

DRAFT Local Assistance
Highway Bridge Program Advisory Committee Meeting
February 18, 2021—Decisions Made, Action Items and Summary

Attendees

Mark Samuelson, DLA
Dee Lam, DLA
Linda Newton, DLA
Robert Peterson, DLA
Andy Chou, DLA
Jeremy Wright, DLA
Jim Perrault, DLAE D6
Sudhakar Vatti, SLA
Michael Johnson, SM&I
Michael Chung, San Joaquin County
Matt Randall, Placer County
Chris Sneddon, Santa Barbara County
Jason Vivian, Tulare County

Debbie O'Leary, City of Oxnard
Rebecca Neves, City of Placerville
Robert Newman, City of Santa Clarita
Jesse Gothan, City of Sacramento
Ross McKeown, MTC
José Luis Cáceres, SACOG
Jon Pray, CTC
Tim Sobelman, CTC
Marina Espinoza, CSAC
Max Katt, Quincy Engineering
Margot Yapp, NCE
Susan Herman, CSUS

Decisions

The committee approved the high cost bridge programming exception, which increases the annual limit from 50% to 60% for the On system sub-apportionment only, between Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 21/22 through FFY 24/25.

Action Items UPDATE per version approved on 2/18, see pdf

All completed Action Items will be removed from the list for the next meeting summary.

Item Number	Status	Who	Action	Date Created	Target Date
A95	Open	DLA	Bridge Capacity System (BCS) hosting: consider costs and risks, with input from County of LA, Caltrans IT, and LTAP Center	2/19/15	2021
A110	Open	CSAC reps	Contact county agencies whose unprogrammed bridge projects appear on the scour critical list coded 1 or 2, to promote awareness of HEC 23 chapter 2 (Scour Plan of Action and Countermeasures), available mitigation funding, and HBP prioritization criteria.	2/21/19	2021

A112	Open	DLA	Invite a specialist from Caltrans Division of Environmental Analysis to provide input on NEPA process, for discussion on how to streamline.	4/18/19	2021
A114	Open	All	Discuss possible changes to 6-A scoping document to help estimate project cost more precisely	4/18/19	2021
A115	Open	All	Discuss future of BIC program to balance flexibility and fairness—e.g., whether to simplify the program to encourage better utilization, discontinue program, or other action.	4/18/19	2021
A120	Open	DLA	Circulate letter for comment to 6 county agencies whose yet-to-be programmed bridge projects appear on the scour critical list coded 2, seeking response on Scour Plan of Action and Countermeasures.	8/22/19	2021
A125	Open	DLA	<p>Increasing HBP apportionment: Dee will convene a group with Caltrans Federal liaison Nicole Longoria and report back on available channels for advocacy and sources of support.</p> <p>Update 2/18/21: DLA reported on recommended legislation submitted for next transportation package asking for double current apportionment. CalSTA also supports. DLA will share with all so effort can be coordinated with CEAC and other groups.</p>	6/18/20	2021

A126	Complete; see Agenda #6	DLA	Form a subgroup to focus on AC policy to ensure fairness in reimbursement practices and to provide information for agencies on how AC reimbursement is prioritized	12/10/20	2/18/2021
A127	Open	DLA	Environmental mitigation: DLA to discuss with DEA - input on Caltrans and CDFW departments' different terms for environmental monitoring and maintenance (3 years vs. 5)	2/22/21	2021

Discussions

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Debbie O'Leary is now primary CLC representative, Robert Newman is alternate.
- Jeremy has a new position in Structures Local Assistance. He may still attend meetings on Sudhakar's behalf. He will continue in role of Seismic Retrofit Program Manager within DLA until his position is filled.

2. Agenda Review

- No changes were made to the agenda

3. Review of 12/18/20 Draft action summary

- No changes were made to action items from December. Finalize for posting.

4. Financial Status

HBP Manager shared the financial status report as of February 1, 2021.

