

ACTION ELEMENT – CONCLUSIONS

The Action Element identifies all transportation projects within the financial constraint requirements within the horizon of the RTP. This Action Element implements the Policy Element with the anticipated financial resources identified in the Financial Element and conform to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality. In addition, this RTP attempts to identify which projects can't be completed due to a lack of funding for transportation.

LINKAGES

This portion of the Action Element identifies (links) the specific projects currently funded in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) and Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP). The RTP is used as the foundation for the programming of the FTIP and RTIP. The RTIP and the FTIP identify the majority of the transportation projects programmed or planned through the state and federal process. The projects contained in this section are detailed enough in order to prepare an appropriate regional emissions analysis required to evaluate and demonstrate air quality conformity. In addition, during the 2004/2005 fiscal year, BCAG prepared a Regional ITS Architecture in compliance with the National Architecture. Project or project components that are later defined as a result of the Regional Architecture will be amended into the RTP to ensure consistency and to maintain a linkage with the RTIP and FTIP.

Where state highway projects are identified, BCAG consulted Caltrans District 3 to ensure consistency and linkage between the RTP, RTIP and Caltrans' ITIP and SHOPP. This ensures consistency as well with the objectives contained in the State California Transportation Plan prepared by Caltrans. In addition, BCAG referred to the Transportation Concept Reports (TCRs) for the state highways in Butte County. Caltrans TCR website can be found at the following link:
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist3/departments/planning/systemplanning.htm>

ACTION ELEMENT OVERVIEW

Long Range Plan

BCAG's long-range vision is to address the existing safety and operational concerns on the state highway system. This vision includes the incremental development of improving the SR 70 Corridor in the form of passing lanes in Butte County. BCAG and Caltrans District 3, as funding partners, will continue to focus on developing the SR 70 Corridor. In addition, BCAG will also focus on developing the SR 99 Corridor through the urbanized area of Chico. As a result of SB 45, it is BCAG's responsibility to address the state highway "regional" system in Butte County. The following section identifies projects that are currently underway in the STIP. BCAG also recognizes the significance in needed transit system planning and operation improvements. During the 2008/09

fiscal year, BCAG hopes to embark on a market based transit plan (contingent on state grant funding being approved) to evaluate the fixed route and paratransit systems for long-term service benefits.

Local roadway needs have also been included and are identified. Because this Plan is financially constrained, those projects that did not fall within the anticipated funding projections have been identified as “un-funded needs” in the Financial Element.

The **Transit** component of the Plan identifies in detail the current Butte Regional Transit system as well as discussion of planned improvements. Since the last RTP was prepared, BCAG has consolidated the previous fragmented transit systems in Butte County.

The **Aviation** component of the Plan is a direct product of a project initiated by Caltrans Division of Aeronautics. The plan is a joint effort to prepare Butte County’s portion of the Interregional California Aviation System Plan (ICASP).

Butte County’s **rail system and goods movement** are also included with discussion of previously studied systems.

A detailed discussion of **non-motorized travel options** is also included with appropriate plans for needed improvements.

Butte County is landlocked in that there are **no navigable waters**. As such, this RTP does not address nor include maritime transportation.

During the 2004/2005 fiscal year, BCAG received a grant from Caltrans to assist in the development of an **ITS plan** for the three counties including Butte, Glenn and Colusa. This plan has been completed and is still current.

Previous Plan Accomplishments

As part of the 2004 RTP, BCAG reported the successful programming of nearly \$35 million in STIP funds for local and state highway projects since 1998. Since the 2004 RTP, BCAG programmed \$39 million as part of the 2006 STIP Augmentation Cycle and the infusion of Proposition 1B funds for transportation, and \$12 million in the 2008 STIP. BCAG has been successful as the lead agency for several state highway projects in Butte County, as well as a forest highway project 9.8 miles in length. In addition, since the 2004 RTP, the SR 149 project represents Butte County’s largest infrastructure project in over 30 years at over \$130 million. Construction will be completed in 2009.

Besides typical roadway accomplishments, BCAG successfully consolidated the transit systems in Butte County. The new system is now Butte Regional Transit or “B-Line”. This was a large undertaking for a relatively small organization. During the 2007/08 fiscal year, BCAG equipped the B-Line system with an automated farebox system to encourage ridership, develop accurate reports, and simplify the fare collection process.

During the 2008/09 fiscal year, BCAG plans to equip the paratransit fleet with the same system and add an AVL/GPS component for increased flexibility and planning tools to develop a better system, and thus increase ridership.

