

CALIFORNIA RURAL COUNTIES TASK FORCE

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AGENDA **SEPTEMBER 20, 2002** **12:30 pm**

*Note Change in
Location!*

*See below for important parking
information*

SACOG Board Room
3000 S Street, Room 200
Sacramento, CA

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|----------|----|---|--------------------------------|
| 12:30 pm | A. | Self Introductions | |
| 12:35 pm | B. | Approval of Minutes from July 19, 2002 | P. Couch |
| 12:40 pm | C. | 2002 STIP Amendment Recommendations | D. Brewer |
| 1:00 pm | D. | ITIP Process for 2004 | J. Nicholas |
| 1:15 pm | E. | RTIP Project Delivery Issues | B. Felker
P. Couch |
| 2:00 pm | | BREAK | |
| 2:15 pm | F. | CalACT/RCTF Conference Update | P. Spaulding
RCTF Conf Cmte |
| 2:30 pm | G. | Federal Aid Streamlining Committee Final Report | T. Abbott
C. McAdam |
| 2:45 pm | H. | Unobligated Balances for Federal Funds | N. Ortega |
| 3:00 pm | I. | RCTF Leadership Change/Election of Vice Chair | C. McAdam |
| 3:15 pm | J. | Status Report on RCTF Issues | See attached list |
| 3:30 pm | | Announcements | |
| 3:40 pm | | Adjourn | |

SACOG PARKING INFORMATION: Don't park in the Sacramento Natural Foods parking lot adjacent to SACOG - they will tow you! Instead, park at the lot under the freeway on S Street between 29th and 30th. For those more local, there is a light rail stop at R and 30th Streets, approximately one block north of SACOG.

DRAFT
California Rural Counties Task Force
July 15, 2002

Self-Introductions – Chairman Celia McAdam called meeting to order at 12:35 p.m. in Caltrans Director's Conference Room, 1120 N Street, Sacramento. She invited those present to introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes – Minutes were approved by consensus.

2002 STIP Amendments: Outlook for October – David Brewer reviewed information to date (below):

- CTC will postpone decision until October meeting
- \$123M + lapsed projects = \$140-150M capacity with most in 06 & 07
- Every county is guaranteed to get its share in 2004 STIP, but probably not useable until 08 & 09
- CTC may hear from regions at its October meeting
- In August, categorical analysis will be presented to CTC
- CTC may provide some direction to its staff about preparing staff recommendations
- Staff expects to communicate with regions, especially those proposing work in early years
- Priority in early years for planning and get-ready work
- Unlikely that CTC will program new projects (not already in STIP)

RCTF/CalACT Conference – CalACT Executive Director Pete Spaulding gave short presentation on plans to include an "RCTF track" within the autumn CalACT conference at Konocti Resort in Kelseyville. Sessions of particular interest to RCTF members will be offered on Thursday and Friday, October 17 and 18. Tentative conference fees will be \$110 for 10/17; \$55 for 10/18; \$165 for 10/17 & 10/18; \$275 for 3 days, plus \$30 for special dinner & program on Thursday night. Lodging arranged at \$84/night + taxes. Spaulding is working with RCTF members to refine content of RCTF sessions. Walt Allen reviewed list of "top topics" from previous efforts to develop retreat and training; he crossed off RTP as was not longer timely. George Dondero discussed desire to invite RCRC representative, consultant and others to discuss legislation. Dan Landon mentioned need for update on federal re-authorization, which is planned during Thursday general luncheon session. All agreed to consider RCTF involvement during autumn conference only. (CalACT has spring event in So CA). RCTF members will be identified, perhaps with border around conference name badge.

511 Deployment Efforts – Caltrans Chief of Traveler Information David Lively distributed brochure and fact sheet, and outlined objectives for CA system - Caltrans info to public; work with commercial entities; "partnerships" enriching database - to provide information to travelers as essential decision makers. Caltrans will undertake \$100,000 study for 511 planning in rural areas with elements such as communications; content; architecture and sustainability. Lively expressed need to be ready to implement with funding becomes available; he commented about important link between 511 and to national security. He underscored issues in rural areas: gaps in communication, and lack of transit trip planners.

Pam Couch offered information that 2-year study was approved by Caltrans former New Technology, now Division of Innovation and Research. The study will investigate tools and develop strategies to deploy a rural transit trip planning tool (in Lassen, Modoc and Plumas counties). She also commented about Rural COATS effort which developed architecture for coordinated ITS deployments in Oregon and California, and existing internet-based European trip planning system. She hoped that the new Caltrans study would build on or integrate with those efforts. Lively said it would, and commented on the national transit database and another FTA study.

