Supplement to the 1999 Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines

December 2003

California Transportation Commission

Table of Contents

A. Purpose of this Supplement……..……..……..2

B. 2003 RTP Evaluation Report …..……..……..……..…….……2

C. 1999 RTP Guidelines…….……..……6

D. RTP Guidelines Supplement Overview…….…….……6

D-1. Revised Checklist of Items Required to be in the RTP…….……..8
D-2. Interagency Coordination…….…….……...9
D-3. Tribal Government Issues…….……..…...11
D-4. Public Involvement…….…….…..…13
D-5. Private Sector Involvement…….…….……...15
D-6. RTP Environmental Documents…….……17
D-7. Transportation Control Measures...……..20
D-8. Project Intent Statements…….……...22
D-9. List of Financially Un-Constrained Projects ……..……..25

E. Conclusion…….27

APPENDICES

1. Checklist to be completed by MPO/RTPA prior to submitting the draft RTP to the California Department of Transportation…… 29

2. Listing of phone numbers and websites of California Department of Transportation Headquarters and District staff……33

Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines Supplement

(Adopted by the California Transportation Commission _____, 2003)

A. Purpose of this Supplement

Govt. Code §65080(3)(d) specifies how often RTPs are to be updated.

This Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Supplement was prepared by the California Department of Transportation (Department) on behalf of the California Transportation Commission (Commission). The supplement is intended to provide additional guidance to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) for the preparation of their upcoming cycle of 2004/2005 RTPs. California Government Code §65080(3)(d) requires MPOs to submit an adopted RTP to the Commission and the Department every three years. RTPAs must submit an adopted plan every four years. Current Federal regulations require MPOs in Federal nonattainment and maintenance areas to update their RTPs every three years.

This supplement was prepared based on the 2003 RTP Evaluation Report completed for the Commission. One of the 19 recommendations listed in the Evaluation Report specified the preparation of a supplement to the 1999 RTP Guidelines. Copies of this report are available from the Department's Office of Regional and Interagency Planning at (916) 654-8175.

This Supplement does not replace the 1999 RTP Guidelines, it is intended to provide further clarification on issues identified in the RTP Evaluation Report. The evaluation report identified several primary areas where many of the 2001 or 2002 RTPs either did not address, or document the required items as specified in the 1999 RTP Guidelines.

B. 2003 RTP Evaluation Report

Section 14032 of the California Government Code requires the Department to provide a review and evaluation of the RTPs (also known as "Plans" within this document) to the Commission. The most recently prepared RTP Evaluation Report was completed in April 2003 and provided an overview of the last cycle of RTPs adopted in 2001 and 2002.

The Evaluation Report addressed two primary issues:

The RTP Evaluation Report addressed two primary areas.

- Overall, how well did the MPOs/RTPAs address the items identified in the 1999 RTP Guidelines during the preparation of their last RTP? The RTPs were evaluated collectively in the report. Individual RTPs were not identified as inadequate or not fulfilling the requirements as presented in the RTP Guidelines.

- What recommendations should the Commission address to improve the current RTP process?

During preparation of the report, each RTP was evaluated using Appendix A from the 1999 RTP Guidelines. This appendix is commonly referred to as the "RTP Checklist". The evaluation report provided an item-by-item discussion of how the RTPs addressed the checklist.

RTP Guidelines checklist identifies the required items for each RTP.

Not one RTP from the last cycle addressed every item identified in the RTP checklist. For example, most of the plans omitted the analysis of land use and transportation related to projected housing, employment and the environment. During the development of the RTP, MPOs/RTPAs should review other planning documents such as general plans, air quality plans, etc. Some MPOs/RTPAs developed their own RTP format, thus making it difficult to conduct an analysis of the RTPs in relation to other plans.

As a result of reviewing the last cycle of RTPs and through a series of discussions with staff both inside and out of the Department, the 2003 RTP Evaluation Report suggests the following 19 recommendations to be considered by the Commission. The Commission's Planning Committee reviewed and approved these recommendations at the June 2003 Planning Committee meeting, following a review period by each of the MPOs/RTPAs.

Short-term recommendations

Recommendations 1 through 11 are considered for implementation within the 2004/2005 RTP cycle. This means they are addressed within the RTP Supplement and should be considered by the MPOs/RTPAs in their upcoming RTP cycle. The purpose of this Supplement is to provide additional information on these 11 recommendations that is not contained in the 1999 RTP Guidelines.

Long-term recommendations

Recommendations 12 through 19 will to take longer to implement and thus are not discussed in this Supplement. These longer-term recommendations are planned for the next revision of the RTP Guidelines, scheduled to begin in mid-2004.

Short-Term Recommendations to be Addressed in the 2004/05 RTP Cycle

1. ***Prepare a supplement to the RTP Guidelines*** *– California Government Code §65080(3)(d) requires that the MPOs submit an adopted RTP to the Commission and Department. The next Plans are due by September 1, 2004. RTPAs must submit their RTP by September 1, 2005. This supplement would address the issues listed below and would be provided to the MPOs by December 2003.*

2. ***Lack of Uniformity in RTP Format*** *– The format and content of the RTPs varies widely. Some MPOs/RTPAs developed their RTP to fit their own regional needs. This makes it difficult to obtain a statewide perspective. An expanded RTP checklist should be included with the supplement identifying the Federal and State required items in the RTP. Each MPO/RTPA is to specify where these required items are located within their RTP.*

3. ***Interagency Coordination*** *– Overall, communication and coordination between neighboring MPOs/RTPAs could be improved. Many regional agencies cease any transportation planning efforts at their jurisdictional boundaries. Efforts should be made by the CTC and the Department to strengthen communication and coordination between these agencies and geographic neighbors. These efforts and accomplishments should be documented and evaluated in the RTP.*

4. ***Delay in Preparation and Adoption of RTPs*** *– A number of the RTPs from the last cycle were not adopted and submitted to the Commission by the statutory deadline of September 1, 2001. The Commission should notify these agencies their Regional Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIPs) may not be approved if the RTPs are not current.*

5. ***Communication/Coordination with Native American Tribal Governments*** *– Although many of the RTPs have undertaken efforts to communicate with the tribal governments located within their region, further efforts should be made to strengthen this process. These efforts should be documented and evaluated in the RTP.*

