

CALIFORNIA RURAL COUNTIES TASK FORCE

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AGENDA **July 20, 2001** **12:30 pm**

Department of Transportation Building
1120 N Street, Room 2116 (Directors Meeting Room)
Sacramento, CA

- | | | | |
|----------|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 12:30 pm | A. | Self Introductions | |
| 12:35 pm | B. | Approval of Minutes from January 19 and March 16, 2001
Approval of Minutes from May 18, 2001 | W. Allen
C. Field |
| 12:40 pm | C. | 2002 STIP Fund Estimate | R. Terry
J. Nicholas |
| 1:10 pm | D. | Changes to STIP Guidelines
1. Programming of County Shares for period beyond
STIP funding period | D. Brewer |
| 1:20 pm | E. | California Transportation Plan | N. Smith |
| 1:40 pm | F. | Recap of RCTF Semi-Annual Report to CTC
1. Potential consolidation of resources | C. McAdam |
| 2:10 pm | G. | Air Quality Conformity Issues for Rural Counties | K. Rosser |
| 2:30 pm | H. | Update on Proposed Caltrans 10% Oversight Fee for
Contracted Out Projects | S. Post |
| 2:40 pm | I. | Legislation
1. AB 608 (Dickerson) re: Change to STIP guidelines,
PPM funding
2. Update on Governor's Budget
a. Redirection of sales tax on gasoline to
transportation – ACA 4, AB 227, etc.
b. Rural transit grants – SB 787 | C. Oldham
C. McAdam |
| 3:00 pm | J. | CTC Appointment Discussion – Don Raffaelli | S. Clifton |
| 3:20 pm | K. | Status Report on RCTF Issues | See attached list |

3:40 pm

Adjourn

DRAFT
California Rural Counties Task Force
May 18, 2001
Meeting Minutes

Meeting was called to order at approximately 12:30 p.m.

Attendance: See sign in sheet.

Item A: Self Introductions

Self introductions were made. See attached list of attendees.

Item B Approval of Minutes from January 19 and March 16, 2001

RCTF Chair Celia McAdam stated that minutes from the January 19 and March 16 RCTF meetings were not yet available.

Item C 2002 STIP Fund Estimate Assumptions

Jim Nicholas, Caltrans Programming, advised that the fund estimate for the 2002 STIP was going to be discussed at the CTC meeting of June 6 and 7 in San Jose. The June meeting will be used to establish the building blocks for the fund estimate that will be decided after the 2001/02 budget is adopted in July or August. Jim advised that it would be worthwhile for rural counties to witness this discussion regarding growth assumptions, revenue projections, and other factors that go into determining the fund estimate for the next STIP cycle. Earlier projections that there may be \$1.5 billion per year for each of the three new years of the next STIP cycle may not remain intact due to the Governor's May revised budget estimates which include reduced revenue projections.

Item D-1 Proposed Changes to STIP Guidelines - State Only Funding

Jim Nicholas advised that projects that have been funded with State-only funds for \$750,000 or less will be funded with State-only funds. Likewise, any other projects approved so far using State-only funds will go forward using State-only funds. The CTC's goal of achieving \$300 million in local road rehabilitation projects through the STIP has been achieved. Now any new projects, regardless of their cost, will have to go through the "exception" process to get State-only funds. There are lists of projects approved for State-only funding and other projects not yet approved for State-only funding on the Caltrans programming web site.

David Brewer, CTC staff, stated that they don't know what is going to happen with the State-only money in the 2002 STIP. The current interim process explained by Jim Nicholas will end in August or September with the new fund estimate, then they will know how much State-only money will be available. Celia asked if we will see a State-only estimate at the June CTC meeting. Jim Nicholas responded - no.

Item D-2 Proposed Changes to STIP Guidelines - Programming of County Shares for period beyond STIP funding period

David Brewer stated that there are presently seven different proposals to amend the STIP Guidelines. A handout was made available concerning them (CTC Book Item 4.2b, May 18, 2001). One of these proposals is to address where the STIP funding period ends in a different year than the period covered by RIP shares. He stated that the STIP period for the 1998 STIP was six years

ending in 2004. The period for the 2000 STIP was four years, also ending in 2004. The new STIP period will extend this by three years to 2006/07. The period for which county shares will be apportioned will end one year later, 2007/08.

David said that in the 2000 STIP many counties did not program all of their shares and there are unprogrammed regional share STIP funds left over. If this happens again then there will be no difficulty programming all four years worth of funds to those counties that want them. Conversely, if all counties want to program all four years worth of their county's shares, it will not be possible to program them all within the three new years of the 2002 STIP and some counties may not be able to program all they want to have programmed.

Kevin Rosser (Tehama County) stated that some rural counties are distraught over the CTC's recent denial of certain requested STIP extensions. He stated that although the counties were warned that the CTC would give a hard look to all requested extensions, and Caltrans had requested explanations and justifications regarding all requested STIP project extensions, there was no further dialog, notice, or exchange before the CTC took action.

Jim Nicholas stated that if you are a lead agency you need to be responsible to deliver your projects on schedule. If there are not good reasons for extending STIP project schedules, the CTC is making it clear they will be denied. Reasons for requesting STIP project extensions need to be real and reasonable. Statute uses the words "unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the lead agency". Kevin advised that the reason that one of Tehama County's projects needed an extension was because the Army Corps of Engineers was requiring that work regarding wetlands be re-done. Jim Nicholas and David Brewer advised that this might constitute a good reason for an extension. However, the CTC also denies some extensions for the benefit of the lead agency. In this example the CTC may have understood that it would be better to re-program the project than to grant the one-time 20-month extension. All lead agencies should remember that once the one-time 20-month extension is granted, the CTC cannot honor any further extension requests; it is best to save your extension requests to the end of the project and not use them during the early project phases such as environmental clearance.

Kevin stated that this lesson is teaching that agencies should program projects by phase. David Brewer added that regions should also pay careful attention to the years in which you request phases to be programmed.

