

# Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS  
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Date: January 19-20, 2011

Reference No.: 3.8

From: NORMA ORTEGA  
Chief Financial Officer

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Subject: **CALIFORNIA STATE RAIL PLAN UPDATE**

## **SUMMARY:**

This information item provides an update of the status of the California State Rail Plan (Rail Plan) that the California Department of Transportation (Department) is required to prepare pursuant to Government Code Section 14036. The California Transportation Commission (Commission) reviews and approves this Plan.

The Passenger Rail Improvement and Investment Act of 2008 (PRIIA) requires comprehensive rail plans in order for States to be eligible for new federal rail capital grants. Under PRIIA the Department has been designated to prepare the State Rail Plan. The California High-Speed Rail Authority supports the Department as the lead in the preparation of the State Rail Plan. The Department delayed the preparation of the state-mandated 2009-10 to 2019-20 Rail Plan pending new federal guidelines. The FRA provided preliminary guidance for the development of State Rail Plans in March 2010.

The Department applied for and received \$1.5 million in federal High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Program funding for the preparation of the new State Rail Plan. This Plan will be the first planning document that fully integrates the planned California high-speed rail system with the existing and proposed conventional rail (intercity and commuter) system and freight rail system. (Urban rail uses a different set of tracks, therefore is not included in the evaluation of the intercity and commuter passenger rail system.) The Department prepared a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) and Statement of Work (SOW) that is being circulated for review to Department divisions, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA), the Capital Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA), FRA, and Commission staff. The Department anticipates a consultant contract by June 2011 and the Plan to be completed by June 2013.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### **California State Rail Plan Requirements:**

The Department is required, under Section 14036 of the Government Code, to prepare a ten-year State Rail Plan which is updated biennially. The Plan is due to the Legislature and Governor by March 31 of every even numbered year. A draft Plan is required to be presented to the Commission for advice and consent in October of the preceding odd-numbered year. The last Plan approved by the Governor was the 2007-08 to 2017-18 Rail Plan published in March 2008. The 2009-10 to 2019-20 Rail Plan was delayed pending the publication of new FRA guidelines that were promised in spring 2010. The Department received legislative approval to delay the submission of the 2009-10 to 2019-20 Rail Plan until the guidelines have been received.

Federal Requirements for State Rail Plans:

The federal PRIIA established new requirements for State Rail Plans. Conformance with these rail plan requirements will be necessary for the Department and the CHSRA to receive capital funds under the new HSIPR grant program established under PRIIA. For the first two rounds of HSIPR funding, the FRA waived the State Rail Plan requirements since the guidelines were not yet public.

The FRA released a Preliminary State Rail Plan outline (Preliminary Outline) in March 2010 and advised that the final State Rail Plan guidelines would be included in the National Rail Plan to be released in September 2010. However, the September National Rail Plan Progress Report did not contain the anticipated final guidance on rail plans. The FRA subsequently advised States that the Preliminary Outline should be used as the guide for State Rail Plans.

The new Federal Rail Plan requirements are much more extensive than the existing state requirements. This Plan will be the first planning document that fully integrates the planned California high-speed rail system with the existing and proposed conventional rail system (intercity and passenger rail) and the freight rail system. Both five and 20 year capital project plans are required for the rail system. Rail system planning is required to be integrated into the entire transportation system. At the time the last State Rail Plan was adopted (covering the period of 2007-08 to 2017-18) the voters had not yet approved Proposition 1A; which was approved in November 2008. The Plan will serve as a roadmap for federal and state rail investments within the State for high-speed, intercity, commuter, and freight rail projects. The vision, priorities and implementation strategies in the Plan will support the State's goal of an integrated, multimodal transportation system. This Plan will establish a framework for the delivery of cost-effective rail services in California that promote climate stabilization, job access, environmental improvements, and improved mobility.

The new Plan will also complement the California Interregional Blueprint (CIB), currently under development by the Department. The CIB is a comprehensive, multimodal planning and mapping tool that will be the foundation for the 2040 California Transportation Plan (CTP 2040), called for by SB 391 (Chapter 585, Statutes of 2009). The CIB will articulate the State's vision for an integrated multimodal interregional transportation system complementing regional transportation plans and land use visions.

Under SB 391, CTP 2040 is required to address how the state will achieve maximum feasible emissions reduction in order to attain a statewide reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. One of the key strategies is the expansion of public transit, commuter rail, and intercity rail. The Plan will provide an assessment of green house gas emissions for the existing and future system.

Department's Plan for Next State Rail Plan:

The Division of Rail (Division) applied for a federal HSIPR planning grant in May 2010 and in December 2010 received notice of approval of a \$2 million grant (\$1.5 million federal funds and \$500,000 state match) from the FRA to produce the California State Rail Plan.

The Division has developed a draft Statement of Work (SOW) and Request for Proposals (RFP) for a consultant to prepare the Plan. The draft SOW provides that all current State Rail Plan requirements contained in Government Code Section 14036 and the federal requirements in PRIIA must also be addressed in the new Plan. In December 2010, the draft SOW was distributed for review and comment to the FRA, Commission staff, the CHSRA, the CCJPA and a number of Divisions within the Department.

The Department anticipates a consultant contract will be awarded by June 2011 and that the Plan would be completed by June 2013. The Division is collaborating with other Divisions in the Department to ensure that the products of the Plan, for example the GIS layers, will have the highest utility for other modal planning documents the Department produces, such as the CIB. In addition, to ensure that the Plan and the CIB have consistent planning years, the five and 20 year planning horizons required in the State Rail Plan will correspond to the 2020 and 2035 planning years in the CIB. The Plan will provide the CIB with the attributes of the planned rail system for 2020 and 2035 and public participation for the Plan and the CIB will be coordinated. To satisfy state requirements, a ten-year planning period (2025) will also be used.

The Department will continue to keep the Commission apprised of the progress of the Plan.