6. ***Public Involvement in the RTP Process*** *– Engaging the public in the RTP process has been a challenge for many MPOs and RTPAs. The Commission and the Department should assist the MPOs/RTPAs by providing examples of success efforts by other agencies. Public involvement activities should be documented and evaluated in the RTP.*

7. ***Private Sector Involvement in the RTP Process*** *– Some MPOs and RTPAs could improve their efforts by bringing the goods movement and business industry into the long-term transportation planning process. The Commission and the Department should invite these groups to be involved in the RTP development process. These efforts should be documented and evaluated in the RTP.*

8. ***RTP Environmental Document*** *– The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is an important component of the RTP. The RTP EIR describes the projected cumulative environmental impacts of the transportation projects identified in the RTP and efforts to mitigate those impacts. The supplement and future updates of the RTP Guidelines should provide additional direction concerning the type of information these EIRs should include.*

9. ***Identification of Transportation Control Measures (TCMs)*** *– Federal air quality regulations require TCMs be identified in Federal nonattainment and maintenance areas. These TCM's should be listed in the RTP or lack of applicability should also be documented. Many RTPs did not identify TCMs. The supplement and an update of the RTP Guidelines should contain a requirement that RTPs in Federal air quality nonattainment, or maintenance with approved State Implementation Plans (SIPs) should specifically identify their TCM's.*

10. ***Project Intent Statements (Purpose and Need) in the RTP*** *– Project Intent Statements are critical to successful project development in providing justification for project funding. The Commission should update the RTP Guidelines to provide more emphasis on the development of plan level Project Intent Statements. The development of a standard format for these statements should also be addressed.*

11. ***Include Unconstrained Transportation Needs in the RTP*** *– RTPs are required to identify projects that are financially constrained. However, recent legislation (AB 631 and ACR 32) required the Commission to prepare an assessment of the unmet transportation needs in California. An update of the RTP Guidelines should require the MPOs/RTPAs provide a separate list of un-funded transportation projects in the RTP that addresses identified unmet transportation needs.*

Long-Term Recommendations to be Addressed After the 2004/05 RTP Cycle

12. ***Update the RTP Guidelines*** *– The Commission adopted the current RTP Guidelines in December 1999. The document should be updated to include changes in legislation and recent Commission requirements.*

13. ***Outdated Planning Documents*** *– RTPs are just one of the planning documents produced by local and regional agencies impacting transportation. Other documents include Circulation and Housing Elements of general plans, Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans and AQMPs. For example, 42 percent of all general plans in California are more than 10 years old. The Commission, Department and other State agencies such as the Office of Planning and Research (OPR), Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and the air quality regulatory agencies should address how these plans relate to each other and how often they should be updated.*

14. ***Statewide Financial Information Coordination*** *– Presently, each MPO and RTPA is required to prepare its own individual estimate of Federal, State and local transportation funds available during the 20-year life of the RTP. The Commission and Department should develop a financial forecasting framework to be adopted by the Commission that will assist the MPOs/RTPAs in their RTP funding forecasts.*

15. ***Transportation Security and Safety*** *– California should be prepared to address Federal safety and security issues as they may impact the transportation planning process. The Commission, MPOs/RTPAs and the Department should continue to monitor Federal transportation reauthorization, anticipate future funding directed for safety and security, and ensure these are included in future RTP updates.*

16. ***Varying Timeframes of Various Planning Documents*** *– Planning documents, such as RTPs, General Plans and SIPs are often prepared during different times and with different timeframes. This makes it difficult for MPOs/RTPAs to prepare an RTP that includes information from these various sources that were completed on different dates. The Commission, Department along with other State agencies such as the OPR, HCD and air quality regulatory agencies should begin discussions on how these planning document timeframes could be more in line with one another.*

17. ***Performance Measurement*** *– The 1999 RTP Guidelines stated each RTP should identify a set of transportation performance measures reflecting the RTPs goals and objectives. Some RTPs did not identify any performance measurements. The updated RTP Guidelines should provide more specific direction on developing transportation performance measures.*

18. ***Environmental Stewardship*** *– The goal of Environmental Stewardship is to identify environmental concerns early in the project planning/development process in order to reduce potential delays. The Commission, MPOs/RTPAs and the Department should determine how this issue should be addressed in the updated RTP Guidelines.*

19. ***Update California Statutes Relating to the RTP Process*** *– The Commission and the Department should conduct a review of current statutes relating to RTPs to determine if any are out-of-date, or require clarification. California RTP statutes should also conform to Federal requirements relating to RTPs.*

C. 1999 RTP Guidelines

The Commission adopted the first RTP Guidelines in May 1978, and since then there have been eight subsequent updates. The latest was adopted by the CTC in December 1999.

This RTP Supplement does not replace the 1999 RTP Guidelines. The RTP Guidelines remain the primary source of information and should be consulted by MPOs/RTPAs during the preparation of the 2004/05 RTPs. The Supplement is intended to point out deficiencies that were noted in many of the 2001 and 2002 RTPs. These RTPs were evaluated by the Department during the preparation of the 2003 RTP Evaluation Report.

This Supplement does not replace the 1999 RTP Guidelines.

The Commission is responsible for issuing RTP Guidelines (Government Code §14522) to assist the regional agencies in the development of their transportation plans, and to ensure that all participants, staff and decision makers are aware of the legal requirements for receiving State and Federal funding. The Guidelines summarize planning legislation and specify required elements that serve as a framework for the RTP.

RTP Guidelines Government Code §14522.

The purpose of the 1999 RTP Guidelines is to:

- Promote an integrated, statewide, multi-modal, regional transportation planning process.
- Set forth a uniform transportation-planning framework throughout California.
- Promote a transportation planning process that facilitates decision-making.
- Promote a continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process that facilitates the rapid and efficient development and implementation of projects while maintaining California's commitment to public health and environmental quality.
- Promote a planning process that considers the views of all stakeholders in the decision-making process.

The 1999 RTP Guidelines contain the Federal and State RTP requirements.