Item E Proposed Caltrans 10% Oversight Fee for Contracted Out Projects or Project Phases

Shannon Post and Mary Beth Herit provided a brief overview of the new policy that proposes a 10% oversight fee be charged for projects on state highways which are contracted out. They advised that there used to be a statute whereby measure counties (counties with sales tax measures) would receive Caltrans oversight funded out of Caltrans' budget. This policy involves Caltrans charging 10% of project cost to oversee State highway projects where Caltrans is not the lead agency that is processing or constructing the highway project.

After recent passage of Proposition 35, Caltrans determined two things need to be considered: (1) the way Caltrans does project oversight (2) a method to receive reimbursement for the cost of this oversight. Caltrans is working on methods including "quality control/quality assurance" whereby they intend to keep their cost for carrying out project oversight to less than 10% of project cost. There were two methods for determining how the State would be reimbursed for this oversight work: (a) requiring use of State highway account funds "off-the-top" or (b) using State highway account funds programmed for each project. One of the primary reasons that Caltrans requires oversight of projects constructed on the State highway system is to maintain "design immunity" (Caltrans is held responsible for projects designed and built on the State highway systems therefore they must oversee these projects when constructed by local agencies and/or private consultants/contractors). Mary Beth stated that Caltrans Headquarters has tentatively adopted a

policy whereby highway projects being constructed by measure counties will still be covered by the department (Caltrans) out of their budget. However, other projects funded by the Governor's TCRP or regional shares (RTIP) will be required to pay toward Caltrans' 10% oversight charge out of each project's budget.

Phil Dow (Lake & Mendocino) and Celia McAdam (Placer, RCTF Chair) both stated that this policy was unfair because it rewards measure counties by taking funds off the top of the State highway account thus reducing the pool of funds available for county shares. After county shares are allocated, the non-measure counties take a second "hit" by having to pay Caltrans 10% for oversight over and above the estimated costs for their projects. Phil and Celia emphasized that they are already at a disadvantage before the 10% policy is considered, because with two exceptions (Madera and San Benito) rural counties have not been able to achieve the two-thirds majority required to become measure counties.

Charles Field (Amador) stated that the 10% policy appears to be a "disincentive" for small rural counties who are trying to save project costs and expedite project delivery. He stated that Amador, Alpine, and Calaveras Counties are considering a new tri-county agreement for the 2002 STIP and that in order to build a new list of State highway projects faster and with less money, they need to consider using private consultants to develop and deliver some of these projects rather than Caltrans. Jim Nicholas stated that the State might reconsider the policy if private consultants would take responsibility for "tort liability" and indemnify the State from lawsuits regarding the new highway projects. Charles said that the counties might feel better if they knew that the 10% fee meant Caltrans would expedite review of their projects. The Task Force agreed that its position regarding this matter should be that the 10% fee should be charged to all projects (sales tax measure projects as well as non-sales tax measure projects) so that all counties are treated fairly and that payment of the fee will mean that Caltrans will expedite oversight of these projects. **Celia McAdam will draft a letter on behalf of the RCTF concerning this subject for review by Phil Dow and other interested RCTF members.**

Item C (Revisited) 2002 STIP fund Estimate Assumption

John Ferrera, Assistant Secretary, Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, provided a brief summary of recent actions surrounding the Governor's revised budget. He stated that faced with the current energy crisis, the Governor had the choice to use funds previously obligated to transportation to help solve current budget problems. The Governor did not do this. The Governor has chosen to try and protect transportation funding with an innovative strategy summarized generally as follows: the devotion of the sales tax on gasoline to transportation will be extended from 2006 to 2008. These two new years of funding will be used to pay back the State highway account and the Traffic Congestion Relief Fund (TCRF) from money that will be taken over the next two years to help balance the State budget.

The Task Force thanked John for his ongoing participation with the RCTF and extended thanks to the administration for maintaining transportation as a priority in spite of the current energy crisis.

Item F Legislation

Chuck Oldham, CTC staff, provided a more thorough explanation of the presentation provided by John Ferrera. One item worth noting in this explanation was that in order to continue to make transfers promised for local roads, approximately \$354 million over the next two years, the State will borrow from future years and there is no promise that these local road funds will also be available in those future years.

The group discussed AB 608 (Dickerson). This bill has been expanded to include increasing PPM fund allowances for rural counties from 2% to 5% as well as providing assurance that STIP project savings will be credited to county shares for that county where the project is located. Celia

McAdam reported that this bill has passed the Assembly Transportation Committee on the Consent Agenda and is now in the "Suspense File". Letters of support from RCTF members are encouraged. David Brewer advised that one of the new proposed amendments to the STIP Guidelines would involve recalculating funds programmed in the STIP to protect project savings similar to what is proposed in AB 608.

The group discussed ACA 9 and AB 227 which are measures intended to make permanent the redirection of sales tax on gasoline to transportation purposes. **Celia McAdam will email letters written by Placer County (PCTPA) in support of these two bills to RCTF participants in case there are other counties that want to send similar letters of support.**

Dan Landon (Nevada) advised that the Nevada County Transportation Commission has also sent out a letter opposed to AB 1196. On the surface this bill would appear to benefit rural county transit, however, Nevada County believes that the bill tries to codify a lot of what is already in the Transportation Development Act (TDA) and that it may lock in some new requirements that we do not want.

The group also discussed SB 787. This bill would set forth how \$18 million in funding will be distributed for rural county transit if this money stays in the Governor's budget. The bill contains restrictions of new funds to counties presently using TDA funds for street and road purposes; a portion of the new grant funds would be deducted based upon the amount of TDA such counties are spending on streets and roads.

Item G TEA Reform

Pete Hathaway stated that, following a recent TEA advisory committee conference call, he conducted some research regarding TEA programs across the nation. He found out that California's TEA program has almost the worst performance of any State in the country. He has made one presentation to the CTC regarding how to improve the State's TEA program if it is extended with the next Federal re-authorization in 2003/04. He will be preparing another presentation to the CTC that may be considered during the CTC meeting on July 11 and 12. Pete shared his recent presentation to the CTC (see attached "Keys to a successful program"). He told the RCTF that rural counties can provide any input they may have through him or through RCTF TEA Advisory Committee Representative Phil Dow.

