

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: January 25-26, 2024

From: TANISHA TAYLOR, Executive Director

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Prepared By: Brigitte Driller
Associate Deputy Director

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Subject: North Workshop for the Draft 2024 Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines

Summary:

California Transportation Commission (Commission) staff is working in collaboration with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to update the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Guidelines. The RTP Guidelines set forth a statewide, long-range regional transportation planning framework; promote an integrated, multimodal planning process; and facilitate the efficient delivery of transportation projects that meet local, regional, and state goals. As was done for the 2017 RTP Guidelines, separate versions of the 2024 RTP Guidelines have been developed for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs). Separate versions are necessary given additional MPO requirements for the development of their respective RTPs.

Prior to amending the RTP Guidelines, the Commission is required, per California Government Code Section 14522.1, to hold two workshops, one in Southern California and one in Northern California, during regularly scheduled Commission Meetings. The workshops provide an opportunity for additional public comment before the final guidelines are adopted. The South Workshop was held at the December 6-7, 2023 Commission Meeting. Following this North Workshop, staff will present the final RTP Guidelines for both MPOs and RTPAs for Commission adoption. The proposed final 2024 RTP Guidelines incorporate stakeholder feedback received, where consistent with the law, and are available at: <https://catc.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning>.

The second draft of the 2024 RTP Guidelines for MPOs and the first draft of the 2024 RTP Guidelines for RTPAs were released on October 6, 2023, for a 30-day public comment period. During the October 6 – November 6 public comment period, 15 organizations submitted comments, including state agencies, advocacy organizations, MPOs, an RTPA, a nonprofit, and a county transportation commission. Comments spanned diverse topics, but several high-level themes emerged across multiple letters that are addressed in the proposed final language:

- Ensure new RTP Guidelines language does not go beyond existing statutory requirements, particularly for the areas of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation and transportation performance management (MPO version only).
- Consider suggestions for additional community engagement strategies.
- Expand considerations for environmental justice.

To view a log of stakeholder comments received to date, please visit:

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning/division-of-transportation-planning/regional-and-community-planning/rtp-guidelines-update>.

The 2024 RTP Guidelines incorporate updates to reflect changes in state and federal law, streamline language, and update references. Changes to the 2017 RTP Guidelines were developed through technical work groups and informed by comments received from state agencies, regional agencies, advocacy organizations, and other stakeholders. Language was updated for several policy areas, including equity and environmental justice; coordination with the Regional Housing Needs Allocation process; federal performance management requirements; climate adaptation guidance and tools; vehicle miles traveled analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act; and clarifications to the Sustainable Communities Strategies process and implementation resources (MPOs only).

Background:

The Commission is authorized to develop RTP Guidelines (California Government Code Sections 14522 and 14524.3) and to direct Caltrans to prepare updates to the guidelines (California Government Code Section 14512). While there is no requirement for how frequently the guidelines must be updated, the Commission aims to initiate an update when there have been significant changes to federal or state law.

MPOs and RTPAs are required by law to prepare an RTP that describes the region's transportation vision and goals. The RTP is a long-range (20-year minimum) planning and policy document that conveys the unique needs and characteristics of a region and identifies improvements to the transportation system.

Since the RTP Guidelines were last adopted in 2017, relevant state plans, reports, and policies have been released, including Executive Order N-79-20, the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure, Caltrans' California Transportation Plan 2050, the 2022 Progress Report on Sustainable Communities Implementation (Senate Bill 150 Report), the 2022 Climate Change Scoping Plan, and the California Transportation Assessment (AB 285 Report). Federal policy direction has also emerged from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Additionally, updates to the RTP Guidelines are needed to reflect advances in the practice of long-range regional transportation planning, including improvements in the areas of housing coordination, zero-emission and near-zero emission vehicle technologies, climate change mitigation and adaptation planning, equity and engagement, goods movement, travel demand modeling, performance management, and vehicle miles traveled reduction strategies.

There have been several engagement opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the development of the guidelines. On October 27, 2022, staff held a kick-off meeting for both the RTP and the California Transportation Plan Guidelines, which were adopted in June 2023. The purpose of the kick-off meeting was to provide an overview of the guidelines update process and hear from stakeholders about their expertise in long-range planning and important issues to address in the guidelines.

Next, technical work groups were formed, and the first work group meetings were held in February 2023. Work group meetings gave stakeholders an opportunity to provide comments and feedback throughout the RTP Guidelines update process. The work groups comprise subject matter experts who provided input into the development of the following subject areas:

- Equity, Engagement, and Health
- Housing
- Climate Change
- Sustainability and Environment
- Freight and Economic Development
- Transportation Performance Management
- Modeling

Two to four meetings have been held for each work group topic area.

A workshop was held to discuss the RTP Guidelines on February 15, 2023. Feedback received at the initial work group meetings was shared at the workshop. Two key themes that emerged from both the work group meetings and the workshop were the need to update the RTP Guidelines to reflect changes in federal legislation and regulations and the need to incorporate new planning practice examples.

A second workshop was held to discuss the RTP Guidelines on July 12, 2023. The purpose of that workshop was to share feedback received during the public comment period and to discuss how feedback was being considered for incorporation into the next draft. Meeting materials for all workshops can be accessed at <https://catc.ca.gov/meetings-events/workshops>.