncan responded that revenues are tracking and an adjustment to the current (2022) STIP fund estimate is not expected.

3. Planning (E. Thompson)

Erin Thompson, Caltrans, provided an update on Planning activities. Ms. Thompson announced that the FY24 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants were due on March 9, 2023 and included the additional \$50 million for adaptation. Caltrans is currently reviewing the applications. Awards are scheduled to be announced in late August 2023. Ms. Thompson also gave an update on RPA grants and stated that is an excess above 25 percent, but we will discuss it at the next RCTF meeting. Staff are working on updates to the RTP (MPO & RTPA) Guidelines. Ms. Thompson announced that there aren't a lot of changes to the RTPA RTP guidelines unlike the MPO RTP guidelines. The first draft is still scheduled to be released in May 2023 with a second draft scheduled for release in late summer. The RTP guidelines are scheduled to be finalized in October 2023 and adopted in December 2023/January 2024. The CTP Guidelines are scheduled to be adopted at May 2023 CTC meeting.

G. Miscellaneous (All)

There were no miscellaneous items.

H. Adjourn

Ms. Barrett adjourned the meeting.