Item H Proposition 10 Children Age 0-5 Transportation Opportunities

Alice Trujillo from the California Children and Families Commission (CCFC) provided a brief overview of the efforts initiated by Proposition 10. Under Proposition 10 the CCFC "supports children from pre-natal to age 5 by creating a comprehensive and integrated system of information and services to promote early childhood development and school readiness". Proposition 10 was an initiative approved by the voters in November 1998 which added 50 cents per pack to cigarettes and a comparable tax to other tobacco products.

She stated that each county has set up a Commission. Each county receives \$200,000 or more per year for their Proposition 10 efforts. There was recently a summit involving all rural counties and three urban counties. A consistent theme expressed by all counties was the need for adequate access and transportation. She advised that Pam Couch (Modoc) provided valuable input to the group about how the Children and Families Commissions can coordinate their efforts with RTPAs. This can include incorporating the Children and Families Commissions into each region's Social Service Transportation Advisory Council and building their needs into required social service transportation inventories and action plan updates. **She requested that all rural county RTPAs make contact with their Children and Families Commissions for this purpose.** If further information is needed there is a web site (www.ccfc.ca.gov).

Item I Proposed CTC Appointment Endorsement - Don Raffaelli

Celia McAdam advised that CTC applicant Don Raffaelli was unable to attend today's RCTF meeting. Don is from Humboldt County and would qualify to represent rural counties on the CTC. Spencer Clifton, Executive Director, Humboldt County Local Transportation Commission, was also not able to attend today's meeting, therefore Item I may be continued to the next agenda.

The group agreed that it was still the RCTF position not to formally endorse any CTC candidate as a group. However, there was a consensus that meeting and talking to CTC applicants during RCTF meetings was appropriate and that individual counties could write letters of support if they were inclined to so do.

Item J Rural Counties Retreat Update

Celia McAdam advised that the RCTF was not able to put together the rural county retreat for this spring. She, Walt Allen (San Benito), Jerry LeFrancois (Mono), and Spencer Clifton (Humboldt) will continue to try and put together a rural county retreat for the fall. This retreat may be coordinated with the Regional Council of Rural Counties (RCRC) annual conference.

Item K Status Report on RCTF Issues

Celia McAdam reviewed the RCTF Annual Report presented to the CTC in December 2000. The group discussed changes and new issues or accomplishments that should be addressed in the Semi-Annual Update to be presented in June 2001. Celia advised that she may not have time to distribute copies of the new draft report for review by RCTF members before Friday, May 25, 2001 when it has to be submitted for the CTC June agenda.

Dan Landon reported that RCTF dues appear to be a successful effort. Likewise, efforts to increase PPM funding from 2% to 5% appears to be moving forward per discussions held under the separate agenda item (F - Legislation).

Phil Dow reported that his items pertaining to local road rehab funding and STIP protection and pertaining to TEA were addressed as part of the regular meeting agenda.

Sharon Scherzinger advised that the annual OWP process appears to be working more smoothly this year. She also reported that Caltrans Planning has begun interviews and meetings as part of the statewide transportation plan update. Celia McAdam stated that she hopes to attend the California Transportation Futures Seminar in Southern California on June 22 which is also somewhat advisory to the statewide transportation plan update process.

Celia asked if it was necessary to keep clarification and improvement of the OWP process on the RCTF Issues and Objectives list. The group agreed that this was an ongoing effort.

Celia McAdam advised that she has been encouraged to attend a meeting concerning a "Universal Transportation Project Identifier (UTPI)". Gene Murtey, Caltrans Programming, advised that this effort was trying to establish a system of project identifiers. Celia asked what could be easier than giving a project a number. Gene advised that it is much more complicated than this. **Gene Murtey will give Celia McAdam more information about how the rural counties can help with this effort.**

Pam Couch advised that Lassen, Modoc, and Plumas Counties are working on a rural county trip planning tool. The effort may be funded by Caltrans new technologies. She needs letters of support indicating how this tool could benefit rural counties. **She will email rural county participants more information about the tool, its proposed purpose and benefits.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

**RCTF SIGN-IN
5/18/01 MEETING**

Brenda Mitchell	SCTC
Jeff Damon	PSOMAS
Deborah Pederson	Caltrans D2
Scott White	Caltrans D2
Sharon Scherzinger	Caltrans
Gerry LeFrancois	Mono LTC
Charles Field	ACTC
Liz Levine	MCTC
Kathleen Zahniser	Caltrans District 10
Amy D. Roberts	Mariposa LTC
Chuck Oldham	CTC
David Brewer	CTC
Celia McAdam	PCTPA
Don Anderson	Caltrans District 2
Kevin Rosser	Tehama Co. Trans. Comm.
Gene Murtey	Caltrans
Peggy White	Glenn Co.
Dan Landon	NCTC
Jim Nicholas	Caltrans
Olin Woods	SACOG
Pam Couch	Modoc Co. LTC
Dan Newton	Lasses County
Loretta Ellard	Lake & Mendo.
Phil Dow	Lake & Mendo RTPAs
Lynette Wilhelm	RCRC

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To: Rural Counties Task Force Participants
From: Celia McAdam, Chair
SUBJECT: 2002 STIP Fund Estimate

Issue

The STIP fund estimate provides the basis upon which Regional Choice (also known as "county shares") and Interregional funds are calculated. Key components to this calculation include the actual amount of funds that will be available, as well as the various "off the top" funding allocations.

The 2002 STIP fund estimate is being presented to the CTC at their July 11 and 12 meeting in Los Angeles. Rick Terry and Jim Nicholas will be providing information on the assumptions and background to the calculation of the Regional Choice, as well as the results. It is expected that the CTC will adopt a Final Fund Estimate in August.

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To: Rural Counties Task Force Participants
From: Celia McAdam, Chair
SUBJECT: Changes to STIP Guidelines

Issue

Like the STIP fund estimate, STIP Guidelines play a pivotal role in how transportation planning commissions program Regional Choice funds. Of particular concern are potential changes to the State Only funding policies that affect the smallest jurisdictions the most.