RTIP Project Delivery Issues – Pam Couch explained that Modoc County Transportation Commission (MCTC) used RTIP only funding for State hwy project. She suggested that MCTC was one of the first local agencies to do so. She said many issues have arisen, which may also affect other local agencies, if they haven't already. Couch distributed copies of memo sent by email to RCTF members, and another concerning cost overruns on the project in question. Then, she introduced Tom Tracy, MCTC Executive Director and Modoc County Road Commissioner and Public Works Director to discuss issues and suggestions to avoid or resolve problems with RTIP funded projects on State highways.

Tracy briefly reviewed history of State Route (SR) 299 project, roadway rehabilitation with new 2-way left turn lane, shoulder widening and upgraded railroad crossing. Estimated total cost is \$3.5M for 1.2 miles: \$605K was programmed for preliminary phases in 1998 STIP and nearly \$2.9M was requested for 2002 STIP amendment. Tracy said that until four days ago, Caltrans could not provide a financial accounting of project expenditures. Now, the Project Manager has received financial data from Caltrans central accounting, and has been able to compile cost summaries that show the PA&ED phase overrun by a factor of four. To date, costs for the preliminary phases have overrun programmed amount by \$60K, although right of way has not been acquired and design is not complete.

Tracy identified four major issues in “partnering” with Caltrans on a State highway project:

- Lack of accountability and regular fiscal reporting for RTIP projects by Caltrans that makes it difficult for local agencies to monitor RTIP projects and their funds. Further, Tracy noted that Caltrans chose not to have a pre-award audit conducted, as required of local agencies. He said that consultants or contractors typically provide monthly status reports with an accounting of expenditures. Because Caltrans does not, there seems little recourse for a regional agency once funds are RTIP programmed but to sit and wait for a final bill. Tracy suggested that the absences of accountability and financial reporting for projects are contrary to established practices in government and in the public works field; and could lead to accusations of impropriety and accusations of possible violations of the law.
- Relatively high cost for work performed by Caltrans. Tracy offered rough cost comparisons between three local projects and three Caltrans projects, suggesting that Caltrans spends three to six times as much as a local agency for similar projects. He indicated that differences in construction standards alone, do not account for the cost variances, which possibly suggest inefficiency and wastefulness.
- Opportunity cost for wastefulness is the costs for collisions, injuries and fatalities that happen when safety improvements could have been made, but were not because funds were spent inefficiently elsewhere.
- Conflict of interests inherent to Caltrans' roles. Last, Tracy suggested that there is an inherent conflict of interest between Caltrans' roles as overseer of local agencies and as chief provider for a portion of the transportation system, relative to competing needs and funding shortfalls. He said that this issue requires considerable scrutiny and thoughtful analyses.

Then, Tracy offered several suggestions or alternatives to address the issues:

- Avoid “partnerships” with Caltrans
- Suspend RTIP projects on State highways until Caltrans' record keeping is straightened out and accountability assured.
- Require Caltrans to conduct 1) pre-award audits for projects greater than a reasonable threshold, and 2) periodic comprehensive fiscal and performance audits
- Initiate a comprehensive study by an independent agency or organization to assess relative actual project costs, and make recommendations about which agencies are more cost-effective for different types and sizes of projects
- Transfer responsibility for local agency oversight to another entity

Chairman McAdam remarked that RCRC is following up on “contracting out” issues. She added that Assemblyman Cogdell has request to audit Caltrans projects. Caltrans representatives deferred comment on issues, but agreed to make sure that appropriate person (Brent Felker or Tony Harris) will

attend September RCTF meeting Terry Abbott noted in terms of project cost team, history hasn't required it. Information was provided that since July 2001 Butte County has cooperative agreement with Caltrans; County does PA&ED on State hwy projects. Ten percent fee to Caltrans covers required oversight, for which Caltrans is supposed to account.

Charles Field thanked Tom Tracy for bringing issues to the table, and asked for show of hands from other counties with similar issues on State hwy projects; many hands went up. In addition to RCTF forum, he suggested that the issues should be the focus of a session at the CalACT conference, and agreed to organize the effort. He said the theme might be "How to Integrate with Caltrans" with panelists from local agencies and Caltrans.

Legislative Issues – Updates and discussion occurred on the following legislation:

Prop 51 (Transportation Congestion Relief and Safe School Bus Initiative) Chuck Oldham reported that it is not new money, rather a hit on the General Fund. CTC opposes; Commissioner Lindsay adamantly opposed. Charles Field noted the initiative is not fair to rural; counties. Phil Dow summarized Prop 51 discussions at CalCOG directors mtg: no one can understand how it plays out; too complicated; too many variables. Last, Oldham noted that it fractured funding; he wrote letter (book item) explaining problems.

