

California Rural Counties Task Force
January 19, 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: Sinara Pheng, Caltrans Headquarters, David Huff, Caltrans Headquarters, Dawson Stroud, Caltrans District 3, Abhijit Bagde, Caltrans Headquarters, Brenda Caruso, Caltrans Headquarters, and Eric Reitz, Caltrans.

B. Approve Minutes (N. Barrett)

There were no comments on the meeting minutes. The November 17, 2023 meeting minutes were approved.

C. Information Sharing/Topics of Significance (All)

Eric Reitz, Caltrans, announced that the guidelines for the Low Carbon Transportation Operations Program (LCTOP) was released and the call for projects will be released in early February 2024.

Chair Barrett, MCOG, enquired about the schedule for the Rural Induced Demand Study. Mike Woodman, Nevada County Transportation Commission, responded that an administrative draft would be available in the next 2-3 weeks. A presentation and final draft can be made available to the RCTF.

D. 2024 Meeting Schedule (N. Barrett)

Chair Barrett, MCOG, presented the 2024 meeting schedule for the RCTF. One meeting date has been changed due to a conflict with CTC meeting. The May meeting is proposed for one week earlier on May 10, 2024.

F. RPA Carryover (N. Barrett/E. Thompson/B. Caruso)

Erin Thompson, Caltrans, provided an update on the RPA funding. There is approximately \$580,000 available. The funds will need to be expended by June 30, 2026.

Mike Woodman, NCTC, stated that there is a need for additional funding (~\$50,000) for engagement and outreach to discuss the findings and recommendations from the Rural Induced Demand Study as well as some additional data needs. Chair Barrett, MCOG, mentioned that we

also typically use \$25,000 to fund three rural agency participants in the CALCOG CARL Program. Please send an email to Chair Barrett by February 9, 2024 for additional suggestions for a joint regional project. A final decision on the regional “off the top” projects would be finalized at the March 15, 2024 meeting. The remaining balance (~\$505,000) would then be available for discretionary competitive grants for RCTF members.

Chair Barrett, MCOG, stated that there has been discussion regarding a request for increased RPA funding. She will be putting together a letter to Caltrans explaining the needs for additional RPA funding and asked RCTF members to provide feedback/input on an amount that we should be asking for. Ms. Thompson, Caltrans, mentioned that the last increase to RPA funding was in 2015. Numerous RCTF members commented that this was a good idea and agreed we should request an increase in RPA funding.

E. CSIS 2.0 (N. Barrett/S. Pheng)

Sinara Pheng and Hunter Owens, Caltrans, provided an overview of recent changes to CSIS and summary of RCTF comments received and responses to those comments. RCTF members commented that CSIS needs to make sure that they evaluate rural projects as part of their metric testing. RCTF asked clarifying questions on the CSIS. Mike Woodman, NCTC, requested a meeting be scheduled between Caltrans and a subgroup of the RCTF members to further discuss comments and responses.

G. CTC Updates

a. Legislative Update/IIJA (J. Behrens)

Justin Behrens, CTC, provided a legislative update on the Governor’s budget and draft ATP budget estimate. Mr. Behrens reported that new bills are being introduced and the deadline for new bills is February 16, 2024.

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

Beverly Newman-Burckhard, CTC, stated that she will be presenting the draft ATP guidelines to the January 2024 CTC meeting. No big changes are proposed for the ATP except for the application portal. The CTC is expected to adopt the ATP guidelines in March 2024 with the call for projects going out shortly afterwards. Project applications will be due on June 17, 2024. Ms. Newman-Burckhard, stated that the new application portal is Submittable. A webinar or educational training is also being explored. Finally, branch workshops are being held throughout the state. Virtual site visits are also available. To schedule a virtual site visit, please go to: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfuGxPwxeQe3AJIZ2YrLL3avy9x3zArY-MEKVuWxCW7Gccl3g/closedform?pli=1>.

c. SB 1 Programs (K. Giese)

Kayla Giese, CTC, provided a quick update on the upcoming SB 1 workshops and office hours. The first LPP workshop is scheduled for January 30, 2024; the TCEP workshop is scheduled for January 31, 2024; and the SCCP workshop is scheduled for February 2, 2024. All the workshop information is also on the CTC website. CTC staff will be holding office hours again this cycle in March, April, and May 2024. To register for SB 1 program virtual office hours, please visit: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe3SagMDuzJ4kclaHP24fJhfTi7Y2fwYgLHW-4P7CdFkw8U6w/viewform>.