Another issue that was identified was the discrepancy between the time period for County Share funds and the STIP. Because the time period for the County Shares is longer than the STIP, there is the potential for shortfalls in the availability of funds at the time they are needed.

These STIP Guidelines were discussed at May 2 and 3 RTPA and CTC meetings, and adopted at the June CTC meeting. A recap of these changes, and how they affect RTIP programming, will be provided at the RCTF meeting.

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To: Rural Counties Task Force Participants

From: Celia McAdam, Chair

SUBJECT: California Transportation Plan

Issue

As many of you are aware, Caltrans is in the process of developing a long term overall vision for the state's transportation system, known as the California Transportation Plan.

Nathan Smith of Caltrans will be making a presentation to the Task Force on these efforts and how rural counties can participate.

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To: Rural Counties Task Force Participants
From: Celia McAdam, Chair
SUBJECT: Recap of RCTF Semi-Annual Report to CTC

Issue

Attached please find a copy of the RCTF Semi-Annual Report to the CTC, as presented at their June meeting.

Discussion

Commissioners noted that a number of the issues presented in the report have a common theme – rural transportation agencies have limited staffing and resources, compared with the tremendous requirements that we must deal with.

In response, the Commission appointed Kirk Lindsey to chair an ad hoc group of commissioners, CTC and Caltrans staff, and rural counties to explore ways of sharing and otherwise improving the resources available for rural agencies. This group is scheduled to meet Friday, July 20, 2001 (immediately prior to the RCTF meeting) at 9:00 am at 1120 N Street, Room 2116 (Directors Boardroom) in Sacramento. **All RCTF members are strongly encouraged to attend.**

The ideas generated and outcomes recommended at this meeting, as well as future actions, will be discussed by the group under this item.

RURAL COUNTIES TASK FORCE
Semi-Annual Report
June 2001

The Rural Counties Task Force (RCTF) was formed in 1988 as a joint effort between the California Transportation Commission and the 28 rural county Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) and Local Transportation Commissions (CTCs). The purpose of the Task Force is to provide a direct opportunity for the smallest counties of California to remain informed, have a voice, and help shape statewide transportation policies and programs.

The Task Force is an informal organization with no budget or staff. Meetings are held on the third Friday of odd numbered months at the Caltrans Headquarters facility. Kathie Jacobs of the CTC staff acts as liaison to the Task Force, and CTC and Caltrans staff typically attend these meetings to present information or engage in discussions regarding statewide transportation issues that interest and affect rural counties.

The implementation of SB 45 in 1997 significantly increased the responsibilities on transportation planning agencies. The effects were particularly pronounced in the smallest agencies, where modest staffs were now responsible for project specific planning, programming, and monitoring. These changes also intensified the value and purpose of the Task Force.

The following information is provided to highlight the challenges and accomplishments that have involved Task Force members in the first half of 2001, as well as the issues that will continue to confront Task Force members in the future.

State Only Funding

Task Force members very much appreciate the Commission's policies to provide state-only funds for local road projects of \$750,000 or less, as well as matching funds for the federal dollars in the STIP, including Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) where applicable. Equally appreciated is the Commission's policy to allow rural areas to exchange Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEA) and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds for state-only dollars. These policies have allowed Task Force members to avoid dealing with cumbersome federal processes such as Disadvantaged Business Enterprise requirements or federal environmental regulations on small projects, enabling us to use the funds for product rather than process.

We recognize that state-only funds are a scarce resource that is highly sought after, and that Caltrans must manage the use accordingly. However, the continuation of these Commission policies to exchange federal dollars for rural counties and to provide state-only funds for small projects are of critical importance.

Efforts

Task Force members have been working closely with Caltrans Headquarters staff as they propose revisions to the state-only funding policies, to make sure that the ongoing needs of rural agencies are considered.

Continuing Issues

- Continued availability of state-only funds for TEA and RSTP exchange programs, as well as for small projects, is necessary to maximize the effectiveness of scarce transportation funds in rural areas.

Planning, Programming, and Monitoring (PPM) Funds

If we have learned anything from SB 45, it is that quality planning, programming, and monitoring of projects are essential to project delivery. That means having the staff or consultants with the expertise to wade through the myriad of federal requirements and Caltrans procedures associated with moving a project from concept to construction. This is where rural counties often find themselves at a disadvantage: obtaining and retaining personnel or consultants that have this expertise costs money. Planning, programming, and monitoring (PPM) funds provide those funds. However, the limitation for regions to programming no more than 2% of their Regional Choice funds for PPM creates a major problem for the smallest rural counties. If you're only receiving a few million in any given STIP round, 2% does not go far enough to cover the costs of adequate project PPM.

Efforts

The Task Force has been working closely with the Regional Council of Rural Counties to develop legislation that would increase the allowable amount allocated to PPM from 2% to 5%. This has now been included in AB 608 (Dickerson) in the 2001/02 legislative session.

Continuing Issues

- The Task Force will continue to work towards approval of legislation to allow regions to program PPM funds at levels adequate to assure project delivery.

Local Road Rehabilitation and Maintenance Funding

The State's smallest counties generally have proportionately higher miles of roadways with the fewest resources to maintain them. The CTC recognized this need when, in 1998, the Commission opened the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to local road rehabilitation projects. Many of these projects were added, including those in rural areas, even though rehabilitation projects do not fit well with the intent or mechanics of the STIP. The Task Force acknowledges and appreciates the Commission's efforts to widen the description of rehabilitation project and work with rural counties to make these projects fit better into the STIP.

The funding picture brightened somewhat with the Governor's Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP), with its one-time \$400 million distribution for maintenance and an estimated \$120 million for the next five years. Unfortunately, the city and county apportionments to rural areas from this total will meet less than 5% of the identified needs.

Efforts

The Task Force has continuously focused on reducing the \$1 billion backlog of rehab projects that would bring county roads up to "good" condition, as well as providing a dedicated funding source for the \$50 million needed annually to maintain those roads in good condition.

Continuing Issues

- Until the backlog is eliminated and a dedicated funding source is found, rural counties continue to need the option of using STIP funds for road rehabilitation.