SB1847 (State budget) Senate passed; Assembly in quandary.

Reauthorization McAdam will serve on special task force. She reported administration is working on earmarks and their feasibility. Walt Allen offered that Monterey hired federal lobbyist to work on earmarks. List of 14 project evaluation criteria was distributed, includes all info need to help "sell" project for Congressional earmark.

TEA Current practice is 75/25 split for Transportation Enhancement Activities funds; Caltrans wants 50/50 split. MTC is sponsoring legislation to get 75/25 split into statute. Looking for support. Contact Diane Steinhauser at dstein@mtc.ca.gov. Phil Dow commented that he serves on related Advisory Committee, and thus far State hasn't provided any good reason for changing to 50/50.

Caltrans Transportation Planning Academy and Other Training – Chris Hatfield provided an overview of training opportunities at Caltrans, and some that local agency staff may attend. She distributed FY 2002/03 schedules for Caltrans and UC-Davis Extension, 6/25/02 "Planning on Track" seminar aboard Amtrak train. Local agencies wanting their staff to attend should contact District liaison or Erica Bautista at (916) 651-8203 or by email.

Status Reports on RCTF Issues – List was quickly reviewed.

Announcements – McAdam distributed RCTF semi-annual report (July 2002). Next meeting scheduled for September 19, 2002 at site to be determined.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pam Couch
RCTF Secretary
Modoc County Transportation Commission

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To: Rural Counties Task Force Participants
From: Celia McAdam, Chair
SUBJECT: 2002 STIP Amendment Recommendations

Issue

There is approximately \$649 million in unprogrammed balances statewide with only \$123 million in programming capacity remaining in the 2002 STIP. Approximately \$84 million of the balances are in 19 rural counties, with totals ranging from \$18.6 million to a mere \$4,000. In contrast, 18 urban areas account for over \$550 million of unprogrammed dollars.

The CTC will decide on how to program the remaining capacity of the 2002 STIP at their October meeting in San Diego.

Discussion

CTC staff has received requests for \$223 million in STIP amendments to program remaining \$123 million capacity for the 2002 STIP. The requests are being reviewed based on the guidelines discussed at the May CTC workshop, which gives highest priority to:

- Cost increases on projects already in the STIP
- Projects submitted in the agency's 2002 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)
- Planning, Programming, and Monitoring (PPM)
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) (rideshare programs)

In reviewing the requests, CTC staff has noted that \$14 million is for Advanced Project Delivery Element (APDE), which doesn't count against the programming capacity, and \$54 million requests advances to county shares, which is not a priority under the May guidelines. This leaves approximately \$155 million in requests to measure against \$123 million in capacity.

It is hoped that the staff recommendations for the STIP amendments will be available at or before the RCTF meeting.

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To: Rural Counties Task Force Participants
From: Celia McAdam, Chair
SUBJECT: ITIP Process for 2004

Issue

Although we're still grappling with the 2002 STIP process, Caltrans is already beginning to look forward to the 2004 Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP).

Discussion

Jim Nicholas of Caltrans Headquarters Programming will discuss plans to develop the 2004 ITIP submittal, starting with outreach to the districts and local agencies to discuss potential project nominations.

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To: Rural Counties Task Force Participants
From: Celia McAdam, Chair
SUBJECT: RTIP Project Delivery Issues

Issue

At our July meeting, there was a lively discussion about the difficulty some counties have faced in obtaining detailed financial and scheduling information on RTIP projects. This item was continued to this meeting to provide the opportunity to invite key Caltrans staff to address the issue.

Discussion

Pam Couch from Modoc County Transportation Commission has provided "bullet points" for the continued discussion, which are attached.

Brent Felker, Chief Engineer of Caltrans, will provide his perspective on the issues brought up at our July meeting.



Modoc County Transportation
Commission
202 West 4th Street
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To: Celia McAdam
RCTF Chairman

Date: August 29, 2002

From: Pam Couch

Subject: Improving “The Partnership” – What Local Agencies Need from Caltrans

Below are several bullet points identifying tools and mechanisms to improve communication, coordination and cooperation between the State and locals. This list is very rough starting point, feel free to add, delete or modify.

