



BUTTE COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS NEWSLETTER

Fall 2015

BCAG & Caltrans District 3 wins award

Caltrans District 3, Butte County Association of Governments (BCAG) and our consultants Restoration Resources were awarded the "2015 Caltrans Excellence in Transportation Award" under the Stewardship of the Environment category.

Each year, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) highlights the best of its work and the work of its partners through the annual Caltrans Excellence in Transportation Awards Program. For the 2015 program, Caltrans received nearly 80 entries from within Caltrans, public agencies, private contractors and consultants across the state.

The Butte County Freshwater Marsh (Phase I) and Vernal Pool (Phase II) Mitigation Project was a joint effort by the BCAG, Caltrans District 3 and Restoration Resources to provide the required mitigation for impacts arising from the construction of the State Route 70/149/99/191 Highway Improvement Project. The two phases of this project led to the preservation of over 480 acres of wetland, woodland and grassland habitats, including the creation of 38 acres of freshwater marsh and nearly 30 acres of vernal pool habitats.

Under constant care and monitoring, these created and preserved habitats have developed into lush refuges for wildlife species in a landscape dominated by agricultural uses. These habitats are now protected under



One of the Vernal Pools Created as part of the State Route 70/149/99 Mitigation Requirements

perpetual conservation easements held by the Wildlife Heritage Foundation, a state and federally approved non-profit land trust. This ensures permanent protection of the wetland preserve, as well as providing high quality ecosystem-based mitigation for the Highway Improvement Project for State Routes 70, 149, 99 and 191 in Butte County.

As a testament to this, the created vernal pools have since been inhabited by the federally endangered fairy and tadpole shrimp and both phases of the mitigation project were accepted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 2013, fulfilling Caltrans' mitigation requirements.

The project was recognized as an exceptional example of an effective public/private/non-profit partnership. Working together, the team successfully designed, built and now permanently manages and protects a large-scale wetland preserve.

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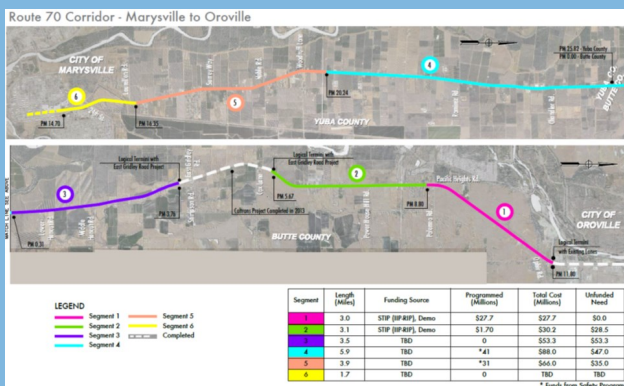


BCAG continues Project Development Work for State Route 70 Corridor

BCAG, Caltrans District 3 and Yuba County are continuing their ongoing efforts to implement improvements on the State Route 70 Corridor in Butte and Yuba Counties.

BCAG completed a Project Report in 2013 that identified the six remaining projects to widening State Route 70 to four-lanes between the cities of Oroville in Butte County, and the of Marysville in Yuba County (see Figure 1 below).

Currently, BCAG is developing the Project Approval and Environmental Documents (PA&ED) for Projects 1 & 2 as identified in Figure 1; Project



1 is fully funded through construction while Project 2 is funded through PA&ED.

In Yuba County, Caltrans District 3 is developing a State Highway Operation and

Protection Program (SHOPP) project just north of the City of Marysville to the Butte/Yuba County line. The SHOPP project is a \$91 million safety project that includes widening SR 70 to include a two-way center left-turn-lane at various locations and widening of the shoulders. The first phase for developing the SHOPP project will be to prepare the required environmental documents.

While the Yuba County SHOPP project is focused on the required safety improvements as specified under the SHOPP program, Caltrans District 3 and BCAG are looking at the viability to include additional funding that would allow the scope of environmental documents to include the ultimate widening for this segment of SR 70 corridor to five lanes. It is estimated that the additional funding to include the ultimate project widening would be approximately \$4 million.

