

DRAFT Local Assistance
 Highway Bridge Program Advisory Committee Meeting
 April 15, 2021—Decisions Made, Action Items and Summary

Attendees

Jeanie Ward-Waller, Deputy Director
 Planning & Modal Programs
 Dee Lam, DLA
 Linda Newton, DLA
 Robert Peterson, DLA
 Andy Chou, DLA
 Jeremy Wright, DLA
 Robert Zezoff, DLA
 Jim Perrault, DLAE D6
 Sudhakar Vatti, SLA
 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
 Jesse Gothan, City of Sacramento
 Ross McKeown, MTC
 José Luis Cáceres, SACOG
 Marina Espinoza, CSAC
 Jon Pray, CTC
 Daniel Hawk, FHWA
 Max Katt, Quincy Engineering
 Gavin Keating, Quincy Engineering
 Margot Yapp, NCE
 Susan Herman, CSUS

Decisions

No decisions were made at the meeting.

All completed or closed 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	June 2021

Item Number	Status	Who	Action	Date Created	Target Date
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	August 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; see note on Item 3	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	June 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

Item Number	Status	Who	Action	Date Created	Target Date
A125	Complete	DLA	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.	6/18/20	2021
A127	Open	DLA	Environmental mitigation: Invite DEA input on Caltrans and CDFW departments' different terms for environmental monitoring and maintenance (3 years vs. 5 years)	2/22/21	August 2021
A128	Open	all	Committee members to provide input on the CA Statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment to Quincy by May 13, 2021.	4/15/21	5/13/21
A129	Open	Quincy Engineering	Quincy will create a list of local and state moveable bridge projects of interest where recent work has been completed, to gather more information about costs.	4/15/21	May 2021

Discussions

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Michael Johnson has moved back to Asset Management; Deputy Division Chief of Maintenance is now Erol Kaslan.
- Dee Lam affirmed that she is sharing outcomes from committee discussions with upper management.
- Jeanie Ward-Waller noted her appreciation of the Committee's work. Caltrans Director Toks Omishakin has asked for regular updates on HBP. Hard decisions will need to be made on reforms.

2. Agenda Review

- No changes were made to the agenda.

3. Review of 2/15/21 Draft action summary and 3/17/21 Draft Workshop summary

- A95 will be discussed at the June meeting.
- A110 and A120 to be acted on together.
- A112 and 127: Local Programs has an environmental specialist, may not be necessary to consult with Division of Environmental Analysis.
- A114: entire LAPG Chapter 6 is under review. Target for finalizing is May 2021. This item will be on hold until after that.
- A125 is complete.

The 3/17 workshop included discussion of two HBP proposed reforms:

- 5a) High-Cost Bridge projects: more input relevant to that will come today with discussion of Item #8, Needs Assessment report.
- 2c) Approach Roadway: the reform will not go forward at this time. Committee member comments are:
 - The approach roadway is inherently part of most bridge projects; there are minimum standards for length of roadway from top height of bridge to touchdown, for example.
 - Many projects would benefit from input from a roadway specialist so specific needs for alignment, etc. can be considered project-by-project.
 - It was noted the reform as proposed seemed too broad-stroke and disproportionately impactful. While it's important to have cost-cutting measures, a system of more targeted incentives may be preferable.
 - A Committee member recommended long approach costs be funded via different federal funding that locals and regions have access to.
 - A Committee member said Sacramento County is highlighting its bridge needs with federal liaisons/advocates to receive stimulus and/or new funding from an updated infrastructure bill. The Planning Deputy affirmed that bridges & roadway repairs are centerpieces of Caltrans' federal priorities list.
- Office bulletin for all HBP reforms will go out for stakeholder review once process review comments are addressed.
- Item 115: HBP managers recommend not making changes to BIC program currently. HBP managers provided a summary of discussion on this topic. A Committee member noted that training on how to use BIC is a need for many local agency staff.

4. Financial Status/Financial Constraint

HBP managers provided the financial status report.

- \$178.4M obligated as of 4/6/21—highest amount obligated by April in past 5 years.