- When Caltrans performs work, need **Contract or Written Agreement** with defined roles and responsibilities. Could be Master Agreement with Project Supplements.
- For each project, need written **Scope of Work** with cost estimate, work schedule and comprehensive fee schedule.
- For each project, need **Project-Level Accounting** in user-friendly reporting format.
- For each project, need **Monthly Report** showing expenditures (month and cumulative) and percent completion with bullet points in three sections: 30-day History, 30-day Forecast and Sponsor Action Needed. (Fax example follows.) To ensure full accountability and to allow the region to monitor the project and spending in timely manner, enabling appropriate decision-making.
- For each project, need **Sponsor Acceptance / Approval** at specific milestones (when applicable) for example: PID/PSR, project report, final PS&E, RTL (bid package), completion, etc. To ensure that the region retains control over its funding and some authority as project sponsor.
- Need **Procedures and Guidelines for STIP Projects on State Highways** commensurate to standards that locals are held to. (See Local Assistance manuals.)

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To: Rural Counties Task Force Participants
From: Celia McAdam, Chair
SUBJECT: CalACT/RCTF Conference Update

Issue

The CalACT/RCTF Conference is scheduled for October 16-18, 2002 at the Konocti Harbor Resort in Kelseyville (Lake County), CA

Discussion

Pete Spaulding of CalACT and the RCTF conference organizing committee will provide the latest updates to the RCTF programs.

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To: Rural Counties Task Force Participants
From: Celia McAdam, Chair
SUBJECT: Federal Aid Project Streamlining Final Report

Issue

Led by Terry Abbott of Caltrans Local Assistance, the Federal Aid Project Streamlining Team has been meeting over the eighteen months to find ways to make it easier to get through the Federal process and get projects built. The focus has been on small projects, though larger projects may also benefit.

Discussion

The Federal Aid Project Streamlining Team has come up with a series of reports and documents designed to assist local agencies in the efficient delivery of federalized projects. These documents, which have been sent to each RTPA, MPO, and City/County Public Works Agency in the state, include:

- Pre Award Audit Questionnaire
Designed for agencies to provide to potential contractors to determine up front if they can meet Caltrans audit requirements for expenditure of federal funds
- Simple Projects Guidebook
A highly streamlined version of the Local Assistance Manual, designed to guide project sponsors through the requirements for a simple federalized project with Categorical Exemption under NEPA
- Sample Work Plans
Provides an example of how to develop a detailed time line for the development and implementation of federal aid projects, with a goal of identifying critical path items, allowing project elements to be done concurrently, to make sure all requirements are met, and to manage expectations of all parties
- Best Practices Manual
One page summary sheets on techniques being used around the state to expedite project delivery

Terry Abbott and Celia McAdam will provide a wrap-up of the Team's efforts and view towards future tasks.

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To: Rural Counties Task Force Participants
From: Celia McAdam, Chair
SUBJECT: Unobligated Balances for Federal Funds

Issue

AB 1012 imposes specific timelines for the timely expenditure of state and federal funds. This requires funds to be obligated within 3 years.

Discussion

Norma Ortega of Caltrans Headquarters Local Assistance has identified numerous RTPAs that have not obligated federal funds, and run the risk of losing them. She will provide an overview of what agencies need to do to obligate funds and comply with AB 1012.

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To: Rural Counties Task Force Participants
From: Celia McAdam, Chair
SUBJECT: Change in RCTF Leadership/Election of Vice Chair for 2002

Issue

Due to significantly increased work responsibilities at the Tuolumne County/Cities Area Planning Council, Darin Grossi has requested that we seek a replacement for him as Vice Chair for the remainder of the year.

Discussion

Under the policies agreed to in January, the Vice Chair of the RCTF serves a two year term, then becomes Chair for a two year term. The RCTF Secretary is elected annually. The Vice Chair that would take Darin's place would therefore become Chair in January 2003 for a two year term.

**RCTF ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES
Report for September 20, 2002**

Issue/Objective

SB 45 Implementation Changes Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan (ITSP) Rural Transit (FTA 5310, Welfare to Work, CalACT)	Darin Grossi, Tuolumne
Formulas for Distribution of Local Road Funds SB 45 Project Monitoring/Reporting Database	Walt Allen, Monterey
RSTP/CMAQ/TEA Project Delivery Committee	Dan Landon, Nevada
Local Road Rehab Funding & STIP Protection TEA Advisory Committee	Phil Dow, Lake & Mendocino
Formulas for Distribution of Local Road Funds California Transportation Investment Strategy (CTIS)	George Dondero, Calaveras
City/County/Caltrans/FHWA Coordinating Group and Local Assistance "Enhanced Training Committee"	Spencer Clifton, Humboldt
Interregional Strategic Transportation Plan (ITSP)	Charles Field, Amador
Local Road Rehab Funding & STIP Protection Federal Aid Project Streamlining TEA-3 Federal Reauthorization Transportation for Economic Development Committee	Celia McAdam, Placer