The Guidelines are intended to provide each MPO/RTPA with Federal and State planning requirements relating to development of the RTP. Government Code §65080 requires each RTP to have three components: *Policy Element, Action Element* and a *Financial Element.*

D. RTP Guidelines Supplement Overview

The following items located on pages 8 to 24, were identified in the 2003 RTP Evaluation Report as areas where the majority of adopted RTPs from the 2001-02 cycle should have addressed. It is strongly recommended each MPO/RTPA review these nine items to ensure they are contained in their 2004-05 RTPs.

Items D-1 through D-9 are presented in the in the following format:

- **Overview** – Provides a general discussion of the specific topic.
- **Legislative Requirement** – Discusses the Federal and State legislative/regulatory background.
- **Department Findings Based on the Evaluation of the RTPs** – This section provides a brief discussion of the findings from the Commission's 2003 RTP Evaluation Report. The nine items presented in this Supplement were found deficient in the 2001-02 cycle of RTPs.
- **Recommended Action** – Suggested action the MPO/RTPA should take to comply with this item.
- **Best Practices** – Provides several "best practices" examples from the 2001-02 RTPs or suggestions where pertinent information can be found.

D-1. Revised Checklist of Items Required to be in the RTP

Overview

A checklist of the elements to be included in all RTPs is identified as Appendix A in the 1999 RTP Guidelines. The intent of the checklist was to establish a minimum standard in the development of the RTPs. Along with the checklist, Appendix A includes a summary of the statutory requirements and recommendations in the guidelines that have been established by State and Federal legislation and the Commission.

The RTP Checklist is located in Appendix A of the RTP Guidelines.

The checklist has been revised in this supplement (located in Appendix One, Page 28). The format is the same, however, MPOs/RTPAs should now include the page numbers indicating where the checklist items are addressed in the RTP.

Legislative Requirement

The checklist is included in the RTP Guidelines, which were adopted by the Commission in 1999.

Department Findings Based on the Evaluation of the RTPs

The 2003 RTP Evaluation Report stated that the basic format of the 2001 and 2002 RTPs was not consistent. The lack of consistency makes it difficult to obtain a statewide perspective when conducting interregional or statewide analysis of the RTPs.

Recommended Action

The revised RTP checklist is located in Appendix One of this Supplement. The checklist should be submitted to the Department along with the draft RTP. The checklist will be available electronically, and should be completed electronically as well.

The revised checklist is in Appendix One of this supplement.

D-2. Interagency Coordination

Overview

Coordination is vital to ensure a seamless transportation system throughout the State. Each MPO/RTPA should coordinate its regional transportation planning activities with all appropriate transportation agencies: Federal, State and local agencies, environmental resource agencies, Air Quality Management Districts, Tribal Governments and adjoining MPOs/RTPAs. This effort includes the coordination of planning activities for highways, airports, seaports, rail and public transit facilities whose impact crosses MPO/RTPA jurisdictional boundaries.

Coordination of transportation planning activities between neighboring MPOs/RTPAs and the Department is important.

Interagency Coordination also involves coordination of regional agencies beyond the region's border. The RTP should reflect coordination as well as document any transportation/RTP planning efforts with neighboring MPOs/RTPAs and other agencies/Tribal Governments.

Legislative Requirement

Federal regulations require each RTP to have a comprehensive coordination and consultation process. Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §450.316(a)(13) requires the RTP to reflect consultation with resource and permit agencies to ensure early coordination with environmental resource protection and management plans. Title 23 USC §134(g)(3) and Title 40, CFR §93.105(b) reflect specific consultation activities with air agencies concerning the development of the plan.

California Government Code §65080(a) states that each transportation planning agency shall consider and incorporate, as appropriate, the transportation plans of cities, counties, districts, private organizations, and State and Federal agencies.

Government Code §65081.3(a) states that as part of its adoption of the regional transportation plan, the designated County Transportation Commission, RTPA, or the Metropolitan Transportation Commission may designate special corridors, which may include, but are not limited to, adopted state highway routes, in consultation with the Department of Transportation, cities, counties, and transit operators.

Department Finding Based on the Evaluation of the RTPs

Many of the 2001 and 2002 RTPs did not identify coordination or communication efforts with neighboring MPOs, RTPAs, Tribal Governments or other agencies that may have an impact on the regional transportation planning process in their area. Department staff believes that some Interagency Coordination takes place but was not identified as an activity within the RTPs. However, because the plans are silent with respect to the coordination process there is concern as to the validity of a truly "regional" document.

Since the RTP is the basis for the programming of projects, it must be able to adequately support the justification and expenditures of major resources. The lack of consultation with other agencies also responsible for projects of regional significance (local entities responsible for land use planning, economic development agencies, and air quality agencies) reflects a wide gap in the regional transportation planning process that has the potential to adversely impact the programming of projects.

Recommended Action

The development of the RTP should include a comprehensive Interagency Coordination process. Planning of routes and other transportation facilities that may have an impact on neighboring regions should be discussed with the regional representatives. The process should be clearly identified in the RTP and reflected in the various components of the plan. The process may be identified as a chart, flow diagram or narrative. Specific agencies involved in coordination should be identified as well as major decisions that resulted from this effort. The MPO/RTPA should also discuss the possible programming of future projects early in the planning process with the Department to avoid any potential conflicts.

The MPO/RTPA should coordinate their planning efforts with neighboring agencies and the Department

Best Practices

The 2001 Butte County Association of Governments (BCAG) RTP addressed how state, Native American Tribal Governments and Federal agencies were included in the BCAG planning process. BCAG's 2001 RTP is available at:

www.bcag.org/2001_rtp_update.htm

The 2001 RTP prepared by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission also provides another example of interagency coordination. The RTP is available at:

www.sccrtc.org

D-3. Tribal Government Issues

Overview

Federal regulations require MPOs/RTPAs to consult with Tribal Governments within their jurisdictional planning areas

MPOs/RTPAs should consult with all federally recognized Native American Tribal Governments located within their region during the RTP development process. In addition to including Native Americans in the public participation process, MPOs/RTPAs should involve Tribal Governments in the planning and programming issues that may have an impact on tribal communities. Establishing and maintaining government-to-government relations with Federally recognized Tribal Governments through consultation is separate from, and precedes the public participation process.

