



TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PUBLIC WORKS POLICY COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

Friday, January 24, 2025

ATTENDANCE

Members: Fred Jung (Chair); Newell Arnerich (Vice Chair); Robert Armijo; Phil Bacerra; Liz Becerra; Priya Bhat-Patel; Chelsea Byers; John Campbell; Amanda Carter; Jennifer Cervantez; Connie Cochran; Shannon DeLong; Bob Engler; Justin Ezell; Peggy Flynn; Thomas Gaffery; Gaurav Garg; Erika Herrera; Kerry Hillis; Mike Isom; Adria Jimenez; Mike Johnson; Peter Kraut; Linda Krupa; Marilyn Librers; JR Matulac; Brian McCarthy; Jennifer Mendoza; Linda Molina; Joshua Nelson; Heather Newsom; Adolfo Ozaeta; Kelli Pickler; Christian Punsai; Kristine Scott; Amber Shah; Helen Tran; Nathan Vosburg; Colleen Wallace; Scott Wolfe

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

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Fred Jung and Vice Chair Newell Arnerich welcomed committee members and introduced themselves.

Chair Fred Jung introduced Cal Cities Executive Director Carolyn Coleman and President Lynne Kennedy, Mayor Pro Tem of Rancho Cucamonga. President Kennedy emphasized the importance of communicating community priorities to legislators and thanked members of the committee for their efforts.

Director Coleman began her remarks by expressing sympathy for the cities in Southern California affected by the LA fires. She recognized committee member Thaddeus McCormack, long standing committee member, who has been instrumental in organizing a mutual aid network for city managers.

Director Coleman then highlighted President Kennedy's commitment to meeting members across the state. She discussed the numerous meetings held with legislators and the excitement from legislators to hear from cities, despite budget challenges and federal administration uncertainties.

II. Public Comment

Chair Jung 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 Update Document](#), which includes the latest on legislative and budgetary matters affecting cities.

IV. Survey and Adoption of 2025 Work Plan

Waleed Hojeij presented the results of the workplan survey. Cal Cities staff surveyed policy committee members to better prioritize focus areas for 2025. The top three issues based on the survey responses are:

- Infrastructure and Maintenance Funding
Secure funding for roadways, bridges, and other critical infrastructure, address deferred maintenance, and ensure sustainable infrastructure planning and improvement.
- Public Transportation Access and Funding
Respondents emphasized the need for better public transit accessibility, operational funding for transit systems, and addressing Road use charge/gas tax concerns.
- Broadband and Telecommunications Access
Expand broadband availability, ensure affordable digital access for all communities, and modernize telecommunications infrastructure to promote economic growth and inclusivity.

Members emphasized the importance of ensuring cities retain flexibility and decision-making authority to address unique local challenges. Additional areas of interest include modernizing evacuation routes, enhancing telecommunications during emergencies (such as wildfires), and preparing for zero-emission and autonomous vehicle integration.

The 2025 Work Plan was adopted with unanimous support following discussion.

V. Transportation Funding and Gov Budget

Frank Jimenez, Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst Office, presented an overview of the state budget process and transportation funding challenges. They explained the steps from the January budget proposal to the July enactment, highlighting challenges such as managing wildfire costs and potential federal funding changes.

He reported that despite proactive measures in 2024, the state faces projected operating deficits from 2026 to 2029. Key transportation allocations include \$4 billion in formula funding for transit and rail capital, with the final \$1 billion scheduled for 2025-26. However, no new funding is allocated for the Zero-Emission Transit Capital Program (ZETCP) in 2025-26. The budget also includes \$25 million for the Clean California Community Cleanup and Employment Pathways Grant Program.

During the Q&A session, committee members raised concerns about the accuracy of budget projections given uncertainties like wildfires and economic changes. The analysts emphasized stability in short-term projections but acknowledged risks in out-years. Questions on equity in transportation funding highlighted disparities affecting rural and disadvantaged communities, with ongoing studies cited as part of the response. Members also requested clarity on preemptive wildfire resiliency funding, and the analysts referred to climate bond allocations as a potential resource.

VI. SB1 and Road Use Charge

Lauren Prehoda, Road Charge Program Manager, Caltrans, discussed the challenges of relying on the gas tax for transportation funding. She highlighted issues such as declining revenues due to fuel efficiency gains and the rise of zero-emission vehicles, as well as inflation eroding the purchasing power of fixed-rate taxes.

Mrs. Prehoda outlined the proposed Road Charge Program (RCP), a system that charges drivers based on miles driven. The RCP is designed to replace the gas tax, ensuring revenue neutrality and equitable burden distribution without incentivizing specific behaviors. Several pilot programs, including those focused on rural and tribal communities and GPS-based revenue collection, are ongoing to inform future implementation.

Committee members expressed concerns about the regressive impacts of the RCP on disadvantaged communities. Mrs. Prehoda clarified that the RCP addresses these inequities by charging all drivers based on usage rather than fuel type. Questions on administrative costs revealed plans to leverage private partnerships for cost efficiency. Members also explored alternative tax structures, including electricity-based taxes, though Mrs. Prehoda noted technological challenges in tracking electricity use for vehicles.

VII. Local Highway and Bridge Program

Andy Chou and Roberta Jensen, both from the Caltrans Office of Bridge Design, provided an overview of the Local Highway Bridge Program (HBP). The program focuses on maintaining the structural safety of existing local bridges, with funding sourced from federal programs requiring an 11.47% local match.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) significantly increased funding through core apportionments and the Bridge Formula Program. California received \$384 million for on-federal-aid-system bridges and \$186 million for off-federal-aid-system bridges in 2025. However, program backlogs persist due to limited funding in prior years, and scour—erosion around bridge foundations—remains the leading cause of bridge failures.

Committee questions focused on project prioritization and funding gaps. Mr. Chou and Ms. Jensen explained that projects are selected based on cost-effectiveness and critical safety concerns, with delayed reimbursements posing challenges for local budgets.

VIII. Legislative Update

Damon Conklin provided updates on the legislative landscape. With over half of the legislature having two years or less of experience, they emphasized the importance of relationship-building and educating new members. Key issues include permitting reform, advanced clean fleet programs, and sustainable transportation funding.

Members sought guidance on engaging legislators and addressing funding shortfalls under SB 1. Mr. Conklin advised leveraging local relationships and submitting letters to the legislator.

IX. Existing Policy and Guiding Principles

Mr. Conklin gave a brief overview on our [Existing Policy and Guiding Principles](#). It was described as a foundational, living document that is revised biennially by every Policy Committee. It is available on the Cal Cities website and serves as a comprehensive guide for committee actions and positions on legislative issues.

X. Closing Remarks and Adjourn

Chair Jung and Vice-Chair Arnerich thanked committee members for their engagement and encouraged ongoing advocacy and participation in future meetings.

Next Meeting: Friday, March 28, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Marriott Burbank Airport Hotel, 2500 N. Hollywood Way, Burbank