




Grass Valley • Nevada City

Nevada County • Truckee

TO: Nevada County Transportation Commission  
 FROM: Daniel B. Landon, Executive Director   
 SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report for the November 15, 2017 Meeting  
 DATE: November 2, 2017

## 1. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR REBUILDING AMERICA

In an effort to secure funding for construction of improvements on the segment of SR 49 from north of La Barr Meadows Road to 0.4 miles south of the McKnight Way interchange, Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) and Caltrans District 3 staffs prepared and submitted a joint application to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) for funding from the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) discretionary grant program.

The INFRA program advances a pre-existing grant program established in the FAST (Fixing America's Surface Transportation) Act of 2015 and utilizes updated criteria to evaluate projects to align them with national and regional economic vitality goals, and to leverage additional non-federal funding. The new program will increase the impact of projects by leveraging capital and allowing innovation in the project delivery and permitting processes, including public-private partnerships. The INFRA program will make approximately \$1.5 billion available to projects that are in line with the Federal Highway Administration's principles to help rebuild America's crumbling infrastructure.

The DOT will make awards under the INFRA program to both large and small projects. For a large project, the INFRA grant must be at least \$25 million. For a small project, the grant must be at least \$5 million. For each fiscal year of INFRA funds, 10% of available funds are reserved for small projects and at least 25% of funding is reserved for rural projects.

The DOT understands that rural needs may well exceed this limit, and they will consider rural projects to the greatest extent possible. For rural communities in need of funding for highway and multimodal freight projects with national or regional economic significance, INFRA is an opportunity to apply directly for financial assistance from the federal government. For these communities, the DOT will consider an applicant's resource constraints when assessing the leverage criterion.

This joint application proposes to combine NCTC's current investment of \$6,000,000 of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds with \$50,660,000 of State Highway Operations Protection Program (SHOPP) funding from Caltrans, and \$37,480,000 of INFRA funds into a \$94,140,000 project proposal to improve 2.1 miles of State Route 49 into a four-lane conventional access control highway with a continuous median/left-turn lane, and 8-foot

shoulders. Upgrading the highway will improve safety, traffic operations, peak period level of service, provide adequate distance for decelerating and accelerating traffic, and improve sight distance.

The project application notes that SR 49 is a significant interregional connector for goods movement, and for travelers seeking tourist and recreational destinations. The corridor serves as a vital link to regional employment centers in Placer County, and provides the connection to Interstate 80 and regional employment centers in Sacramento. Safety, mobility, and capacity are major issues on the SR 49 corridor.

SR 49 is also critical to the national economy, as SR 49 and SR 20 are the only routes that can be utilized as Emergency Detour Routes when Interstate 80 between Emigrant Gap and Colfax is closed due to major accidents, wildfires, and construction. Both of these State Highways are designated to handle STAA oversize and CA Legal Trucks. When Interstate 80 is closed north of Colfax, truck traffic and passenger vehicles can be detoured onto SR 20 to SR 49 and back onto Interstate 80. The amount of commerce that travels over Interstate 80 is immense; it has been estimated that on average between \$4 to \$8 million worth of commerce travels over the Donner Pass on Interstate 80 every hour throughout the year.

With both truck and passenger volumes forecasted to increase on Interstate 80, SR 20, and SR 49, it is critical that improvements are constructed on SR 49 to ensure it has the capacity to safely handle both growth and future detour events.

The notice of funding opportunity published by the U.S. DOT does not indicate when the grant awards will be announced.

## 2. 2016 NEVADA COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPA) are required by the state to prepare, adopt, and submit an updated Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and to Caltrans every five years. The purpose of this update to the RTP is to document the short-term (2015-2025) and long-term (2025-2035) regional transportation policy direction, multi-modal regional transportation needs, and to set forth a financially constrained action plan to meet those needs. To qualify for federal and state funding, projects must be included in or be consistent with the plan. The 2016 Nevada County RTP includes the projects that can reasonably be anticipated to be funded within the plan's fiscal constraints. The RTP also identifies projects that can be implemented if additional funding becomes available.

The Draft 2016 Nevada County RTP was made available for a 30-day public review period between May 17, 2017 and June 19, 2017. Public outreach to receive comments on the draft RTP included posting it on the NCTC website, issuing press releases stating that the document is available for review, providing hard copies at local libraries, and distributing to member jurisdictions, neighboring RTPAs, Caltrans, and other state and federal agencies as appropriate. Comments received on the draft have been incorporated into the draft final report, which will be presented to the NCTC at their January 17, 2018 meeting for consideration to adopt.

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) was prepared by De Novo Planning Group and made available for a 45-day public review period between August 7, 2017 and September 20, 2017.

The supplement to the Program EIR addressed the minor technical changes and additions in relation to the RTP update.

Public outreach to receive comments on the draft SEIR included posting it on the NCTC website, issuing press releases stating that the document is available for review, providing hard copies at local libraries, and distributing to member jurisdictions, neighboring RTPAs, Caltrans, and other state and federal agencies as appropriate. Comments received on the draft EIR are being incorporated into the final EIR, which will be presented to the NCTC at their January 17, 2018 meeting for consideration to adopt.

### 3. EASTERN NEVADA COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

The purpose of the Eastern Nevada County Transit Development Plan (ENCTDP) update is to provide guidance to the Town of Truckee for making operational adjustments to the public transit system over the next five-year planning period covering Fiscal Year (FY) 2017/18 through FY 2021/22. LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. continue to make progress on the update of the ENCTDP. The draft ENCTDP is scheduled to be completed in December and presented to the Truckee Town Council at their January 9, 2018 regularly scheduled meeting for review and comment. Comments received will be incorporated into the final report, which will be presented to the NCTC at their January 17, 2018 meeting.