Legislative Requirement

The purpose of U.S. Department of Transportation Order 5301.1 is to ensure that programs, policies and procedures administered by the U.S. DOT are responsive to the needs and concerns of Native Americans. This Order provides a very thorough overview of the various Federal regulations and Executive Orders on this subject. This Order is available at:

http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/guidebook/vol2/5301.1.pdf

Title 23 CFR Part 450, Subparts B and C – Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Planning states that affected Tribal Governments shall be involved appropriately in the development of transportation plans and programs.

Department Findings Based on the Evaluation of the RTPs

Significant progress has been made to improve the government-to-government relations between Federally Recognized Tribal Governments and MPOs/RTPAs over the past few years. Quite often, coordination and consultation with Tribal Governments was described in the public participation discussion of the RTPs. Based upon the findings from the 2003 RTP Evaluation Report, many of the 2001/2002 RTPs should have documented their consultation with Tribal Governments separately from the public participation discussion. This documentation should not be included in the discussions of the public participation process within the Plan.

Recommended Actions

The MPO/RTPA should document in the RTP efforts to communicate transportation plans with Tribal Governments

The MPO or RTPA should include a discussion of consultation, coordination and communication with federally recognized Tribal Governments when the tribes are located within the boundary of an MPO/RTPA. The MPO/RTPA should develop a government-to-government relationship with each of these tribes. This refers to the protocol for communicating between the MPOs/RTPAs and the tribal governments as a sovereign nation. This consultation process should be documented in the RTP. The initial point of contact for Tribal Governments should be the Chairperson for the tribe. This process could take considerable effort on the part of the MPOs/RTPAs and Tribal Governments to establish.

Over the past few years, several MPOs/RTPAs in California have not been very successful in soliciting a positive response from some of the Tribal Governments. Should this occur, the MPO/RTPA should reevaluate the method used in encouraging participation from the Tribal Government. Other MPOs/RTPAs that have had success in establishing an on-going consultation process with Tribal Governments should be contacted. It is important to ensure that efforts in establishing channels of communication are documented in the RTP. For further information and assistance in the consultation process, contact the Department's Native American Liaison Branch located in Sacramento at (916) 651-8195.

Best Practices

Many of the policies and procedures used by MPOs/RTPAs to establish a formal government-to-government relationship with the Tribal Governments within their region are undergoing development.

The Department is working to develop guidance to address how MPOs/RTPAs can consult and coordinate with Tribal Governments. This handbook will give an overview of the Tribal Government structure as well as providing procedural guidance for consultation and coordination with these federally recognized tribes. This handbook is scheduled to be completed by December 2003. Copies will be available from the Department's regional planning liaisons or the Native American Liaison Branch.

D-4. Public Involvement

Overview

Public involvement is a major component of the regional transportation planning process and is specified in both State and Federal regulations and statutes. As citizens, local organizations and special interest groups are significantly impacted by the region's RTP, they have a vested interest in being part of the process of the RTP development. Since the RTP impacts the future of the region's transportation network and require additional public funding support, it is vital the public be given the opportunity to actively participate in this process.

A planning process that does not reflect the wishes of a wide range of citizens living within that region is open and may contribute to legal challenge, blocking potentially vital transportation projects

A regional transportation planning process that does not reflect the wishes of a wide range of citizens living within that region is inadequate, and open to legal challenge that may block transportation projects. To assure there is strong, dynamic public involvement, the MPO/RTPA should document within the RTP efforts to involve the public in the long range planning process. Public input should be involved in all non-technical aspects of the planning program. The process and all input should be summarized and clearly identified throughout the RTP.

Legislative Requirement

Federal legislation (Title 23 USC §134 [g][4]), (Title 23 USC §135[e]) and (Title 23 CFR §450.316[b][1][c]) require a transportation planning process that includes a public involvement program.

Title 23 CFR §450.316(b)(1) requires that the public involvement process shall provide for: complete information, timely notice, full public access to key decisions; reasonable public access to technical and policy information and to demonstrate explicit consideration of public input; and seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to low income and minority households. At a minimum, the RTP should: 1) document the public involvement program 2) articulate the efforts made to maintain 3) identify participating groups and 4) document efforts to recruit and facilitate a broad range of community representation.

Title 23 CFR §450.316(b)(8) requires the RTP to include opportunities for citizen involvement in early stages of plan development.

FHWA and FTA Memorandum TOA-1/HEPH-1 dated October 7, 1999. This memo outlines the actions necessary for implementing Title VI requirements in metropolitan and statewide planning.

State Government code §65050(a) requires all regional transportation plans to "consider factors specified in Section 134 of Title 23 of the United States Code."

Department Findings Based on the Evaluation of the RTPs:

While the 1999 RTP Guidelines identify suggestions for the planning agencies to comply with State and Federal legislation in developing the "public participation" process in the RTP, there is a uniform lack of documentation relating to citizen involvement. Many RTPs simply provide a list of meeting dates, and the number of meetings held. There is minimal documentation concerning the results of public involvement and a lack of identification of the impacts or benefits upon the planning process.

Recommended Action:

Public Involvement efforts should be identified and reflected in each section of the RTP

Public Involvement efforts should be identified and reflected in the RTP. In the introduction of the Plan, there should be a discussion reflecting the MPOs/RTPAs process to gain the public's input in the development of the RTP.

The appendix of the Plan should contain the technical aspects of public involvement, specifically the number of meetings, and any other mechanisms for public input, costs and results. In addition there should be a summary of how the public has influenced the scope, direction or contents of the plan or the planning process.

Best Practices:

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the largest MPO in California and in terms of land area, largest in the United States. It has an extensive public involvement process and results are documented in a technical appendix. Information includes all public input results and specific public comments considered in the development of the RTP. The 2001 SCAG RTP is available at:

www.scag.ca.gov/rtp/mainrtp.html

D-5. Private Sector Involvement

Overview

The private sector has a clear stake in the future transportation system within the region

Private Sector Involvement relates to how the goods movement industry and other business or commercial interests are represented in the development of the RTP. Trucks, freight trains, taxis, limousines all use the transportation network and are an integral part of the regional transportation system. Other examples of private sector involvement in the development of the RTP include Transportation Management Associations, private transit operators, developers, and Chambers of Commerce. Their absence in the regional transportation planning process adversely impacts the efficiency of the transportation network.