- The program received \$285M in new FFY apportionment; De-obligations in the amount of \$9.1M as of February 1 are on a program level, not a project level
- As of Feb 1, almost \$51M in obligations have been made and just over \$1M in projects are in Districts
- Projects in HQ not ready for reserve \$22M, pending obligations \$65M.
- \$65M + \$50M = \$115M in projects obligated and ready to obligate vs. last year at this time when the amount was \$109M
- Slow start due to continuation of FAST Act, limited funding caused backlog of reservations now going through system
- The projected balance was \$146M

Comments

- Inspection costs come off the top of HBP and are federally required. Michael Johnson will check on status of federal funds request for inspections.
- Of the \$652M program yearly demand (financially constrained to \$289M apportionment), how much is delivered to agencies? Before prioritization, if an agency had programmed funds in current year and received the E-76 this was considered delivery. If no E-76, funds were pushed to end of the FTIP cycle. However, HBP management now tracks savings data to determine funds available for Advanced Construction on other projects.
- In April HBP managers will share data on current delivery and savings; in December HBP managers will share FFY 20/21 delivery.
- Project sponsors are looking for a way to estimate when their funding will be available.? Delivery and “savings” data may help in this regard.

5. High Cost Programming Exception

HBP Managers shared a recommendation for committee approval. Matt Randall moved to approve the change; Rebecca Neves seconded. The committee voted to approve the recommendation.

- Current high-cost bridge policy states “the sum of cash managed high cost projects in any federal fiscal year must not exceed 50% of the annual revenue for that federal sub-apportionment for which the project is eligible without concurrence from the Committee”.
- The HBP managers are recommending an increase from the 50% annual limit to 60% for the next four FFY for the on system sub-apportionment only, between FFY 21/22 through FFY 24/25. The on-system apportionment is currently at \$214 million/year. 50% of this value is \$107 million/year for high cost projects. An increase to 60% allows another \$21.4 million/year for programming to high cost bridge projects.
- The programming increase would only be used for projects under existing agreement and would be utilized on the most expensive projects.
- HBP managers are also requesting an increase beyond \$20 million per year for projects exceeding \$80 million between FFY 21/22 through FFY 24/25.
- The intent is to get the Advanced Construction (AC) converted closer to the actual construction time frame for the project and as soon as possible.

Comments

- If the next transportation act has an apportionment increase, the 60% will cover a lot more.
- When a project is within six months of “ready to advertise” status the sponsor enters the high-cost agreement with HBP. HBP is not able to enter any new high cost agreements right now due to insufficient capacity.
- Golden Gate Bridge seismic retrofit project requested a cost increase from \$51.1M to \$475M—cost increase was denied.

- Possibility of creating a separate program for high-cost bridges has been floated through CEAC lobbyist, to increase capacity for Local programs.
- Under the reform, sponsors do not have to pay an additional match, because the award has already occurred.
- More discussion is needed on whether there should be an upper limit to the cost of high cost bridge projects. Previously the committee voted not to have a cap. Proposals to bring back the \$80M cap or increase it to \$100M or another amount should not be tied to current proposal for getting existing high cost bridge projects off the books to create programming capacity.

6. Advancing Construction

HBP Managers presented HBP Managers' priorities to apportion and advance federal funds into FFY 20/21 as de-obligations from prior projects and additional programming becomes available.

In a workshop with HBP Advisory Committee members held February 4, 2021, the below priorities will be used for advancing projects in FFY 20/21, even after EPSP and Post Programming open on April 1.