New Project Funding Sources

Clearly, existing resources are not sufficient to make the capital improvements needed to provide effective transportation systems in rural areas. These transportation improvements are identified in the local Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs), which must provide a “financially realistic” project list. More and more counties find themselves unable to reconcile their project needs with their realistic funding expectations over the 20 year life of the plan.

Efforts

About half of the counties represented by the Task Force have expressed interest or have taken steps to pursue the approach taken by many urban areas: a local sales tax for transportation. While many rural counties could meet a 50% or 55% majority threshold, few - if any - could meet the currently required 2/3 majority.

Continuing Issues

- Rural counties join our urban counterparts to try to develop additional sources of funding for needed transportation projects.

Rural Planning Assistance (RPA) Funds

Previous efforts by the Rural Counties Task Force and Caltrans resulted in the doubling of Rural Planning Assistance funds within the Caltrans budget starting in FY 2000/01. The primary need and use for these additional funds is to improve the Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) and transportation planning processes in rural counties.

Task Force members also wish to acknowledge Caltrans’ successful efforts to improve the speed at which agencies are reimbursed for RPA funds. In small agencies, cash flow is an issue, and Caltrans’ improved reimbursement has made a big difference.

Efforts

Prior to this additional funding, some rural county RTPs had not been updated in ten years. With the help of these planning funds, all rural counties will have current RTPs ready for the 2002 STIP.

Continuing Issues

- It is critical to the continued improvement to the rural planning processes that the increased level of Rural Planning Funds is continued.

Caltrans Local Assistance

The effects of SB 45 have included a significant increased demand on Caltrans Local Assistance. Rural counties in particular depend on the expertise of the Local Assistance program to guide us through the maze of federal and state requirements. We appreciate Caltrans' response to this need, by increasing the staffing for Local Assistance and practicing more direct outreach to the local jurisdictions.

While the improvements to Local Assistance is important, these Caltrans staffers can only go so far. For example, they can help explain the new Federal DBE requirements or how to process a federal environmental document, but they cannot send staff to a small city or county to actually implement either. This is why the Task Force members still need additional PPM funds and state-only funding.

Efforts

Task Force members continue to work with their districts' Local Assistance program to facilitate better communications and information flow between Caltrans and project sponsors and improve project delivery.

Continuing Issues

- The Task Force strongly encourages Caltrans to continue the training and improved staffing levels for the Local Assistance program.

Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP)

As our members gear up to prepare our 2002 Regional Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIPs), so Caltrans is developing their 2002 ITIP. Under SB 45, 25% of the STIP is to be programmed into the ITIP, with primary focus outside of urban areas. This creates a particularly strong connection between RTIP and ITIP projects for rural areas, because so many of our members' largest transportation challenges are on the state highway system. At the same time, many of these projects have price tags that far outstrip the ability of the local agencies to fund them. That is where ITIP participation becomes so critical.

The Task Force is particularly enthused about the way Caltrans has addressed the 2002 ITIP. In the past, the timing of the ITIP project selection had made it difficult for local agencies to adequately coordinate their RTIP submittals for potential joint projects, since they weren't certain what was or was not included in the ITIP portion. In the 2002 round, Caltrans has been proactive in seeking RTIP/ITIP partnerships with local agencies. The process is much more transparent, and there has been a far higher level of communication between Caltrans and local agencies about the Department's priorities. Of particular value is the commitment of Jim Nicholas and his staff to provide an ITIP by late summer, which gives the local agencies time to craft and coordinate their RTIP submittals prior to the December due date.

Efforts

Task Force members have been working closely with Caltrans and their local project sponsors to develop partnerships for ITIP/RTIP projects that make the best use of state and local resources.

Continuing Issues

- The Task Force supports the continued efforts to make the ITIP process proactive, accessible, and coordinated with local project sponsors.

Commission Liaison to the Rural Counties

The transportation needs and issues of rural counties are unique, and those sensibilities need representation on the Commission. The Task Force is most appreciative of Commissioner Kirk Lindsey in his appointment to the CTC, acting as liaison to the Task Force, and providing an effective voice for these issues.

Efforts

Task Force members regularly communicate and coordinate with Mr. Lindsey to provide input on the rural perspective to the Commission activities.

Continuing Issues

- Another rural county representative to fill one of the two openings on the Commission would further help efforts to ensure communication and cooperation between the CTC, the Governor's administration, Caltrans, and the State's 28 rural counties.

State Level Committee Participation

In addition to those issues and efforts listed above, various Task Force members are also providing a rural perspective to the following efforts. Many of these efforts involve participation on committees established by Caltrans.

- Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan
- SB 45 Project Monitoring/Reporting Data Base
- Local Assistance "Enhanced Training and Outreach"
- SB 335 Transportation Issues
- Caltrans, City, County, Federal Highway Administration Coordinating Group
- State Planning Guidelines Development Quality Assurance Team
- California Transportation Investment Strategy (CTIS)
- Universal Transportation Project Identifier (UTPI) Project
- Next TEA Federal Reauthorization
- FTA 5310, Welfare to Work Advisory Committee, Rural Transit Issues
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
- Streamlining Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures and Guidelines Manuals

Members of the Task Force also actively coordinate with other statewide groups to share information and perspective on transportation issues. These other groups include:

- Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) Group
- California Association of Councils of Government (CALCOG)
- Regional-Caltrans Coordinating Group
- Regional Council of Rural Counties (RCRC)

CALIFORNIA RURAL COUNTIES TASK FORCE

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(831) 775-0903*

To: Rural Counties Task Force Participants
From: Celia McAdam, Chair
SUBJECT: Air Quality Conformity Issues for Rural Counties

Issue

With the potential adoption of new standards for air quality conformity, known as the 8-hour standard, many rural counties that are currently considered attainment areas may be reclassified as non-attainment areas. This redesignation would bring with it more stringent standards for air pollutants, while also providing Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding eligibility.

Discussion

The California Air Resources Board is currently developing the new standards for air quality conformity. Kevin Rosser of the Tehama County Transportation Commission has been working on this issue and will provide the group with an assessment of the pros and cons of conformity on transportation planning.