In most urbanized areas of California, the number of trucks on the highway system has substantially increased. This has had a direct impact on traffic congestion within these areas. An increased level of truck activity has also had an impact in rural areas of the state as well, although primarily on the principle routes in these rural counties. For these reasons, an RTP that does not include the "Private Sector" in the planning process is not a viable plan. The impact of the private sector on the transportation system is just too significant not to be included and documented in the RTP process.

Unfortunately, in many plans, the private sector is not identified as a planning partner. Where addressed, goods movement is discussed in the abstract with minimal long-range assumptions identified or assessed.

Legislative Requirement

Federal regulations require private sector involvement as a component of the regional transportation planning process. Title 23 USC §134 (g)(4), Title 23 USC §135(e) and Title 23 CFR §450.316(b)(1)(c) require the transportation planning process include input from the goods movement industry and other transportation organizations.

California Government Code §14000(d) recommends that a comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process should be established which involves all levels of government and the private sector in a cooperative process to develop coordinated transportation plans.

Department Findings Based on the Evaluation of the RTPs

While the 1999 RTP Guidelines identify suggestions for MPOs/RTPAs to comply with State and Federal requirements in developing the public participation process in their RTP, there is an overall lack of documentation in the Plans relating to private sector involvement.

Major employers including trucking firms should be encouraged to participate in the RTP development

Recommended Action

MPOs/RTPAs should take necessary actions to ensure major trucking firms, large employers and business organizations are formally invited to participate in the preparation of the RTP. The MPO/RTPA should strive to include any major long-range plans of these organizations that may have an impact on the regional transportation system. The purpose is to provide private sector transportation providers a process of communication and involvement into the region's transportation planning process. The specific outreach techniques developed and ultimately used is dependent on the size and composition of the region. These efforts to solicit input into the long-range regional transportation planning process should be documented in the RTP.

Best Practices

The Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG) provides an excellent example of a well-developed private sector component of the RTP. Based on the Central Stanislaus Freight Study, a corridor approach was established to increase the number of jobs and improve the efficient movement of goods. The plan identifies several supporting agencies that specifically support the immediate goals as well as longer-term goals (three or more years).

StanCOG's 2001 RTP is available at:

http://www.stancog.org/rtp.htm

D-6. RTP Environmental Documents

Overview

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was enacted in 1970 and requires State and local agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions and to avoid or mitigate those impacts. The RTP and any subsequent revisions, amendments or updates, are to comply with CEQA requirements (Public Resources Code §21002.1). Typically, a Program or Master Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is prepared to identify mitigation measures necessary as a result of the transportation projects identified in the RTP and Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). An EIR is required to consider alternatives that would avoid or reduce significant environmental effects of projects identified over the 20-year life of the RTP. A Negative Declaration (ND) or Mitigated Negative Declaration may be prepared if projects in the RTP contain no significant environmental impacts.

The MPO/RTPA must prepare an ED for the RTP if the projects identified in the Plan will impact the environment

CEQA regulations apply if the MPO/RTPA determines the projects identified in the RTP have the potential to significantly impact the environment. Examples of possible environmental impacts include increased vehicle emissions, additional vehicle trips or increased population growth resulting from transportation facility improvements.

The MPO/RTPA determines if the proposed transportation projects in the RTP collectively are subject to CEQA and have a significant impact on the environment. When an MPO/RTPA updates its RTP, it determines if the proposed changes are subject to CEQA. Certain projects, as defined in statute, are exempt projects, and not subject to CEQA requirements. If the MPO/RTPA identifies any activities that do not fall in the exempt categories, CEQA regulations apply.

Legislative Requirement

The RTP is required to comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Public Resources Code §21002.1. California statues relating to CEQA impacting government agencies are identified in Sections 21000–21178 of the Public Resources Code. CEQA gives governmental agencies at all levels the responsibility of developing standards and procedures necessary to protect environmental quality, and to consider alternatives to proposed actions based on their impacts on the environment.

Department Findings Based on the Evaluation of the RTPs

Review of the last cycle of RTPs and the environmental documents indicated 15 RTPs (34 percent of the total) stated their Plans would not impact the environment, and issued NDs. It should be noted the rural counties prepared all of these 15 RTPs. Not a single RTP ND was issued by an MPO/RTPA located in a heavily urbanized region.

There is a wide range of quality and detail in the Program EIRs prepared for the RTPs. While some Program EIRs provided detailed information on the environmental impacts, others provided minimal information or analysis. Many Program EIRs deferred analysis to the project level EIR and did not analyze the cumulative impacts of all the projects. Inadequate cumulative impact analysis weakens project development at the project level making it too late at the project level for consideration of a broad range of transportation programs and alternatives.

It is more efficient to scope the environmental analysis at the plan level to create a foundation for project development, to reduce later environmental issues that can lead to costly delays and lost resources. At the plan level, environmental concerns can be identified at the broad regional and corridor scale making it easier to avoid and to mitigate impacts. The environmental resources agencies and environmental advocacy groups should be encouraged to participate in the RTP development process so their issues can be identified early.

Recommended Action

Page A-8 of the RTP Guidelines lists the items that must be addressed in the RTPs environmental document

During preparation of the RTPs, MPOs/RTPAs should make sure that potential environmental impacts are identified and mitigation measures listed in the RTPs Environmental Document. When preparing a Program EIR, the MPO/RTPA should ensure the EIR addresses cumulative impacts, growth inducing impacts, and a broad range of alternatives. By taking these steps, the MPO/RTPA will reduce the probability of litigation and delay at the project delivery stage relating to the projects identified in the RTP.

The EIR should identify cumulative impacts, the potential for all projects collectively in the RTP to significantly impact the environment. While impacts of many individual projects can likely be mitigated to a less than significant level, the cumulative effect of RTP implementation is often considered significant and unavoidable.

In addition, the EIR should identify the growth inducing impacts of the projects and programs in the RTP. Discussion should include how these projects could foster economic or population growth, or construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly in the surrounding environment. The Program EIR is the most appropriate place to discuss both cumulative impacts and growth inducing impacts. This information is not available at the project level and resource agencies require it to approve projects in the environmental review process.