HBP managers shared the financial constraint report.

- New 2021 Federal Statewide Transportation Improvement Program will be signed by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) tomorrow.

- Note the positive delta between the Federal Total amount that is programmed and the Available Funds: this will be programmed and used.
- Assumptions for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021/22 are based on a continuing resolution of current infrastructure act. If a new infrastructure package is passed, the numbers may change.

Comments

- Q: Is early delivery a function of Advance Construction (AC) conversions that carried over from last FFY? Seems a positive trend.
A: Most is for projects with current year funding since November 2020. Message that the program is over-subscribed has resonated; sponsors are coming in for their funding earlier, including AC conversions from last year.
- Q: Of the \$178M obligated thus far—is about half of this high-cost bridges coming in for AC conversion?
A: it represents about half of the On-system funds, not Off-system.
- Q: We're showing a positive balance—is this because it is programmed out for future years?
A: A positive balance represents projects that are in the queue for authorization.
- Q: HBP is paying back money to another program—is the other program using the funds?
A: A recission was written into the FAST Act, HBP utilized lapsing funds from the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). HSIP will utilize the funds paid back.
- Q: When was the last time a new project's PE was obligated?
A: FFY 2019/20. Currently all new PE is programmed in 2023/24.

5. Current Year Delivery

HBP managers shared a snapshot of the program as of early April. Report shows:

- number of bridge projects sponsored by each local agency.
- federal funds programmed in FFY 20/21 from November 2020's Financial Constraint
- federal funds obligated to a project in FFY 20/21 based on what was programmed in November 2020.
- federal funds remaining to be obligated.
- percent of federal funds obligated of programmed from November 2020.
- It was noted that Post Programming (PP) and Expedited Project Selection Procedures (EPSP) is not included in this report.

Where an agency has completed delivery and used fewer federal dollars than were programmed, this funding will be available to meet demand for EPSP and PP construction priorities. Deadline will be set (possibly mid-June 2021) for sponsors to submit RFA packages before their programmed funds are considered at-risk and provided to other projects.

6. EPSP/ PP advancements

HBP managers shared the report.

- Projects that were advanced following HBP EPSP and PP policies.
- Those coming up against Preliminary Engineering greater than 10 years (PE >10) deadline received funds needed to clear NEPA.
- \$2M available for additional advancements.
- The amount of available funds for EPSP/PP are dependent on de-obligations of prior year's programmed funds and projects obligating less than what was programmed this year.

7. PE > 10 Projects

HBP managers shared the report.

- Identifies agencies that may need help delivering their projects.
- Some will be out of compliance on October 1. HBP managers notified agencies in March of this status and the need to submit a time extension request.

Comments

- Q: How does FHWA determine when the PE 10-year deadline has passed?
A: Calculation is in statute; determined by 10 years plus number of months to end of the FFY.
- Q: If an agency requests an extension is it uniformly one year?
A: FHWA reviews each case to determine how much time an agency needs to clear NEPA and bases an extension approval on that.
- Q: City of Oxnard has 2 bridges on a PE>10 list on the HBP website, but do not appear on the report shared today. Similar situation for San Joaquin County. Clarification is needed about what it means to move to the next phase, for example, certify Right of Way (RW) vs. submit an E-76 for RW? Some do not program RW on their projects; ensuring federal requirements are met becomes cumbersome.
A: HBP managers will work with Implementation to ensure FHWA has information that RW has been accomplished. HBP managers are already working with Implementation toward greater consistency in this area. Any updates to time extension requests or procedure for agencies will be communicated soon.
- Q: is there a performance metric we are trying to set up with this information? What action is needed?
A: HBP managers do look at number of projects with PE>10 relative to the agency's total number of bridge projects programmed in the HBP to determine if there's a systemic problem.

8. CA Statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment

A Committee member provided an update, then started further discussions.

- Audience for report includes local agency public works officials and their elected boards. Will be used by CSAC to do advocacy.

