

Memorandum

Tab 21

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: January 22, 2015

Reference No.: 4.13
Action

From: SUSAN BRANSEN
Interim Executive Director

Subject: **COMMISSION COMMENTS ON THE INTERREGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIC PLAN**

ISSUE:

Should the Commission provide comments to Caltrans outlining the Commission's expectations for the 2015 Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan (ITSP) update?

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Commission direct staff to transmit the attached letter outlining expectations for the upcoming update to the ITSP that encourages Caltrans to:

- Clearly define interregional transportation needs in the plan.
- Evaluate the entire transportation corridor network, including integration of high-speed rail, intercity rail and transit systems, and managed lane connectivity among regions.
- Consider population growth and development patterns.
- Support a balanced and sustainable interregional transportation system, with statewide transportation goals and priorities driving the plan.
- Identify interregional priorities for managing the transportation system, addressing gap closures, operational improvements and freight routes.

BACKGROUND:

California Streets and Highways Code Sections 163-164.56 establish the legislative policy for the use of all transportation funds available to the State. The ITSP provides guidance for transportation improvement projects for state highways, intercity passenger rail, grade separations, and mass transit guideways. The ITSP is expected to be updated periodically to reflect major changes, trends of statewide and interregional significance, and evolving transportation policy and strategies.

The original ITSP was prepared in 1998 in response to the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 45 and identified a specific set of highway projects on ten Focus Routes. In 2012 Caltrans issued a Draft Status Update to the 1998 ITSP, providing a course of action and considerations for the Interregional Improvement Program (IIP) for the 20-year planning period of 2012 to 2032, for which the Commission provided

comments (Attachment A). The Final ITSP Status Update was issued by Caltrans in October 2013, identifying Focus Route improvements, and addressing transportation legislation and policy changes that occurred since 1998. The update did not add new focus routes to the plan and no routes were eliminated except where sections of the route may have been relinquished by the State to a local jurisdiction.

With the enactment of SB 486 (DeSaulnier, 2014), the Commission has an expanded role in the review and approval of the ITSP. Specifically, SB 486 directs Caltrans to submit the ITSP to the Commission for approval on or before June 30, 2015. The ITSP is to provide for a high functioning and balanced interregional transportation system which is action oriented and practical, considering both the short-term and long-term future. The ITSP is required to present clear, concise policy guidance to Caltrans for managing the state's transportation system.

Attachment A – March 11, 2013 – ITSP Comment Letter

Attachment B – Draft Letter to Caltrans Director Dougherty

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March 11, 2013

Malcolm Dougherty
Director
Department of Transportation
1120 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Director Dougherty,

The Commission considered the draft interregional transportation strategic plan (interregional plan) at its March 2013 meeting. Given the importance the interregional plan has to future funding decisions, it is critical that the interregional plan contributes to the statewide vision for an integrated, multimodal transportation system that furthers statewide mobility, safety, air quality, housing, economic, and other goals.

The Commission encourages Caltrans, through an open and transparent process, to refine the interregional plan in parallel with the development of the 2040 California Transportation Plan (CTP). This refinement should include an assessment as to whether the focus routes included in the 1998 interregional plan remain the highest priority for funding when aligned with other plans to achieve statewide goals. This would include, but not be limited to, determining whether focus routes should be added or removed from the plan.

Regional transportation, freight, rail, transit, and other plans are likely to influence future interregional plan priorities. Therefore, the Commission encourages close coordination between the various planning efforts underway to meet legislative requirements and increase assurance that the interregional plan supports a balanced and sustainable interregional transportation system. As evaluations of interregional system priorities are prepared, performance measures in addition to the cost effectiveness criteria included in the draft interregional plan should be utilized. Care should also be exercised to ensure that critical interregional priorities, unlikely to be funded by the more rural areas of the state, are identified and prioritized.