d. Local Streets and Roads (C. Almanza)

Celeste Almanza, CTC, thanked everyone for assisting in getting all the agencies submitted for local street and roads. She stated that for the 6th consecutive year, we have 100% submittal compliance. The next key deadline is July 1, 2024 for proposal projects to be submitted.

e. STIP (K. Ruggerio)

Kacey Ruggerio, CTC, reported that the North STIP hearing will be held on January 24, 2024. The South STIP hearing will be held on February 1, 2024. Information on both hearings is on the CTC website (<https://catc.ca.gov/meetings-events/commission-meetings-2024>) and both hearings will be hybrid meetings.

f. LTCAP (R. Light)

Rebecca Light, CTC, announced that the Cycle 2 kickoff workshop is scheduled for February 7, 2024. The draft policy guidelines are scheduled to be adopted by the CTC in June 2024 with the call for applications following approval of the guidelines.

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

Frances Dea-Sanchez, CTC, reported that the final interim report is scheduled for adoption by the CTC at its January 2024 meeting. Ms. Dea-Sanchez announced that she will be sending out zoom registration links for two SB 1121 technical workshops.

h. Equity Advisory Committee (S. Erasmus)

Sequoia Erasmus, CTC, provided an update on the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee (EAC). The EAC has two seats opening next month due to two members terming out. EAC member applications are due by February 4, 2024. In addition, there are two openings for Ex Officio members. CTC staff recommended to the EAC that the Ex Officio openings be filled with a representative from the RCTF and RTPA group. However, the EAC is also interested in including a representative from a statewide transit organization. New members will be discussed at the next

EAC meeting scheduled for February 13, 2024. Ideally, the new EAC and Ex Officio members will be approved by the CTC in March 2024 and in place for the April 2024 Committee meeting.

i. Other Grant Programs

No report provided.

H. Caltrans Updates

a. Local Assistance (A. Bagde/S. Kalainesan)

Abhijit Bagde, Caltrans, provided an update on OA. He reported that his office is trying to meet with MPOs, RTPAs, districts, and local agencies bi-monthly between April – August to review the obligation plans to see what can be done to expedite project delivery for this federal fiscal year.

Sujaya Kalainesan, Caltrans, reported the Caltrans’ Guidance and Oversight Office will hold office hours for Buy America on January 22nd and March 18th from 10-11am. Ms. Kalainesan also reported that Caltrans has released the [2024 Local Assistance Procedures Manual \(LAPM\)](#) as well as the [2024 updates to the Local Assistance Program Guidelines \(LAPG\)](#). In addition, Caltrans will be holding quarterly and in person workshops and trainings. If there are trainings that RCTF members are interested in, please let Caltrans know. HSIP Cycle 12 call for projects is expected in May 2024. In addition, the HSIP Advisory Committee needs a replacement representative from the RCTF. Chair Barrett, MCOG, will send out an email to the RCTF asking for any volunteers to participate on the HSIP Advisory Committee.

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

Keith Duncan, Caltrans, provided an update on the proposed state budget update, including various program funding. The updated revenue numbers will be provided as part of the May Revise. The draft fund estimate will be presented to the CTC at its January meeting. Chair Barrett, MCOG, asked for clarification on the SB 125 funds. Mr. Duncan responded that there was \$4 billion funded through the general fund and \$1.2 billion from other sources. It was originally funded with \$2 billion from this fiscal year and \$2 billion from next fiscal year. The new proposed budget includes \$2 billion from this fiscal year, \$1 billion from next fiscal year and then \$1 billion from the following fiscal year. It is the same amount of funding, but it has been split differently between fiscal years.

3. Planning/RTP Guidelines (B. Caruso)

Brenda Caruso, Caltrans, reported that Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants applications were due on January 18, 2024. The next steps include grant application review by the Districts who will then submit recommendations to Headquarters. Caltrans Headquarters will

then review the applications with subject matter experts. Ms. Caruso also reminded everyone that draft Overall Work Programs are due to Caltrans on March 1, 2024.

I. Miscellaneous (All)

There were no updates.

J. Adjourn

Chair Barrett, MCOG, adjourned the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2024.