BCAG was the lead agency for developing the SR 149 freshwater marsh mitigation and vernal pool creation sites, which has received achievement recognition. In addition, during the 2006/07 FY, BCAG embarked on the regional blueprint planning effort previously discussed in Chapter 3.

The Interregional California Aviation System Plan (for Butte County) lays out Butte County's airports and planned improvements. An important accomplishment, however, is the continued interagency communication to efficiently coordinate through the planning and programming process.

Implementation

A function of the RTP is to lay out the framework for developing the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) for the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) cycle and the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP). This will facilitate discussions and future partnerships in programming jointly funded projects with Caltrans.

The projects identified for STIP and FTIP programming are consistent with the financial projections identified in the Financial Element of the RTP and with the adopted fund estimate by the California Transportation Commission for the STIP.

Air Quality

The proposed actions identified in the RTP conform to the applicable air quality requirements for Butte County. The regional emissions analysis prepared demonstrates that the 2008 RTP and 2009 FTIP are within the allowable budget. More on air quality and Butte County's designations is discussed as part of the regional emissions analysis.

Land Use

All projects in the Butte County RTP are derived from or are consistent with the goals, policies and objectives of each of the respective jurisdictions' general plans. As such, projects may have already been included as part of the respective agency's environmental documentation. Furthermore, as part of the project development process, each project is required to undergo its own environmental clearance. Throughout the environmental process, each project must stand on its own and satisfy applicable requirements for NEPA and/or CEQA, as well as be consistent with adjacent and or overall environmental goals.

BCAG's blueprint planning efforts previously discussed provide the biological data to city and county general plan updates to ensure that this information is considered as

part of the general plan update process. These efforts are also ensuring that the various general plan updates are consistent with one another and integrated with the 2008 RTP, 2008 Regional Housing Needs Plan, and the development of the Butte Regional Conservation Plan. These planning efforts are being coordinated with numerous stakeholder groups throughout the region through an open and transparent public process.

Regarding land use around the airports in Butte County, the Butte County Development Services Department is responsible for preparing the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. The Aviation component of the RTP will address this subject in more detail.

Environmental Issues

BCAG has prepared an environmental impact report for the 2008 RTP. In addition, environmental review and mitigation for each project will be studied when a project is programmed. The road projects proposed in the RTP are located on existing facilities. As such, the environmental impacts are expected to be minimized.

Corridor Preservation

SR 70 north of its junction with SR 149 has been designated as a scenic highway. This official designation ensures additional compliance for development along the corridor. SR 70 is a gateway to the Sierras with spectacular natural beauty and relatively low traffic volumes.

New Technologies

As part of the 2004/05 fiscal year, BCAG was the lead agency in developing a multi-county ITS Strategic Deployment Plan. The ITS plan included Butte, Glenn and Colusa counties. BCAG promotes the use of ITS to reduce congestion, improve safety, and enhance mode choice as practical solutions.

As part of previous FTIP programming cycles, BCAG programmed ITS “types” of project utilizing Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds for a transit bus card reader system. As part of the 2009 FTIP, BCAG is planning to equip the rest of the transit fleet with smart card technology as well as AVL/GPS. Where feasible and practical, the local jurisdictions in Butte County are receptive to incorporating ITS into future projects. Again, with gas prices exceeding four dollars per gallon in Butte County, the public has been more receptive to utilizing alternative modes of transportation including bicycling and transit.

To make planning and programming material instantly available, BCAG maintains three websites: www.bcag.org, BlineTransit.com, and ButteHCP.com. In the past, BCAG assisted in the original development of an additional website in cooperation with the local Chico Downtown Business Association called, ChicoCommute.com. These websites have proven very useful in making information available to the public and other

interested parties. All significant work products are posted as they are developed to give the public the opportunity to be engaged in the regional transportation planning process. Information available includes current BCAG plans, Overall Work Program and Budget, RTP and FTIP documents and amendments, newsletters, draft material for public review, transit schedules and maps, census demographics, board agendas and minutes, and a general calendar of events.

Evaluation

As part of the comprehensive regional traffic model update, BCAG incorporated performance measures to provide tools to evaluate the RTP. In addition, as part of the development of the EIR for the RTP, BCAG looked at four alternatives.

A key point at which the RTP is evaluated is when the RTIP and FTIP are prepared, ensuring the projects are consistent with each other as well as the local general plans.