1. Prop 1B seismic projects in construction with cost increases are the top priority.
2. Projects in construction requesting project close out.
3. Projects in construction based upon the Project Ranking Policy as prescribed in the LAPG Chapter 6 Guidelines. This includes projects that have gone to construction using AC and the project has been awarded. Projects that have utilized AC may receive a partial AC conversion, at the local agencies request.
"The lowest number rank is the highest priority. Within each rank, projects are sorted by AASHTO Sufficiency Rating (SR) to reflect the general condition of the bridge. The lowest SR is the highest priority."
4. Cost increases to BPMP projects in construction. Priority will be based upon the construction authorization date, oldest to newest.
5. Cost increases to Low water crossing projects in construction. Priority will be based upon the construction authorization date, oldest to newest.
6. R/W evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
7. PE evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Comments

- Programming had demand of \$685M as of October 2020 and capacity of \$289M this year.
- Funds from savings \$11M + de-obligations of \$9M = \$19M to use for other projects. Instead of the usual first-come first-serve from March-September 2021, the priority system will be used.
- HBP managers will report next meeting on how much has advanced.

- Rule is only for FFY 2021. HBP will follow normal financial constraint priorities in October and re-evaluate procedures again next February.
- On completion of financial constraint, PE and ROW phases will not be pushed out to last years of FTIP if agency responds to survey and has not missed any milestones.

7. Office Bulletin—Chapter 6 Reforms

HBP Managers shared the draft office bulletin, which the Division Chief approved in January, along with the proposed changes to Chapter 6 of the LAPG.

- The office bulletin will go through an additional round of Guidance and Oversight Process Review—comments from committee members should be submitted now so they can be incorporated.
 - Of the reforms listed below, the committee achieved consensus on adopting #1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13.
 - They suggested minor updates to #4, 5, 14.
 - They suggested more extensive updates #6, 10—revisions to be circulated for approval.
 - Item #7 requires further discussion with DEA and other departments, See A127.
1. Section 6.1 – Redefine high cost bridge projects to be projects with Right of Way total costs in excess of \$20 million or Construction total costs in excess of \$35 million. These projects will be limited to the previous cap of \$20 million of programming per year. This policy revision takes effect immediately.
 2. Section 6.1 – Addition of a definition of “Mid-Level” bridge projects. This mid-level definition would be for Construction total costs between \$15 million and \$35 million. Construction programming would split the over two federal fiscal years. This policy revision takes effect immediately.
 3. Section 6.1 – Revise the federal/local reimbursement ratio for all HBP projects to 80% HBP/20% local for on-federal aid system projects and 88.53% HBP/11.47% local for off-federal aid system projects. This applies to projects coming into the program.
 4. Section 6.3 – All bridge projects start as rehabilitation or Bridge Preventative Maintenance Plan (BPMP) projects. Proposed replacements must be justified and approved by HBP Managers. This applies to projects without E-76 for PE.
 - Change last sentence to “projects that do not have authorization to proceed with any phase.”
 - Comment: The committee previously discussed a pre-requisite for HBP funding that agencies have an asset management plan. HBP managers will need to further develop this with guidelines and the means to review all agency’s asset management plans. This is for future—not for current iteration of the LAPG.

