

California Transportation Commission

Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines 2010 Update Subcommittee

Rural Counties RTP Workgroup

Teleconference Meeting Notes – Summary

**Thursday, November 19, 2009, 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM
Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Suite 300**

Facilitator: Kathryn Mathews, El Dorado County Transportation Commission

Kathryn Mathews welcomed the workgroup and introductions were made. She also provided a brief overview of the purpose of the meeting explaining that the Rural Counties Workgroup (Workgroup) was convened to review how the update of the RTP Guidelines document may impact the rural counties.

Susan Bransen provided a brief overview of the work that has taken place by the two subcommittees that were formed to develop guidance for the guidelines in response to SB 375. Caltrans issued an RTP Guidelines Working Draft on October 26, 2009. Comments were due to this draft on November 10th. Caltrans is in the process of addressing the comments received and intends to release another working draft on Monday, November 23, 2009 for the subcommittee members to respond to. Susan requested that the workgroup review this draft and provide any comments or concerns to Caltrans no later than December 11th.

To provide the California Transportation Commission with an opportunity to see the progress made to date to update the guidelines, Susan is planning to present the November 23, 2009 to the Commission as an information item at the December Commission meeting. This is not a workshop and no action will be taken.

Kathryn said that it is important to update these guidelines quickly as rural and MPOs are in the process of updating their RTPs right now and it is critical to provide consistency in these RTPs.

Susan provided key dates are as follows: November 23- Caltrans will release a working draft; December 3- Joint Subcommittee Meeting to be held; December 11th- comments to November 23 working draft are due; January 4th- Caltrans will release a new working draft; January 14th-last day to comment on the working draft before public workshops are held; January 31st - Caltrans releases final working draft; February 24th -Workshop on guidelines during CTC meeting; April 7th- workshop held on guidelines during CTC meeting. Adoption of the 2010 Updated RTP Guidelines is planned after the workshops are held in April 2010.

Garth Hopkins provided a background of SB 375 and detailed the efforts taken to date through the formation of a full workgroup; modeling and policy subcommittees and

technical workgroups. He walked the workgroup through the attached flowchart entitled “2010 RTP Guidelines Update Process”. Garth also provided an overview of the key areas within the guidelines that are currently planned for revision.

The workgroup elected to focus on Section 4.45 and 4.46 of the guidelines. Garth explained that language for section 4.45 “Non-MPO Rural RTPA Addressing Greenhouse Gas Emissions” is not yet developed. He shared a letter from the Attorney General dated April 26, 2007 addressed to the Council of Fresno County Governments. This letter identified language that could be used as a starting point in providing guidance to the rural agencies necessary to address GHG during the RTP development process. (See attached letter – underlined sections).

Summary of Key Comments:

- CEQA Guidelines will be amended January 2010 to cover environmental documents. From a rural perspective, it is important that timber and timber harvest plans are addressed for the sustainable communities strategy guidance.
- Laura Pennebaker, Caltrans referenced chapter [6.23](#) in the November 23, 2009 working draft to reference the Williamson Act and forest resources.
- The blueprint process provided MPOs a leg up on addressing SCS and GHG issues. The question for the workgroup is relative to climate change issues and how this will impact the rural agencies.
- It would be beneficial for rural agencies to address GHG in their long term plans.
- In Mono County, the approach is to be proactive as they do not want to get to CEQA and receive a letter from the Attorney General.
- For rural agencies to avoid receipt of a letter from the Attorney General, it may be necessary to have an SCS prepared in a qualitative manner.
- In Del Norte there is a section of 101 that is slowly falling into the ocean. The Caltrans alternative to address this was determined by Caltrans as not feasible and, instead, Caltrans proposes to spend \$10 million to stabilize the roadway in lieu of actually addressing the problem. The community feedback is that this does not make any sense. The question in Del Norte is how this is to be addressed in the RTP from a GHG and adaptation strategy standpoint? It was discussed that the RTP should have a plan to address the time when it is not longer feasible to simply stabilize this section of Hwy 101.
- RTP guidelines need to recognize that environmental/GHG issues are addressed at a programmatic level and not at a project level.
- Tehama County does not have the type of modeling capability that is needed to assess impacts to this level.
- Amador uses a post process model to their regional traffic model of all the specific projects on a programmatic level and this is very helpful in analyzing impacts. The modeling cost for Amador is approximately \$60,000 to \$80,000 per year. Of this the post processing is approximately \$18,000 per year.
- Be sure that the RTP Guidelines acknowledge local land use is the driver of the RTP.

- Del Norte receives approximately \$215,000 for PA & PPM and to take \$80,000 from this is not feasible. It is important that the guidelines do not mandate a regional traffic model.
- Barbara O'Keefe, Tehama County, recommended that a checklist would be helpful in the guidelines to provide a list of how to demonstrate that a good faith effort was made to address GHG and adaptation. Barbara read this list and will send it subsequent to the meeting to the workgroup members. Suggested strategies included, but were not limited to, counties that adopted BP or BP efforts; incorporation of complete streets; adoption of bikeways; multimodal transit facilities; park & ride lots; transit programs by employers; incentives to developers that reduce GHG; downtown redevelopment plans that incorporate compact development.
- Suggestion was made to create a condensed list in a broad umbrella and let each RTPA use what works for them. Provide an introduction that reiterates there is not a law and these are best practices only.
- Suggested adding regional traffic model and post processing as a best practice to the list.
- Important to make the guidelines clear what the obligations/requirements are through statute.
- Specify specific requirements vs. obligations vs. principles (mandates/statutorily required vs. should vs. best practice).
- In Nevada County there is a great concern with respect to impacts that are not generated within a region/county related to ozone related transportation.
- In Alpine County there are no regional traffic models as there are no capacity enhancing projects. Even if eliminated the whole county there would still be air quality issues.
- Numerous times the workgroup members wanted to be sure the guidelines do not box the rural agencies in.
- Question rose as to where a line can be drawn between mitigating future impacts and the cost constraints. SB 375, GHG requirements and adaptation strategies pose an unfunded mandate.
- Look at the old performance measures guidebook that broke out various counties that have addressed strategies. Add a paragraph to explain each strategy.
- Section 4.46 of October 26, 2009 RTP Guidelines working draft, best practices, delete the first sentence and replace with something to the effect that "Notwithstanding a lack of significant data, there is a need to begin to address climate change in long range plans."

Action Item Summary:

- As the next Rural Counties Task Force meeting is not until January 15, 2010, the workgroup members will arrange a teleconference before then to work on recommended language.
- Barbara O'Keefe will provide the checklist that was discussed at the meeting.

- Caltrans staff will develop language based on the discussion today and send it to the workgroup in mid December 2009.
- Caltrans, through the modeling subcommittee, to prepare a table that will identify the modeling requirements for each county. This is expected to be provided on November 23, 2009.

Meeting Materials Provided:

Attorney General Letter to Council of Fresno County Governments Dated April 26, 2007
AB 32 Fact Sheet
2010 RTP Guidelines Update Process