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To: Rural Counties Task Force Participants
From: Celia McAdam, Chair
SUBJECT: Proposed Caltrans 10% Oversight Fee for Contracted Out Projects

Issue

Caltrans has proposed a new policy that would charge project sponsors a 10% surcharge for oversight on support costs for all contracted out projects.

Caltrans currently provides oversight on state highway projects funded via sales-tax authorities through an "off the top" allocation of STIP funds. This new policy would apply only to Regional Choice funded projects, including those currently in the STIP. The financial implications of this policy in rural counties could be significant.

At our May meeting, it was agreed that a letter be drafted to reflect some of the concerns expressed by the group. Liz Levine of Madera County further requested that the letter first be sent to task force members for review prior to it being sent.

Discussion

On June 9, the draft letter to Tony Harris and Brent Felker was sent via e-mail to the RCTF members and other interested parties. The only responses were regarding minor typos. The final letter, sent June 26, is attached.

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June 26, 2001

Mr. Tony V. Harris
Mr. Brent Felker
California Department of Transportation
1120 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: Draft Deputy Directive DD53 Revised: 10% Oversight Charge on State Highway Projects

Dear Mr. Harris and Mr. Felker,

As the transportation commissions and agencies representing California's rural counties, we are concerned about the above referenced proposal to impose a 10% oversight fee for contracted-out projects on state highways.

Rural Counties Task Force members share with Caltrans the strong commitment to getting projects delivered as quickly and cost effectively as possible. The voters gave us a new tool in that quest with Proposition 35, which gives transportation agencies – including Caltrans - the option of using private contractors to develop and construct projects that use State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds. Depending on the individual project circumstance, including Caltrans' workloads and priorities, contracting out has potential to deliver critical projects more quickly. The faster a project is delivered, the more we can avoid cost escalations.

We recognize Caltrans must have funding for the cost of overseeing projects on state highways. It is our understanding that oversight is, in fact, a high priority for Caltrans. If it is the case that this 10% oversight fee would also expedite the processing of these projects through Caltrans channels, it would argue that the cost savings from escalations could offset the oversight fee. This would keep contracted out under Proposition 35 open as a reasonable option for making best use of scarce transportation resources and improving project delivery.

At the same time, we are concerned about how the proposal would treat self-help counties differently from those without local option sales taxes for transportation. The current system is for Caltrans to provide oversight of self-help county projects on the state highway system as part of the Caltrans budget. Make no

mistake, most of our members would love to become self-help counties and many have taken tangible steps in this direction. However, the reality is only two RCTF agencies have been successful.

DD53 Revised

Page two

It is important that we be able to use our limited resources as effectively as possible. We would strongly prefer that the proposal include an equitable system that does not distinguish between self-help and non-self-help county projects in the manner in which oversight is paid.

Lastly, the DD53 proposal is unclear as to how the oversight charge would be calculated; would it be assessed on the programming level cost, or the actual cost?

Thank you for your consideration of our comments and concerns. We look forward to working with your staff on resolving these issues.

Sincerely,

Celia McAdam, AICP

Chair

Cc: California Transportation Commission
RTPA Group
Self Help Counties Coalition

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To: Rural Counties Task Force Participants
From: Celia McAdam, Chair
SUBJECT: Legislation - AB 608, SB 787

Background

AB 608

RCTF members have met with the leadership of the Regional Council of Rural Counties to provide technical information and advice on transportation issues for rural areas. At the request of RCRC, Assemblyman Dick Dickerson (R-Redding) has sponsored AB 608, which would require cost savings from projects funded by Regional Choice money to be returned to the sponsoring county for reprogramming.

At the request of the Rural Counties Task Force, Assemblyman Dickerson has amended the bill to include a permissible increase in allocations for planning, programming, and monitoring (PPM) from 2% to 5%.

Issue

AB 608

The California Transportation Commission had expressed concerns about the bill, as they perceived it would change the basis upon which project costs are calculated. After a very productive meeting that clarified this was not the intent, CTC staffers helped direct us to the statute sections and changes that would address the overage/underage equity issue we are trying to get at. The legislation now proposes that when the engineer's estimate is 20% over or under the programmed amount, the excess would be deducted from or reallocated to the sponsoring county's share.

The bill passed the Assembly and is scheduled for a hearing before the Senate Transportation Committee on July 10. RCRC Legislative Director Wes Lujan and Heidi Heinemann of Assemblyman Dickerson's office have been spearheading the effort to get this bill passed.

The current status of the bill will be provided at the Task Force meeting, along with a discussion of ways RCTF members can assist with this effort.

SB 787

This bill would provide a grant program to distribute the \$18 million currently in the Governor's budget for rural transit purposes. Pete Spaulding of CalACT has requested that the information on the bill (attached) be distributed to Task Force members.

Date: June 22, 2001

To: Regional Transportation Planning Agencies, Councils of Governments and Local Transportation Commissions

From: Peter Spaulding, CalACT Executive Director

Subject: SB 787 - Chesbro, Rural Transit Funding

As you may know, CalACT has been working with Senator Wesley Chesbro, his staff and the Senate and Assembly Transportation Committees to pass SB 787. This legislation would provide up to \$18M for rural transit capital projects. Despite the reductions in state revenues from a sluggish economy and the increased state spending due to the power crisis, the prospects for passage of this legislation are still very good. SB 787 has passed the full Senate, and is now in the Assembly.

SB 787 is scheduled to be heard in the Assembly Transportation Committee, Monday, July 2. The Committee meeting starts at 1:30 PM. We request your help in obtaining a positive vote from this Committee. Once it clears Assembly Transportation, it will move on to Assembly Appropriations, where it would be heard about one to three weeks later.

In its present form, as amended through June 4 and copy attached, there are several aspects of the bill with which you should be aware:

1. Only applicants that spend all of their TDA funds on purposes other than streets and roads, in the year of application, would be eligible to apply.
2. The local matching requirement would range between 10% and 50%, based on the percentage of TDA funds spent on streets and roads projects during the past 3 fiscal years. The less spent on streets and roads, the lower the required local match.
3. The application period will be tight. Money must be allocated by Caltrans in the 2001/02 budget year, and will have to be fully expended by June 30, 2004.