BCAG has made a request to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) to program additional Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) funds to BCAG to allow for the additional environmental studies on the SR 70 SHOPP project, no action has yet been taken by the CTC. While it is not common to expand the scope of a SHOPP safety project to also include capacity increasing needs, it has been done before in other areas of the state.

BCAG will provide further updates on the planning and project development activities for SR 70 in future newsletters. For additional information concerning SR 70 please contact either Andy Newsum or Jon Clark at BCAG, 879-2468.

ATP Projects Approved for Butte County Region

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) approved \$9,953,000 million in Active Transportation Program (ATP) projects for Butte County jurisdictions at their October 22, 2015 meeting.

The ATP was established in 2013 under SB 99 and AB 101, which consolidated the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA), and State Safe Routes to School (SR2S) grant funding programs into a single program with a focus to make California a national leader in active transportation.

The purpose of ATP is to encourage increased use of active modes of transportation by achieving the following goals:

- Increase the proportion of trips accomplished by biking and walking,
- Increase safety and mobility for non-motorized users,
- Advance the active transportation efforts of regional agencies to achieve greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals,
- Enhance public health,
- Ensure that disadvantaged communities fully share in the benefits of the program, and

Provide a broad spectrum of projects to benefit many types of active transportation users.

Below is a list of projects awarded funding:

| Agency | Project | ATP Funds |
|---------------------|---|-----------|
| Paradise | Almond Street Multi-Modal | \$3,429 |
| County Public Works | South Oroville SRTS—Lincoln Blvd & Las Plumas Ave | \$1,516 |
| Paradise | Memorial Trailway Class 1 Enhancements | \$1,356 |
| Biggs | SRTS B St & 2nd St Sidewalk Improvement Project | \$809 |
| Chico | SR 99 Bikeway Phase 4 Improvements | \$800 |
| Paradise | Ponderosa Elementary SRTS Project | \$1,504 |
| Paradise | Downtown Paradise Equal Mobility Project | \$539 |

Board Approves 2015/16 BCAG Overall Work Program & Budget



The BCAG Board of Directors approved the 2015/16 Overall Work Program & Budget for the new fiscal year at their May 28, 2015 Board meeting.

BCAG is required to annually prepare an Overall Work Program (OWP) & Budget to identify all state, federal and regional

transportation

planning and programming activities that will be undertaken for the upcoming fiscal year.

BCAG's 2015/16 OWP includes twenty-six specific work elements that address state and federal planning requirements, regional transportation planning needs, and construction and project development activities required for capital projects. Each work element outlines an objective, tasks to be completed, personnel, and

provides a summary of revenues and expenditures for completing the work element.

BCAG's 2015/16 budget totals \$20,375,959 and includes funding from several federal, state and other discretionary funding programs.

Work program activities include state, federal and regional planning responsibilities, project development activities which include the required planning, design and environmental documents necessary to for construction of highway and other capital projects; transit planning and administration for operating

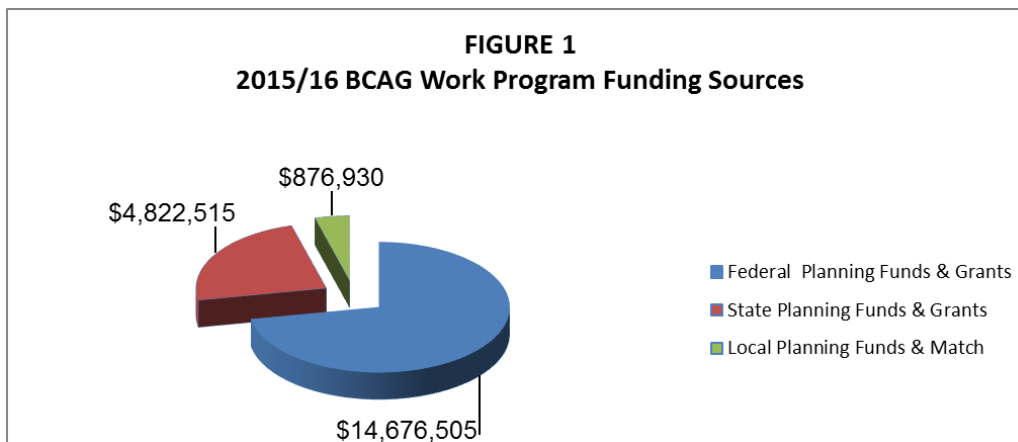


Figure 1 shows the sources of funds to BCAG's 2015/16 budget.