In the Program EIR, the MPO/RTPA should discuss a broad range of program and policy alternatives, including program-wide mitigation measures, considered early when the MPO/RTPA has greater flexibility to deal with fundamental issues or cumulative impacts. Mitigation measures can be grouped by project type. In addition, the EIR should identify long-term corridor plans with associated mitigation, information requested by resource agencies during environmental review.

Best Practices

The San Joaquin Council of Governments EIR prepared for the 2001 RTP is a good example. The document is located at the following website:

http://www.sjcog.org/sections/trans-planning/eir_pdf.php

D-7. Transportation Control Measures (TCMs)

Overview

The Federal Clean Air Act (CAA) regulates air pollutant emissions from area, stationary, and mobile sources. In addition, the CAA authorizes the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to protect public health and the environment. The goal of the Act was to set maximum pollutant standards and direct the States to develop State Implementation Plans (SIPs) for achieving and maintaining these standards.

Because emissions from motor vehicles make a significant contribution to air pollution, the SIP establishes an emissions budget for each pollutant for the attainment year. This serves as a regulatory limit for on-road mobile source emissions. As a condition to receive Federal funding, programs are required to meet those emission budgets through strategies that increase the efficiency of the transportation system and reduce motor vehicle use, including Transportation Control Measures (TCMs).

Examples of TCMs

Examples of TCMs include programs for improved public transit, employer-based transportation management plans, trip-reduction ordinances, programs to limit or restrict vehicle use in downtown areas, programs to control extended idling of vehicles, restriction or construction of certain roads or lanes for use by passenger buses or high occupancy vehicles, and traffic flow improvement programs that achieve emissions reductions.

To ensure that Federal funding and approval are given to activities that are consistent with air quality goals, transportation activities in the RTP must be consistent with the emission reduction and other requirements in the SIP – the conformity process. Conformity must be demonstrated in areas that are in nonattainment or maintenance status for Federal air quality standards. The RTP in conformity areas must provide for the timely implementation of all TCMs in the SIP according to the schedule identified in the SIP. In addition, there should not be any actions in the RTP that interferes with implementation of any TCM in the applicable SIP.

Legislative Requirement

Title 23 CFR §450.322(d) requires all MPOs/RTPAs in Federal nonattainment areas to coordinate their RTP development with their regional Air Quality Management Agency and the Air Resources Board to ensure conformity with the SIP.
Title 23 CFR §450.322(n)(3) requires the RTP to discuss ways in which the Plan will conform to the SIP, including TCM implementation.
Title 23 USC §134(g)(3) requires that the development of the RTP be coordinated with the development of TCM's in the SIP.
Title 42 §7408(f)(1) of the Clean Air Act provides the foundation for development of transportation control techniques and provides examples of TCMs.

40 CFR §93.113 requires RTPs to provide for the timely implementation of all TCMs in the SIP.

Department Findings Based on the Evaluation of the RTPs

Review of the 2001/2002 RTPs indicated that many RTPs in Federal nonattainment or maintenance areas do not specifically identify the TCMs from the SIP or do not indicate how the TCMs are to be implemented. In some cases, TCMs were developed and presented as a separate conformity analysis document. If TCM implementation is not well documented, the MPO or RTPA may find it difficult to show that projects and activities in the RTP are consistent with the emission reduction requirements in the SIP and support timely implementation of the TCMs.

Recommended Action

To achieve consistency between the RTP and the SIP, all TCMs identified in the SIP should be identified in the 2004/2005 RTPs

The RTP should discuss ways in which activities in the plan will conform to the SIP, including TCM implementation. To achieve consistency between the RTP and the SIP, all TCMs identified in the SIP should be identified in the 2004-05 RTPs. In addition, information relating to the completion of the TCMs should be included in the RTP. Planned implementation of the TCMs should be documented and compared to the SIP implementation schedule. The RTP should document any delays in the implementation of TCM's in the SIP, and should describe measures taken to address these delays.

Best Practices

The San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG) 2001-02 RTP addresses TCMs in the Policy Element and the Action Element. Seven TCMs are identified with recent accomplishments, current activities, and proposed actions. The ED is located at:

www.sjcog.org/sections/trans-planning/eir_pdf.php

MTC's 2001-02 RTP provides a good example including implementation steps and status of each TCM. Website:

www.mtc.ca.gov

SANDAG's Mobility 2030 RTP provides a good format and comparison to the SIP. A table identifies the TCMs from the SIP by action, objectives, due date, date completed, responsible agency and funding source. The Executive Summary is available at:

www.sandag.cog.ca.us/uploads/publicationid/publicationid_834_1725.pdf

D-8. Project Intent Statements

Overview

Statements of Project Intent, which are brief statements that identify the region's transportation needs or issues

It is important for MPOs and RTPAs to provide a clearly defined justification for their transportation projects and programs within the RTP. This can be accomplished by developing Statements of Project Intent, which are brief statements that identify the region's transportation needs or issues and state the intended project outcomes that would address these needs or identified issues over the twenty-year planning horizon. The purpose of the Statements of Project Intent provides the foundation for project delivery needed to minimize lengthy delays and lost resources. These statements are necessary to justify the regional agency's projects in the RTIP, and to justify the expenditure of transportation funds to the public and to the Commission. To avoid confusion with Purpose and Need Statements required during the actual project development process, the term Project Intent Statements is used for RTP level project justification.

The RTP Guidelines state the RTP should include a project justification that identifies the specific need for the project and the intended outcome of the proposed improvements that address these deficiencies. The 1999 RTP Guidelines refer to Plan Level Statements of Purpose and Need: short statements, which serve as a justification for a project or a group of projects. These brief plan level justifications should be distinguished from the project level Purpose and Need Statements that require lengthy, detailed information for environmental documents.

Prior to developing a long-range plan, the MPO/RTPA should conduct a needs assessment of the facilities and services provided by the region's transportation system that identifies issues, problems, system deficiencies, and their impacts on the traveling public.

The regional agency should clearly identify and document at the system level critical problems facing the region over a twenty-year planning horizon. The agency should use this information to develop brief statements that summarize these transportation needs, issues and problems. One example of a transportation problem would be: congestion on a corridor within the region.

