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MICHAEL WOODMAN, Executive Director  
AARON HOYT, Deputy Executive Director


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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Nevada County Transportation Commission

FROM: Michael Woodman, Executive Director 

SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report for the January 24, 2024 Meeting

DATE: January 24, 2024

### **NCTC AWARDED LOCAL TRANSPORTATION CLIMATE ADAPTATION PROGRAM (LTCAP) GRANT FUNDING FOR THE STATE ROUTE 49 GRASS VALLEY WILDFIRE EVACUATION ROUTE PROJECT**

The Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) staff, in coordination with Caltrans District 3, submitted the State Route 49 Grass Valley Wildfire Evacuation Route Project to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for funding consideration in the 2023 Local Transportation Climate Adaptation Program (LTCAP).

At their December 6-7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting, the CTC approved the staff recommendations for LTCAP grant funding awards. Included as part of the approval of the LTCAP grant funding recommendation was \$35 million for NCTC's State Route 49 Grass Valley Wildfire Evacuation Route Project grant application.

The proposed project is intended to help address the existing evacuation barriers identified in the State Route 49 corridor between Grass Valley and Combie Road/Wolf Road. The project limits are between Ponderosa Pines Way, just north of Alta Sierra, to Combie Road/Wolf Road and will construct structurally engineered shoulders and a center two-way left turn lane that can be utilized as travel lanes during an evacuation event, thereby reducing evacuation times. The shoulders will be constructed to be 12 feet wide southbound and 8 feet wide northbound. The 16' center two-way left turn lane will also improve safety and operations during non-emergency events allowing safer operations for vehicles entering and exiting the highway. Additionally, the project will harden infrastructure against wildfire events improving climate resiliency and emergency responder ingress.

The grant award of \$35 million of LTCAP funding will expedite delivery of these important community resilience and evacuation route improvements on State Route 49. The LTCAP funding requested will allow NCTC in partnership with Caltrans District 3 to advance the project through a coordinated strategic funding plan to construction in Fiscal Year 2025/26. Of the \$35 million total funding requested, approximately \$10 million of LTCAP is programmed to complete the project development work (Project

Approval/Environmental Documentation, Plans, Specifications & Estimates, Right-of-Way Support, and Construction Support), \$3.5 million for Right-of-Way Capital, and \$21.6 million is being requested to fully fund the construction in partnership with State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP) funding committed by Caltrans District 3 in the amount of \$66.5 million. The total project cost for all phases is \$101.5 million. NCTC is the nominating agency and Caltrans District 3 will be the implementing agency.

### **NEVADA/PLACER COUNTY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION BRANCH WORKSHOP**

On January 8, 2024, NCTC staff in coordination with California Transportation Commission staff hosted an Active Transportation Program (ATP) Branch Workshop at the Grass Valley City Hall. The focus of the workshop was to provide information to local jurisdictions in both Nevada and Placer County regarding the upcoming ATP Grant Cycle 7 call for projects. CTC staff discussed anticipated changes to the grant program guidelines and provided input on how project applications that are proposed to be submitted for the next funding cycle could improve competitiveness.

Prior to the start of the afternoon workshop, NCTC staff coordinated two site visits with CTC staff and staff from Nevada County and Grass Valley to allow them to provide detailed information on two projects being considered for submittal in the upcoming ATP grant cycle and receive feedback from the CTC ATP program staff. The two projects being considered for submittal included Nevada County's Rough & Ready Highway/Ridge Road/Adams Avenue Accessibility Improvements and Grass Valley's Wolf Creek Trail Accessibility/Connectivity project.

### **FY 2024/25 CALTRANS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PLANNING GRANT SUBMITTAL**

On January 18, 2024, NCTC staff in coordination with Nevada County Transit submitted a grant application to the FY 2024/25 Caltrans Strategic Partnership – Transit Planning Grant to fund a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA). The planning study will comprehensively review the existing transit services offered in western Nevada County and identify areas of opportunity to transition to alternative operating models to provide greater system efficiency and ridership benefits. The COA will consider an entire spectrum of transit service options ranging from minor modifications to a full “reset” of the system. These options could include traditional fixed route service, dial-a-ride service, micro-transit service, micro-mobility options, and/or a combination to provide enhanced delivery of transit services within existing funding constraints. Caltrans anticipates the award announcement to be released in the Summer of 2024. If NCTC is awarded grant funding the planning project will be amended into NCTC's FY 2045/25 Overall Work Program that details NCTC's annual budget and planning activities.