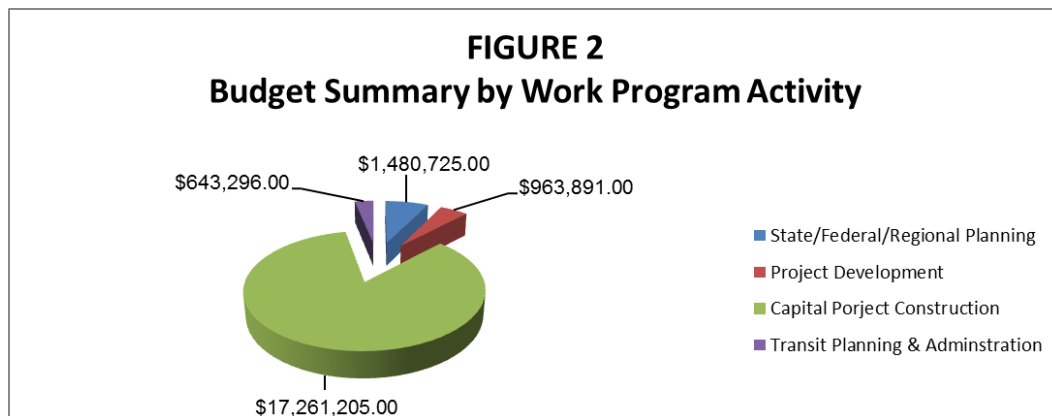


Figure 2 summaries how funding is budgeted within the 2015/16 budget by work program activity.

Butte Regional Transit the B-Line; and capital project construction, which includes construction of state highway projects and other capital facilities.

While many of BCAG's annual work program activities address required state and federal planning responsibilities, most of BCAG's annual work program activities directly support City and county planning and project development .(see *Work Element Benefits Table*).

BCAG's 2015/16 Overall Work Program and budget is available online at <http://www.bcac.org/documents/planning/OWP/2015-16%20FINAL%20OWP.pdf> . For additional information or questions on BCAG's Overall Work Program & Budget, contact Jon Clark, Executive Director at jonclark@bcag.org or call 530-879-2468.

Butte Regional Conservation Plan Final Public Draft

BCAG staff has completed a Final Public Draft of the Butte Regional Conservation Plan (BRCP) and has submitted the Draft Plan to the US Fish & Wildlife Service for noticing in the Federal Register. Once noticed in the federal register, the BRCP will be out for a ninety-day public review and comment period which is expected to begin in the fall of 2015.

The BRCP is a federal *Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)* and a state *Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP)* that is intended to replace the existing problematic federal and state permitting process, with a smarter, simpler more cost effective process managed locally.

BCAG has been preparing the BRCP on behalf of the cities of Biggs, Chico, Gridley, Oroville and the County of Butte for the past seven years. Other plan participants include Caltrans District 3, Richvale Irrigation District, Western Canal Water District, Butte Water District, and Biggs West-Gridley Water District.

BRCP Relationship to General Plans – for the County and participating cities, the BRCP will result in state and federal “take” permits for all activities and projects identified in the General Plans that have the potential to impact sensitive

species and habitat. In essence, the cities and county will already have endangered species compliance cleared for all conceivable General Plan projects before they move forward to construction. This will eliminate a significant hurdle to having these projects constructed. When such projects are planned and constricted in the future, they will be able to avoid the typically lengthy permitting process under federal and state endangered species laws that currently delay construction for months or years, which greatly increases the cost of all these projects.

The overarching purpose of the BRCP is to replace the existing “project-by-project” environmental permitting process for federal and state endangered and threatened species in Butte County, with a more certain, streamlined, and consistent process. This will allow for projects to go forward to construction with local approvals and little or no involvement of federal and state regulatory agencies. The BRCP will ensure that all impacts on protected species are mitigated and will also contribute to the recovery of some species and the conservation of the ecosystems on which they depend.