I urge you to work with individual claimants to determine their eligibility and matching requirements. If a claimant has budgeted some TDA for streets and roads in FY 2001/2002, it may affect the claimant's eligibility in that year.

I am attaching a copy of CalACT's support letter for your information and use. Feel free to adapt this letter in any way to model your support. I would suggest that you include references to any capital projects for which you think you might apply. Indicate how these funds could benefit your program. If your service could benefit a specific segment of the population, such as seniors, low income, students, persons with disabilities, please include anecdotal information. Please encourage individual claimants to submit support letters or phone calls as well.

Also attached is contact information for the Assembly Transportation and Assembly Appropriations Committee members. Please make sure that your support is transmitted to Assembly Transportation Committee members by Friday, June 30. Letters or phone calls to Assembly Appropriations members should not be sent or made until SB 787 passes Transportation. Please copy CalACT on your transmittals. If you have any questions, please call me at 800-422-5228. Thank you for any support you can offer.

You may receive more than 1 copy of this announcement if your organization serves several functions and you are also a CalACT member. I apologize for the overlap.

Attachments:
SB 787 as amended through June 4, 2001
CalACT Support Letter

BILL NUMBER: SB 787 AMENDED
BILL TEXT

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 4, 2001
AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 9, 2001
AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 24, 2001

INTRODUCED BY Senator Chesbro

FEBRUARY 23, 2001

An act to add and repeal Section 14057 of the Government Code, relating to transportation, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 787, as amended, Chesbro. Rural Transit System Grant Program.

Existing law provides for funding of public transit under various programs, including the Mills-Alquist-Deddeh Act, also known as the Transportation Development Act.

This bill, until July 1, ~~2006,~~ 2002 would require the Department of Transportation and the California Transportation Commission to establish a Rural Transit System Grant Program to purchase, construct, and rehabilitate transit facilities, vehicles, and equipment, including energy efficiency retrofits, and to purchase right s -of-way for transit systems. The bill would require the department to submit a report ~~evaluating~~ *describing the projects funded under* the program to the Legislature by ~~December 31, 2005~~ *June 30, 2002* .

The bill would not become operative unless funds for the program are appropriated by the Budget Act of 2001.

The bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

Vote: 2/3. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 14057 is added to the Government Code, to read:

14057. (a) For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) The "program" is the Rural Transit System Grant Program established under this section.

(2) A "rural area" is an area that is not included within the boundaries of an urbanized area, as defined by the United States Bureau of Census in its latest decennial census.

(b) Not later than August 31, 2001, the department shall prepare guidelines for the implementation of a Rural Transit System Grant Program and submit those guidelines to the commission for review.

(c) Not later than October 15, 2001, both of the following shall

occur:

(1) The commission shall adopt guidelines for the program.

(2) The department shall establish the program in accordance with this section and the guidelines adopted by the commission.

(d) The guidelines prepared by the department and adopted by the commission shall include all of the following requirements:

(1) The department shall award grants to recipients on a competitive basis for projects that serve primarily rural areas.

(2) Grants shall be used for the following purposes:

(A) To purchase, construct, and rehabilitate transit facilities, vehicles, and equipment, including, but not limited to, energy efficiency retrofits.

(B) To purchase ~~right-of-way~~ *rights-of-way* for transit systems.

(3) Grants shall be awarded based on criteria that include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

(A) Project need and effectiveness.

(B) Filling transit service gaps, including, but not limited to, connectivity to other transit systems.

(C) The equitable distribution of funds.

(D) The potential of the project to improve the safety of passengers, transit workers, and the general public.

(E) Replacement of vehicles or equipment that have exceeded service life expectations.

(4) Grant awards shall be limited to any claimant, as defined in Section 99203 of the Public Utilities Code.

(5) Grants shall require all of the following:

(A) A project match requirement equal to the percentage of Mills-Alquist-Deddeh Act (Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 99200) of Part 11 of Division 10 of the Public Utilities Code) funds expended for purposes other than transit, community transit services, pedestrian and bicycle, and transportation planning purposes, averaged over the three most recent fiscal years. The match requirement may not be less than 10 percent, and may not be more ~~that~~ than 50 percent. However, no

grant shall be awarded to an applicant in a city, county, or city and county, in which funds that may be claimed by the applicant under the Mills-Alquist-Deddeh Act are expended for street and road purposes pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 99400 of the Public Utilities Code in the same year as the year in which the application for a grant is made, , unless the city, county, city or county, is estimated by the County Auditor to be allocated less than \$100,000 in the year of application under the Mills-Alquist-Deddeh Act, or unless the applicant can demonstrate that they will expend from other sources an amount equivalent to what they may claim under the Mills-Deddeh-Alquist Act, in the year of application.

(B) A demonstration of maintenance of effort.

(C) A demonstration of financial ability to support ongoing operations of the public transportation services.

(e) The department shall prepare a report ~~evaluating~~ *describing the types of projects funded under* the Rural Transit System Grant Program, which shall be submitted to the Legislature on or before ~~December 31, 2005~~ *June 30, 2002* .

(f) This section shall become inoperative on July 1, ~~2006~~ *2002* , and, as of January 1, ~~2007~~ *2003* , is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that becomes operative on or before January 1, ~~2007~~ *2003* , deletes or extends the dates on which it

becomes inoperative and is repealed.

SEC. 2. Section 1 of this act shall not become operative unless the Budget Act of 2001 for the 2001-02 fiscal year contains an appropriation for the Rural Transit System Grant Program.

SEC. 3. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

In order to implement, at the earliest possible time, a rural transit system grant program, it is necessary that this act take effect immediately.

Item J

CALIFORNIA RURAL COUNTIES TASK FORCE

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To: Rural Counties Task Force Participants
From: Celia McAdam, Chair
SUBJECT: CTC Appointment Candidate - Don Raffaelli

Issue

This item was originally scheduled for our May meeting, but deferred at the request of Mr. Raffaelli.