After identifying the region's transportation needs and problems, the MPO/RTPA should describe their intention of solving the problem or addressing the needs with a project or range of projects. The Project Intent Statements briefly identify the transportation needs or problems and state the intended outcome of the project(s) that would meet these needs or solve the identified problems. An example of a Statement of Project Intent that addresses the problem of congestion would be to reduce congestion on a specific route.

Regional agencies should clearly define the need for transportation improvements and develop Statements of Project Intent early in the planning phases for the following reasons:

- To provide justification for the lead agency's projects in the RTIP.
- To justify expenditure of transportation funds to the public and the Commission.
- During project selection, to provide the rationale for selecting specific projects over other projects.
- To consider and document analysis of a broad range of alternatives.
- To provide the foundation for Project Level Purpose and Need information in the environmental documents.
- To facilitate timely project delivery and to minimize lengthy delays and loss of resources.

MPOs/RTPAs will find it is beneficial and efficient to develop consistent project justification from planning through project implementation. The regional agency should provide this justification in the RTP to assure the final project addresses the problem. Also, as the project progresses through subsequent steps to project delivery, it is less likely to be challenged because the problem and the need are clearly defined.

Legislative Requirement

California Government Code §14522 states the Commission may develop guidelines for the preparation of the regional transportation plans. The 1999 RTP Guidelines state the RTP should include a project justification that identifies the specific need for the project and states the intended outcome to address these needs or problems.

Department Findings Based on the Evaluation of the RTPs

Review of the 2001 and 2002 RTPs indicates that Statements of Project Intent are not generally included in the plans; however, the information for developing them is typically in the Action Element and the Policy Element of the RTPs. The regional agency could explain why a project is needed by identifying the specific issues or needs that a group of projects is designed to address.

Recommended Action

The RTP should include Statements of Project Intent

The RTP should include Project Intent Statements, which are brief statements that clearly identify the specific reasons transportation projects are needed (for example, limited mobility on a route, or limited access on the route) and state the intended project outcomes that address the needs or solve the problems (for example, increase mobility or access on a route). It is important to indicate which specific need or problem a project is designed to address.

These statements can be developed and organized by project, or by category, such as by corridor, or by mode and corridor. This is more meaningful than statements applied to the region's entire transportation system.

The following is an example of a format used in the 2001-02 RTPs:

Public Transportation:

- Increase mobility: Decrease travel times for bus passengers on Corridor A
    - Projects: Increase frequency of express buses operating on Corridor A
    - Projects: Restructure and improve bus connections along Corridor A
- Increase access to light rail station along Corridor A
    - Projects: Increase number of feeder buses to light rail station on Corridor A
    - Projects: Improve services for elderly and disabled passengers on Corridor A

Best Practices

Below are examples of three different approaches to Statements of Project Intent. Two RTPs were developed by MPOs and one by an RTPA.

MTC's 2001-02 RTP Project Notebook (Supplemental Report) identified "RTP Goals" (Statements of Project Intent) for each specific project.
For a copy, go to website:

www.mtc.ca.gov

SANDAG's Mobility 2030 RTP organized projects by category and linked them to the RTP goals.

Contact SANDAG at (619) 595-5300

Mendocino's 2001-02 RTP organized projects by category and provided clear statements of project intent. For a copy, go to the following website:

www.mendocinocog.org

D-9. List of Financially Un-Constrained Projects

Overview

Including a list of regional desired un-funded transportation projects in the RTP accomplishes two items

Title 23, Chapter 1, §450.322(11) requires RTPs prepared by MPOs to identify a region's perceived transportation needs based upon projected funding. While planning is a perpetual process, the plan reflects a specific political and visionary perspective at the time of adoption. Because of the ongoing nature of the process, many MPOs/RTPAs have complained that it is unrealistic to specifically define projects and funding since State and Federal resources are not assured from year-to-year.

Two items are accomplished by including a list of regionally desired un-funded transportation projects in the RTP: 1) assures funding flexibility should additional funding become available, and 2) a comprehensive statewide list of un-funded projects will allow for a more accurate determination of transportation needs.

Legislative Requirements

California Government Code §65080 (3)(a) states that the Financial Element may recommend the development of specified new sources of revenue, consistent with the Policy Element and Action Element.

Current Federal regulations require RTPs developed by MPOs be financially constrained. Federal legislation Title 23 Chapter I, Part 450 §450.322(11) states the RTPs financial plan must demonstrate consistency with the proposed transportation investments (RTIP and STIP).

Department Findings Based on the Evaluation of the RTPs

All of the MPOs/RTPAs are aware the proposed projects identified in the RTP must be consistent with the level of estimated funding available over the life of the Plan (financially constrained).

Recommended Action

This unconstrained list will identify projects recommended by the MPO/RTPA however the funding will probably not be available

In addition to the current list of financially constrained projects identified in the RTP, each Plan should contain a list of needed unconstrained projects. This unconstrained list will identify projects that are recommended by the MPO/RTPA without a funding source identified. This list should be included separately from the financially constrained project list. It is preferred that projects on the unconstrained list be identified by transportation corridor within the region.

Best Practices

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) RTP provides an excellent example of funding scenarios. The Plan's Appendix A includes detailed revenue as constrained, reasonably expected and unconstrained revenue scenarios. Included are maps and charts listing highway and transit projects and tables outlining the differences between the various scenarios.

Contact SANDAG at (619) 595-5300

E. Conclusion

Successful transportation planning is an ongoing process combining vision, practical insight, technical expertise and commitment. It requires intra-regional cooperation and teamwork between those championing competing needs.

With thousands of people including professional planners, citizens, policy makers and advocacy group participants involved in the transportation planning process throughout the state, there needs to be a set of approved guidelines that facilitates the development of the 44 RTPs that are under continuous development.

The 1999 RTP Guidelines were the last in a series of Guidelines (since 1978) adopted by the California Transportation Commission to maintain ongoing guidance to both new and experienced regional transportation planners and regional decision makers. This supplement was developed in response to the need for additional, specific guidance based on the evaluation of the current adopted Regional Transportation Plans. It is strongly emphasized that the need for this supplement is not to imply fault or inadequacy of any individual plan or regional transportation planning process.