The Commission looks forward to working with Caltrans and other interested stakeholders as the interregional plan is refined and a broader range of modes and approaches is considered to

Director Dougherty

March 11, 2013

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address the state's interregional mobility needs. Please be assured that the Commission will continue to utilize those resources that are within its purview to assist Caltrans and the regions in developing transportation investments that will enable California to meet its mobility, economic and environmental objectives.

If you have questions or concerns related to these recommendations, please contact Susan Bransen, Deputy Director, at (916) 653-2090.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andre Boutros". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "B".

ANDRE BOUTROS

Executive Director

c: Commissioners, California Transportation Commission
Brian P. Kelly, Acting Secretary, Business, Transportation & Housing

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Will Kempton, Executive Director

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January 22, 2015

Malcolm Dougherty
Director
Department of Transportation
1120 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan

Dear Director Dougherty,

The Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan (ITSP) is an integral element of statewide transportation planning, intended to provide clear and concise policy guidance for the management of the state's transportation system. Recognizing the importance of the ITSP, the Legislature proposed and the Governor approved Senate Bill (SB) 486, which provides for an open and transparent process for the development and approval of the ITSP.

The passage of SB 486 has expanded the California Transportation Commission's (Commission) role in the review and approval of the ITSP. Specifically, SB 486 directs the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to submit the ITSP to the Commission for approval on or before June 30, 2015. At the December 2014 Commission meeting, your staff provided an overview of the workplan and schedule for the development and delivery of the ITSP.

To increase assurance that statewide goals and objectives are addressed in the updated ITSP, the Commission offers the following guidance and expectations:

- Interregional transportation needs must be clearly defined in the plan to provide the basis for recommendations provided in the ITSP.
- "Focus Routes" were developed in 1998 in response to SB 45. Since that time, legislation was enacted (AB 32, SB 375 and SB 391) requiring a new approach to assessing and addressing interregional travel. While previous iterations of the ITSP were highway centric;

the Commission expects that the next ITSP will evaluate the multi-modal transportation corridor network, including integration of high-speed rail, intercity rail and transit systems, and managed lane connectivity among regions.

- Forecasted population growth and development patterns should be considered in the preparation of the ITSP to ensure identified interregional priorities holistically and comprehensively move the state towards achievement of statewide transportation goals and objectives.
- The ITSP should be designed to support a balanced and sustainable interregional transportation system, through the alignment with the California Freight Mobility Plan, the California State Rail Plan, the State Highway Operation and Protection Program, and other statewide plans.
- The ITSP should prominently address interregional priorities for better managing the transportation system, addressing gap closures, operational improvements and freight routes.

The ITSP informs the development of the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP). Prior to approval of the final ITIP, the Commission must evaluate the extent to which the ITIP is consistent with Streets and Highways Code Section 167. Specifically, Streets and Highways Code Section 167 identifies: 1) operations, maintenance, and rehabilitation, 2) safety improvements, 3) capital improvements that expand capacity and/or reduce congestion, and 4) environmental enhancement and mitigation programs as the sequence of priorities needed to be considered in the approval of the ITIP. Therefore, it is critical that the ITSP provides a solid framework for determining interregional investment priorities that maximize the use of federal funds and aligns with statutorily defined priorities for interregional investments.

It is imperative that the ITSP supports a comprehensive and strategic approach to the identification of priority projects to further achievement of the goals and objectives set forth in the California Transportation Plan. As such, the Commission expects that the ITSP will be revised and submitted to the Commission for approval every five years to ensure ITIP related investment decisions are consistent with the dynamic nature of the transportation environment.

The Commission looks forward to working with you and your staff in the preparation and approval of the ITSP. If you have questions regarding the Commission's guidance and expectations please contact Will Kempton, Commission Executive Director, at 916-654-4245.

Sincerely,

Carl Guardino
Chair

c: Commissioners, California Transportation Commission
The Honorable Jim Beall, Senate Transportation Committee Chair
The Honorable Jim Frazier, Assembly Transportation Committee Chair
Secretary Brian Kelly, California State Transportation Agency