- The Administrative draft of the bridge needs report is complete. Ready for committee member review. Committee member comments due by May 13, 2021. Send them to Max Katt maxk@quincyeng.com.
- Web story is drafted, needs additional photos and comments on the messaging; share with Jeremy Hall, JHall@ncenet.com
- Overall Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment report addresses pavement needs, bridge needs, other critical transportation infrastructure. Committee member comments on this also due by May 13, 2021, to Margot Yapp, MYapp@ncenet.com
- Links to all drafts are in handout Agenda Item 8.0 - HBP Local Bridge Needs Assessment Update - April 2021.pdf
- NEC estimates pavement and essential components portion of the report to be complete by end of May. NCE can share updated timeline after next week.
- HBP Advisory Committee (Committee) members will be listed in the Oversight Committee section, along with representatives from CEAC, LCC, and Cal COG
- Draft talking points:
 - Over 1000 bridges or 11.5% of California's local bridges are in poor condition; 7.1 million vehicle trips are made across these poor condition local bridges every day in California. Committee member suggests adding information on economic benefit of bridge assets to the state, in terms of goods movement and Gross Domestic Product. Letting these assets crumble will cost xx dollars to the state's economy. NEC noted that billions of dollars is hard to comprehend; a case study would be helpful here, e.g. collapse in Tehama County that split a community and caused long detours. And/or provide other reference points such as "I Street Bridge has been used since telegraph age"
 - Note that the State Highway System is at 3.3% poor bridges. The FHWA has a national goal of no more than 10% poor bridges on the National Highway System. The State of California has a state goal of no more than 1.5% poor bridges on the State Highway System by 2028.
 - At the current level of investment (\$290 million dollars annually), the percentage of poor condition local bridges will climb above 50% within the next 20 years.
 - The current bridge program financial commitment is approximately \$5.5 billion dollars. It would take nearly 19 years to fulfill this commitment at the current funding rate, without starting any new projects.
 - Committee member: item to add: Only about 30 bridges of the total inventory of 12,400 local public agency owned and operated bridges are being replaced every year. XX percentage of these are nearing the end of their useful life.
 - At current funding levels, local bridges will need to be in service for more than 200 years, or 3 times their intended lifespan.
 - The value of the current present bridge need is estimated to be \$7.2 billion. Broken down by activity: \$2.6B Widenings, \$1.2B Preservation, \$3.4B Major Rehab / Replacement. Committee member: This one needs definition: is this

amount to bring bridges up from Poor to Fair or Good condition? Quincy: includes replacing scour-critical, widening per Average Daily Traffic (ADT), seismic retrofit, preventative maintenance work.

- An annual funding amount between \$700 - \$800 million is expected to be required over the next 10 years to simply prevent an increase in the percentage of poor bridges from current levels.
- Discussion of other talking points and other information to include in the bridge area of the report. Most useful metrics: age > 100 is over its useful life; percent bridges in Good-Fair-Poor condition. For pavement, Pavement Condition Index is the focal metric.

Quincy shared findings on Moveable Bridges—trends and projected future needs:

- Moveable bridges make up small portion of inventory, 20 out of 12,400 locally owned bridges. Three are in poor condition; other NBI data used to determine type of work needed and cost: deck, superstructure, substructure, structural evaluation, scour, and sufficiency rating.
- Example of I Street bridge: not scour critical, deck OK, sufficiency rating of 61. Doesn't meet criteria for replacement. ADT vs. Greenbook standards indicates a widening need of around \$13M. It is programmed in the HBP for a much higher amount, because widening on a moveable bridge ultimately means it must be replaced.
- Example of Mokelumne River bridge on Walnut Grove Road: report shows rehabilitation is needed; only reason for Poor condition is deck pavement. However, there are other issues with the bridge that cause it to not meet standards; electrical and mechanical is also a significant cost. \$5.1M is not realistic for the scope of work that is needed.
- For purposes of the report, any given bridge in the population included in analysis may not appear to pencil out. But a number is needed for the aggregate calculation to be accurate so "widening" is used even though this work isn't feasible in isolation.
- \$450/square foot is being used for replacement cost for moveable bridges—higher than for fixed bridges. This was done to capture data not included in the National Bridge Inventory (NBI). Deck rehab cost per square foot was the same as for fixed bridges.
 - HBP Managers and other Committee members noted that the costs for moveable bridges predicted by the analysis is far too low compared to real costs of currently programmed movable bridge projects.
- Big disparity between needs analysis taken from data in NBI and estimates generated by bridge inspection reports.
- Should "mechanical" be a category for moveable bridges? Not included in report. There's no mechanical code in the NBI. Age is not included either. NBI data also do not have a code for bridges with a crane-removable section.