At the March RCTF meeting, members discussed the possibility of endorsing Don Raffaelli as a candidate for one of the vacancies on the CTC. It was resolved at that time to poll the RCTF membership for questions to be submitted to Mr. Raffaelli, to which he could respond in writing. The group would then determine if the endorsement was warranted.

The response to the request for questions was somewhat underwhelming, with only two responses. As a result, I have supplied Mr. Raffaelli - via Spencer Clifton - a brief list of subjects which are of particular interest to rural agencies on which he could address the RCTF. These subjects are:

- Familiarity with rural transportation issues
- Project Delivery
- What should be the emphasis of the state's transportation program?

The group will have the opportunity at our July meeting to discuss these and other issues with Mr. Raffaelli and determine how - either as a group or as individual agencies - we want to approach the endorsement issue.

RCTF ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES
Report for July 20, 2001

Issue/Objective

CTC Representative 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 2000/01 RCTF Biannual Meeting/Retreat	Walt Allen, Monterey
Increase PPM Funds RSTP/CMAQ/TEA Project Delivery Committee RCTF Dues	Dan Landon, Nevada
Local Road Rehab Funding & STIP Protection Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Applicability to Rural Counties TEA Advisory Committee	Phil Dow, Lake & Mendocino
Formulas for Distribution of Local Road Funds California Transportation Investment Strategy (CTIS) ITS Applicability to Rural Counties	George Dondero, Calaveras
Committee to Review Changes to Local Assistance And Guidelines Manual	Liz Levine, Madera
City/County/Caltrans/FHWA Coordinating Group and Local Assistance "Enhanced Training Committee"	Spencer Clifton, Humboldt
State Planning Guidelines Development Quality Team Clarify/Improve OWP Process Interregional Strategic Transportation Plan (ITSP)	Charles Field, Amador
Local Road Rehab Funding & STIP Protection Federal Aid Project Streamlining (AB 1012) Civil Rights Review Title 9 TEA-3 Federal Reauthorization	Celia McAdam, Placer

CALAVERAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
A Regional Transportation Planning Agency

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San Andreas, CA 95249
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George A. Dondero, II
Executive Director
Fax: (209) 754-2096
info@calacog.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Rural Counties Task Force

From: George Dondero

Date: July 6, 2001

Re: CTIS Status Report

On April 17, 2001 I attended a presentation at District 10 of the **California Transportation Investment System (CTIS)** by **Ann Mahaney**, GIS Analyst and **Pam Korte**, Senior Transportation Specialist. CTIS is a GIS-based tool under development for the past two years. The motivation for CTIS development was to use it as a foundation for developing the State Transportation Plan. The tool is intended to assist Caltrans and the regions make better decisions on future projects, and to aid in tracking existing programmed projects.

The goal from the outset was to make this tool easy to use. It includes frequently used project information accessible in one place. Planners can now look at corridors across regions and improve the timing of their projects. It is also possible to look at cumulative effects early on. Caltrans took CTIS on a roadshow, district-by-district, to introduce it to both district staff and local agency planners. It was also shown at the May 14 Regional-Caltrans Coordinating Group.

Project data originally came from CTIPS and from data supplied by the regions. Currently it includes all projects in the 1998 STIP and SHOPP. Staff are now in the process of entering 2000 STIP data. This includes the ITSP, aviation projects and TCRP (governor's program) project data.

Another goal is to allow local agencies to correct or add data as projects change over time. This will be entered through an Access database, to be on-line in later this year. Users will need at a minimum, ArcView 3.1 on a PC (the program will not work on a Macintosh.) The user's guide is available at www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/osp/. The program is available on a CD and may be procured by contacting Pam Korte at 916-653-2593, or downloaded from the website.

Caltrans staff has put much effort into ironing out bugs and anticipating user's questions and needs. This is a work in progress, which should evolve over time. One key concern raised was whether or not Caltrans will support maintenance (i.e. keep it current) and further development of the tool, once it is distributed. The tool goes a long way to eliminate redundancy, and has real potential to improve communication and awareness of

planning issues between local agencies, the districts and headquarters. It is likely that if CTIS is given ongoing maintenance and development funding, many new uses will be found.

The required skill level or familiarity with GIS is not high, and non-technical planners should be encouraged to get familiar with this tool. The customized menus and applications assist a new user. For those counties having a GIS, data layers embedded in CTIS may be brought over to your own local system. At some districts training is available on-site by qualified staff for new users. An advisory committee is forming to provide direction on how to make updating project data easy for local agencies.

California ITMS

At a second session the same day, staff introduced the Intermodel Transportation Management System, a planning tool that grew out of the federal requirements in ISTEA. This GIS-based tool is a macro-level tool, designed to help identify projects for initiation documents. As it's name implies, it includes data for all modes including ports, airports, transit, highways and railroads. This tool runs on a PC or a Mac, and requires a minimum of ArcView 3.0A or higher. It does not currently run on ArcView 8. Training requirements include a 5 day course given through Caltrans. The training assumes the user has basic ArcView experience.

Scenarios may be projected for 1996 as a base year out to 2006, 2016 and 2026. These are the analysis years available within the program. This tool is described as "A place to begin planning, not to end it", and is designed to find efficiencies and model the effect of various actions and their costs.

For rural counties where the number of transportation available modes may be very limited, this tool would have limited appeal. It appears to have greater utility in more urbanized areas. A goods movement analysis module is included.

Interested users should contact **Linda Turnquist** at 916-653-4107 to register for training or for more information.

Sierra Nevada ITS Strategic Plan

Calaveras County is in the study area for the Sierra Nevada Intelligent Transportation Systems Strategic Plan, one of several regional ITS plans that Caltrans has funded around the state. The attached letter was sent to Booz-Allen Hamilton, the consultant on the project. The letter critiques the project from several angles, regarding the relevance of ITS in rural counties. A suggestion was made in a second letter proposing that GIS be identified as a first-order project. Many rural counties have no GIS in place, and could benefit greatly if GIS were available. Many ITS projects assume a GIS has already been established.