As transportation planning is so complex, those closest and most knowledgeable to the planning process deserve the up-to-date guidance and information. This supplement was developed to meet the needs of those who seek improved conformity to the California Transportation Commission planning expectations and the approval of projects in the resultant Regional Transportation Improvement Program.

APPENDICES

1. Checklist to be completed by MPO/RTPA prior to submitting the draft RTP to the California Department of Transportation

2. California Department of Transportation Regional Planning Staff Contacts, Headquarters and District

APPENDIX ONE

Regional Transportation Plan Checklist

(To be completed electronically Microsoft Word format by the MPO/RTPA and submitted along with draft RTP to the Calif. Department of Transportation)

Name of MPO/RTPA: _____

Date Draft RTP Completed: _____

RTP Adoption Date: _____

Environmental Document (ED) Certification Date (if applicable): _____

Identify where the ED is located (in the RTP, separate document, etc.):_____

By completing this checklist, the MPO/RTPA verifies the RTP addresses all of the following required information within the RTP.

A. Regional Transportation Plan Components

1. Explain how the RTP provides a coordinated and balanced transportation system.

_____
_____
_____
_____

2. Contains a short-term (10-year) time horizon. Page #_____

3. Contains a long-term (20-year) time horizon. Page #_____

4. Considers strategies to meet the seven planning factors specified in Title 23, 134(f) of the U.S. Code. **(MPOs only)** Page #_____

5. Identify where the RTP describes how it is consistent with the Civil Rights Act as identified in Title 23, CFR § 450.316(b)(2). **(MPOs only)** Page #_____

6. Specify where the RTP identifies actions necessary to meet the ADA as identified in Title 23, CFR § 450.316(b)(3). **(MPOs only)** Page #_____

7. Explain how the RTP considers, analyzes and reflects the following social and environmental effects. **(MPOs only)**
   a) Housing Page #_____
   b) Employment Page #_____
   c) Community development Page #_____
   d) Land Use Page #_____
   e) Central city development goals Page #_____

Regional Transportation Plan Checklist (Continued)

8. Other social and environmental effects (identify and specify page number)

_____
_____
_____
_____

B. Public Involvement

1. Includes a public involvement program that meets the requirements of Title 23, CFR § 450.316(b)(1) **(MPOs only)** Page #_____

2. Where there are Native American Tribal Governments within the RTP boundaries, the tribal concerns have been addressed and the Plan was developed in cooperation with the Tribal Government(s) and the Secretary of the Interior (Bureau of Indian Affairs) (Title 23, CFR § 134, 135 [e]). Page #_____

3. Identify where the RTP describes the public involvement efforts the MPO/RTPA used during the development of the Plan. Page #_____

4. Identify where the RTP describes the private sector involvement efforts the MPO/RTPA used during the development of the Plan. Page #_____

5. The RTP describes the coordination efforts of MPO/RTPA with regional air quality planning authorities. **(federal nonattainment and maintenance areas only)** Page #_____

6. Specify where the RTP addresses efforts concerning interagency coordination. Page #_____

C. Policy Element

1. Identify where the regional transportation issues are addressed in the Policy Element. Page #_____

2. Specify where the regional needs are identified in the Policy Element. Page #_____

3. Identify where the regional transportation issues are described in the RTP. Page #_____

4. Identify where the objectives in the RTP are linked to a 10-year time frame. Page #_____

5. Identify where the objectives in the RTP are linked to a 20-year time frame. Page #_____

Regional Transportation Plan Checklist (Continued)

D. Action Element

1. Where are the transportation needs as discussed in the Policy Element identified in the RTP. Page #_____

2. Specify where the RTP describes that it is consistent with the adopted regional transportation goals and policies? Page #_____

3. Identify where the RTP conforms to the projected revenues. Page #_____

4. Where does the RTP identify consistency with the projected constrained financial revenues. Page #_____

5. Includes a discussion of highways. Page #_____

6. Includes a discussion of mass transportation. Page #_____

7. Includes a discussion of the regional airport system. Page #_____

8. Includes a discussion of regional pedestrian needs. Page #_____

9. Includes a discussion of non-motorized transportation Page #_____

10. Includes a discussion of rail transportation. Page #_____

11. Includes a discussion of maritime transportation. Page #_____

12. Includes a discussion of goods movement. Page #_____

E. Consistency Requirement

1. Where does the RTP state the first four years of the fund estimate is consistent with four year STIP fund estimate adopted by the CTC. Page #_____

2. Where does the RTP state the goal, policy and objective statements is consistent with the Financial Statement. Page #_____

3. Where does the RTP state the projects included in the ITIP are consistent with those included in the RTP. Page #_____

4. Where does the RTP identify the projects included in the RTIP are consistent with the RTP. Page #_____

F. Performance Measurement

1. Identify the objective criteria for measuring the performance of the transportation system located in the RTP? Page #_____

Regional Transportation Plan Checklist (Continued)

G. Environmental Considerations

1. How were the environmental impact considerations of the RTP addressed **(Choose A or B)**:

   a) It was determined through the Initial Study (IS) process the projects in the RTP will not impact the environment, therefore a Negative Declaration was prepared. _____

   b) The MPO/RTPA prepared a program EIR in accordance with CEQA guidelines. _____

2. Specify where the RTP identifies how it will conform to the State Implementation Plan (SIP). **(Federal nonattainment and maintenance areas only)** Page #_____

3. Specify where the RTP identifies TCM's to be implemented in the region. **(Federal nonattainment and maintenance areas only)** Page #_____

4. Identify where the RTP addresses efforts to coordinate with the regional Air Pollution Control District and the Calif. Air Resources Board (CARB) to ensure conformity with the SIP. **(Federal nonattainment and maintenance areas only)** Page #_____

I have reviewed the above information and concur that it is correct and complete .

_____ _____

(Must be signed by MPO/RTPA Executive Director or designated representative) Date

_____ _____

Print Name Title

APPENDIX TWO

California Department of Transportation Regional Planning Staff Contacts, Headquarters and District

Location	Name	Phone Number	E-Mail
District 1 - Eureka	Michele Fell	(707) 445-6333	michele.fell@dot.ca.gov
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