- In the next 10 years, which of the moveable bridges will become high-cost projects? And what is the appropriate catchall amount (\$50M, \$80M, other number) or methodology to determine amount? Quincy asked that HBP managers share info on additional costs so it can be included in the analysis. HBP managers can request State data based on bridges currently being worked on.
- Total need over next 10 years for moveable bridges as currently estimated by Quincy's methodology is \$123M. HBP Managers noted this does not seem realistic as the value is too low.
- A Committee member clarified that the number represents a theoretical amount of bare minimum cost based on NBI data, not actual project costs. It is worth capturing additional data as others mentioned, but better to err on the side of underestimating.

Quincy shared findings on High-Cost Bridges.

- Includes element ratings, age, water way topping and assumes replacement in-kind. Criteria mostly align with funding eligibility.
- Needs categories: replacement, deck rehabilitation, strengthening, widening, scour mitigation, seismic retrofit
- Compares HBP Projected cost based on amount programmed to NBI Data analysis projections. Some comparisons are hugely disparate, some are close together and close to the target.
- Currently there are approximately 810 projects in the HBP. Programming needs are determined by bridge owners who select project priorities within their inventories.
- Quincy's analysis predicts work on 27 of 451 candidate bridges, with an average cost of \$37.2M, median cost \$29.6M. This is not too far off from the programmed average cost of \$42.7M, median cost \$34.1M.
- Even with gaps between NBI-based needs calculation and actual costs being programmed for bridges, the report still shows that the annual need is more than double the current level of funding.

Quincy shared about an ADT-based metric for bridge annual value: Detour length x ADT x Mileage value.

- Based on paper, "Economic impact of closing structurally deficient or functionally obsolete bridges on very low-volume roads" (Fitzsimmons, Mulinazzi, & Schrock, 2014).
- Do not include this metric in the Needs Assessment report.
- Could be interpreted as a policy recommendation, e.g. if it will take longer than 75 years to break even on the investment, better choice is to close the bridge.
- Most competitive federal programs do use cost-benefit calculations; still, adding this data to the needs report may be at odds with equity perspective.

9. Review new Action Items

Committee members to provide their input for Quincy by May 13, 2021

Quincy will create a list of local and state moveable bridge projects of interest where recent work has been completed, to gather more cost information.

10. Roundtable

Cost saving idea discussion:

- Committee member: BIC offers incentive for local match. What would it look like to create incentives for broader cost savings? An example was shared of Sutter County's inexpensive concrete cast-in-place bridge in Sutter County. What about an application process or invitation for sponsors to propose creative projects that are "50% cheaper" (or another number) than typical cost, HBP will fund it at 100%? Committee member to reach out to Sutter County to gather more information on the method of savings
- Quincy: Build in a reward for performance, e.g. if agency delivers within time frame and budget, they receive a score that gives them an advantage for future competitive funding. Higher past performance rating = higher standing.
- Committee member: Example of HSIP funds exchange Federal-State. Could HBP swap \$20M of federal with state funding and do an ATP-style competitive grant (points for higher local match, etc.)? Lump sum, no cost increases, delivery within a set number of years.
- SB 137 is already in place and was used for HSIP. The Office Chief for Office of Federal Programs reported that the HSIP management team developed a process to track the swapped funds in the database; should be easy to adapt for HBP.
- Committee member will assemble volunteers for a workshop to mockup proposals and test designs.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:15pm.