



TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PUBLIC WORKS POLICY COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

Thursday, June 20, 2024

ATTENDANCE

Members: Colleen Wallace (Chair); Fred Jung (Vice Chair); Newell Arnerich; Melanie Bagby; Vida Barone; Greg Barton; Liz Becerra; Brigit Bennington; Joseph Bernal; Priya Bhat-Patel; Chelsea Byers; John Campbell; Omar Dadabhoy; Bob Engler; Thomas Gaffrey; Gaurav Garg; Mike Johnson; Trish Kelley; Chris Kelley; Peter Kraut; Irais Lopez-Ortega; Julie Lucido; Lisa Middleton; Linda Molina; Anna Nicholas; Jenelle Osborne; Ann Schneider; Kristine Scott; Richard Standridge; Margaret Talamantes; Terry Taplin; Alexander Trinidad; Steven Vargas; Don Weyhrauch; Dennis Wilberg; Bryce Wilson; Scott Wolfe; Cesar Zepeda

Cal Cities Partners: Alicia Berhow, Shannon McGovern

Staff: Damon Conklin, Legislative Affairs Lobbyist
Waleed Hojeij, Legislative Affairs Analyst

I. **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Colleen Wallace welcomed committee members to the third policy committee meeting of the year and thanked members for their service to all California cities. Cal Cities Executive Director and CEO Carolyn Coleman discussed our legal efforts related to the Taxpayer Deception Act that was before the state Supreme Court and indicated that a decision on the case from the high court was imminent. She thanked the chair and vice chair for the leadership of the committee and thanked committee members for their service and support for participating in policy committees.

II. **Public Comment**

Chair Wallace asked if there was any public comment. None were provided.

III. **General Briefing**

In accordance with the customary practice of convening all policy committee members for a general briefing prior to the start of policy committee meetings, the Cal Cities advocacy team compiled a General Briefing Document, which includes the latest on legislative and budgetary matters affecting cities.

IV. **Last Mile Broadband Program Grant Opportunities**

Cal Cities staff introduced Michael Minkus, Broadband Program Manager, California Public Utilities Commission. Mr. Minkus' presentation provided details on California's various broadband funding programs. He discussed the \$1.86 billion allocated to California through the federal Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program. The California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) budget of \$150 million per year was also mentioned. CASF provides grants for broadband infrastructure, adoption, and technical assistance through various accounts. Two CASF accounts

that accept biannual applications were highlighted - the Public Housing account and Adoption account.

Mr. Minkus covered the \$4.6 billion in federal funding applications received for the CPUC's Last Mile Federal Funding Account program. The CPUC has begun awarding some of these funds through proposed resolutions.

A question was asked about the number of unserved and underserved areas/counties that would be prioritized for the estimated \$650 million in BEAD program funding for broadband infrastructure projects in California.

V. California Middle Mile Broadband Initiative

Cal Cities staff introduced Mark Monroe, Deputy Director MMBI, California Department of Technology, provided an overview of California's effort to expand broadband access across the state through the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative. The goal of MMBI is to create a resilient fiber optic backbone network of over 10,000 miles that will run along highways and connect unserved communities across California. This network is being funded through \$3.873 billion in state and federal funds.

Significant progress has already been made towards building out the network. Through leases of existing infrastructure and joint build partnerships, over 6,500 miles of network have been secured at a cost of \$2.9 billion, well ahead of the original schedule. Construction is now underway on over 160 miles of fiber infrastructure. The ultimate deadline to complete the entire network is 2026 in order to meet federal funding requirements. While the goal is to activate some sections as early as late 2023, challenges in securing an additional \$1.5 billion in requested funding could impact the priorities for reaching the most remote and expensive areas to connect.

Engagement with stakeholders, like the cities and service providers, is a key part of the initiative. Surveys and an RFI process aim to understand connectivity needs and identify partnership opportunities. Once constructed, the network will be operated and maintained long-term by an experienced third party organization to ensure the network is sustainable and meets the policy goals around open access and affordability. Regular progress updates are provided through the MMBI website and quarterly advisory committee meetings to track ongoing developments.

There was a question about any updates on projects along the Highway 32 segments from San Francisco to San Jose, which Mr. Monroe responded would be delivered by one of their lease partners, not Caltrans.

It was asked where one could find a map showing the five regions of the middle mile broadband initiative network. Mr. Monroe provided a link to this map in the chat.

A representative from a city with their own dark fiber system asked how such cities could connect to the planned network. It was explained that MMBI aims to provide interconnection points every half mile at vaults and hubs to reduce connection costs.

VI. Legislative Analyst Office: Budget Update

Cal Cities staff introduced Frank Jimenez, Fiscal and Policy Analyst, and Luke Koushmaro, Fiscal and Policy Analyst, both with the Legislative Analyst Office, who provided an overview of the state's 2024-2025 budget as it relates to transportation state funding.

Mr. Jimenez began with an introduction to the LAO and the state budget process. They discussed the Governor's May budget revision and the legislative budget package in response that was passed by the legislature. Both proposals aimed to address the estimated \$28 billion budget shortfall.

Mr. Koushmaro provided additional details on specific transportation funding changes proposed by the Governor and passed by the legislature. This included reductions, delays, and adjustments to funding amounts for programs like formula transit funding, the Active Transportation Program, and zero-emission vehicle funding.

Questions from attendees included asking for more details on high speed rail funding, including for the San Francisco to San Jose corridor. They also asked how funding reductions may impact awarded transportation projects and how those entities would be notified.

The speakers concluded by noting some uncertainty around enacted budget reductions and potential shortfalls in future years. They discussed trying to prioritize impacted projects in existing transportation programs to help address reductions.

VII. Legislative Update

Cal Cities staff, Damon Conklin and Waleed Hojeij, provided an overview of the major bills Cal Cities is working on in the Transportation, Communication, and Public Works portfolio. Specifically, there was a discussion on several pieces of autonomous vehicle and transportation legislation in California. Cal Cities staff discussed the status of bills related to local control over autonomous vehicles, zero-emission vehicle requirements, and active transportation infrastructure. Also, staff identified efforts to provide more funding for electric vehicle acquisition and identified typically challenges that have been reported with hydrogen fuel infrastructure regulations.

Cal Cities staff provided an update on [AB 2290 \(Friedman\)](#) and [SB 1216 \(Blakespear\)](#), the two measures the committee voted on during the March policy committee meeting. Cal Cities successfully worked with authors to amend AB 2290 and they continue to work with authors to amend SB 1216 to provide more flexibility for cities. Both set of amendments reflected the committee's recommendation to the board.

There was discussion of varying policies related to safety issues involving electric bikes and scooters, especially for underage riders. A committee member asked if local jurisdictions could ban e-bikes from state highways. There were questions surrounding previous bills that do not allow a full ban, only prohibiting them from public spaces. Another member discussed accidents involving underage kids on e-bikes and scooters in their county.

VIII. Adjourn

Chair Wallace thanked everyone for their participation in the committee and thanked everyone for the opportunity to chair the committee in the 2024 year. The meeting adjourned at 12:20pm.

Next Virtual Meeting: Staff will notify committee members by August 23 if the policy committee will meet in October. If you have any questions, please contact [Meg Desmond](#), Cal Cities Associate Manager, Legislative Administration