5. Section 6.4 – Local agencies must include construction cost escalation factors with project programming documents. Escalation factors shall be CTC approved escalation factor. This policy revision takes effect immediately.
6. Section 6.4 – All bridges are only funded at the cost of the most cost-effective solution. HBP will not participate in aesthetics treatments above the 2% cap of bridge construction cost, except historic bridge projects. This policy revision takes effect immediately.
 - Include definition of historic bridge in definitions: “a bridge that is deemed eligible on either the State or the National Register, or both.”
 - Capping historic bridge work at 5%.
 - Revised wording to be circulated for approval.
7. Section 6.4. Environmental mitigation (not included in Office Bulletin but marked in LAPG Chapter 6 proposed updates, p. 19): specific definitions of mitigation accomplished within the scope of the project and maintenance work. HBP funds do not cover monitoring for longer than 3 years without approval.
 - CEQA and NEPA require tree replanting at higher ratio than removed
 - CDFW (Fish and Wildlife) permits require agency to do 5 years’ monitoring and maintenance, not 3.
 - Revisions to this section will be tabled until further discussions can be had on this topic. The text will remain as is for this Office Bulletin and LAPG Chapter 6 Reform.
8. Section 6.5 – Only minimum AASHTO standards and/or NACTO guidelines are eligible for HBP participation. This policy revision takes effect immediately. Projects with approved exceptions exceeding guidelines are exempt.
9. Section 6.6 – Project Prioritization Policy to change BPMP’s priority from 6 to 3, to encourage local bridge owners to keep their bridges in good condition. This policy revision takes effect immediately.
10. Section 6.7 – High Cost Bridge projects over \$50 million require a scoping document to get into the program, paid for by the local agency. The scoping document must consist of preliminary design developed by the agency that includes 30% plans and estimate. Funding for future high cost bridge projects will be limited to the 30% estimate. Caltrans to provide standard outline and format of scoping document. This policy revision takes effect immediately.
 - Office bulletin text does not match proposed update in the Ch 6 document—to be cleaned up.
 - Consider other ways to define level of sufficient detail instead of 30%. Some definitions may include underground utilities and others not.
 - Clarify whether agencies are still on the hook for cost increases when their projects are pushed out of current FTIP.
 - Cost increases beyond the 30% estimate will require justification to the HBP AC.

11. Section 6.7 – Clarification of bridge projects with Preliminary Engineering time extensions. If an agency has a project with PE over 10, with or without a time extension, HBP Managers will not program new bridge projects for the agency. This policy revision takes effect immediately.
12. Section 6.7 – All projects are required to submit an annual status report that provides project updates. The status report will replace the current annual survey. This policy revision takes effect immediately.
13. Section 6.7 – All changes to programmed project costs must be submitted to DLA using the LAPG 6-D form. This policy revision takes effect immediately.
14. Section 6.8 – All projects must have a Field Review, Type Selection Report, Hydraulic/Geotechnical Report reviewed by HBP Managers and/or Structure Local Assistance. This policy revision has implementation requirements outlined in LAPG Chapter 6.
 - Rehabilitation scopes can be complex to estimate on initial application. Consider details for how to get started—or address on 6-A forms.
 - Operational procedure for SLA approval, comments, documentation to be refined. During this transition time an email from SLA can suffice as approval.
 - Date in yellow--change to end of FFY instead of 3/21/21.

8. CA Statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment

Matt Randall reported on the bridge portion of the report.

- Quincy has an administrative version of the draft; clean version will be ready first week of March. Will give committee approximately a month to review it and have a subcommittee work on specifics. About 60 pages total in body of report, much of which is pictures and diagrams. Detailed data are in appendices.
- NCE noted that an oversight committee will also have a draft at the same time as HBP advisory between March 1-April 1.
- Aiming for completion in early May. CSAC will prepare op-eds, press releases, etc. to coincide with Legislature session, so exact date of public release may be later.
- NCE will share a link for more committee members to view and provide comments on the story map, structure, and content of website. The web maps are a separate function from the report and does now follow the same timeline.

9. Review new Action Items

A127 was added

10. Roundtable

- April 2021 meeting agenda to include discussion of high-cost bridge cap and transition steps into any new policy
- In a later 2021 meeting include environmental mitigation question from Ch 6 reform proposal

- Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) funds—can these go to the bridge program? What is the status of these? \$23,495,394 HIP funds to CA for bridge replacement and rehabilitation. DLA to follow up as information becomes available. There may be a State/Local split.
- As of 2012, any project sponsor coming forward with a 2nd PE time extension has to make a presentation for HBP advisory committee. Is this still something the Committee wants to be involved in? The discussion ended with Caltrans staff to handle the time extensions review and bring them to the committee if necessary.
- Is anyone representing Local HBP for Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act 2021 (CRSSAA) funds? What portion of the 40% coming to local programs can go to bridges? Ross indicated CALCOG but hasn't heard back yet.

Adjourn