Butte Regional
CONSERVATION PLAN
BALANCING GROWTH AND CONSERVATION

Additional benefits of the BRCP are the preservation of open space and ongoing farming and ranching economies in the Plan Area that will maintain much of the rural character and natural beauty of our landscape.

The BRCP ninety-day public review period is scheduled to begin in the fall and conclude by the end of the calendar year. A response to comments collected from the public meetings will be prepared and included in the final EIS/ EIR.

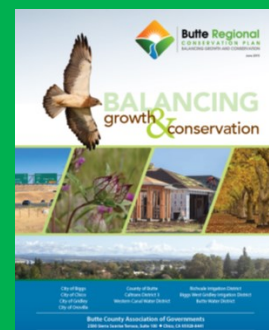
Review and consideration for approval by the cities, County and water districts is anticipated to occur in early 2016. If approved by the local jurisdictions, the BRCP would then need final approval by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries.

For more information concerning the BRCP, please contact Chis Devine, Planning Manager, at cdevine@bcag.org or call 530-879-2468.



BCAG has developed a “BRCP Benefits” brochure that identifies how the BRCP will greatly improve implementation of City and County General Plan land use activities. A copy of this brochure can be found at the following link - http://www.buttehcp.com/documents/Documents/Brochures/BRCP_City-County_Brochure060915.pdf

BCAG has also developed a “BRCP – Balancing Growth & Conservation” brochure that identifies the BRCP’s purpose, need and implementation strategy for streamlining state and federal species permitting. A copy of this brochure can be found at the following link - http://www.buttehcp.com/documents/Documents/Brochures/BRCP_Brochure09jun15.pdf



B-Line Fun Facts

- Transit Service was initially started in Butte County in 1982 by the Cities of Chico, Gridley, Oroville and the County of Butte.
- The individual city and county transit systems were consolidated in 2005 when Butte Regional Transit or the *B-Line* was established and began regional transit service



- B-Line operates 21 regional fixed routes serving the Cities of Chico, Oroville, Gridley, Biggs, the Town of Paradise and the County, providing 70,000 hours of annual fixed route service.
- B-Line operates paratransit

service in the cities of Chico, Oroville and Paradise and provides approximately 50,000 hours of service annually.

- B-Line operates a fleet of over 40 fixed route buses and 30 paratransit vans daily.
- B-Line's annual fixed route ridership is approximately 1.4 million trips per year, or an average daily ridership of approximately 3,000 riders per day.
- B-Line's paratransit service provides approximately 154,000 thousand trips per year, or an average daily ridership pf approximately 430 riders per day.
- B-Lines annual operating budget is approximately \$9.7 million
- B-Line has three over six hundred bus stop locations throughout the cities and county, and three transit centers – Chico, Oroville and Paradise
- A new \$30 million Butte Regional Transit Operations & Maintenance Facility is currently under construction and will provide over 41,000 square feet of new buildings for operations, maintenance, fueling and bus wash. The new facility is scheduled to be opened in Spring 2016.



Unmet Transit Needs Meeting

BCAG is requesting comments from the public on unmet transit needs. Members of the public are invited to submit comments by mail, email, phone, fax, internet or in person at one of the following meetings. All testimony received is given equal consideration.

Oroville: Tuesday, December 1, 2015, 11:30am-12:30pm ~ City of Oroville Council Chambers, 1735 Montgomery St

Paradise: Tuesday, December 1, 2015, 2:00pm-3:00pm ~ Paradise Town Hall, 5555 Skyway

Gridley: Wednesday, December 2, 2015, 1:00pm-2:00pm ~ City of Gridley Council Chambers, 685 Kentucky Street

Chico: Monday, December 7, 2015, 1:00pm-2:00pm ~ Butte County Library-Chico Branch, 1108 Sherman Ave

Butte County: Thursday, December 10, 2015, 9:00am~Public Hearing at BCAG Board Meeting ~ City of Chico Council Chambers, 411 Main Street

If you have comments and are unable to attend, please contact BCAG:

Mail: Butte County Association of Governments, 2580 Sierra Sunrise Terrace Suite 100, Chico, California 95928

Email: jpeplow@bcag.org

Phone: (530) 879-2468

Fax: (530) 891-2979