HUMBOLDT COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
Regional Transportation Planning Agency
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DATE: October 27, 2021

TO: Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

FROM: Oona Smith, Senior Regional Planner

SUBJECT: **Regional Transportation Plan Update: Criteria for listing proposed projects in RTP Action Plans and Development of Equity Criteria**

STAFF REPORT

Contents:

- Staff's Recommended Action
- Staff Summary
- Administrative draft Disadvantaged Communities map
- Public Draft RTP Complete Streets project table (for reference)

Staff's Recommended Action:

1. Introduce the item as an action item;
2. Allow staff to present the item;
3. Receive public comment;
4. Make a motion to direct staff regarding project and equity criteria and/or to make a recommendation to the HCAOG board, as applicable.

Staff Summary:

At the last HCAOG Board meeting (Oct. 21) the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and the Board voted to approve the Regional Transportation Plan full public draft update, *Variety in Rural Options of Mobility* (*VROOM*) 2022-2042. (The formal public review period is October 22 to (Sunday) November 21, 2021.)

Staff is bringing two RTP related items to the TAC. The first is in regards to the RTP Complete Streets project list and the second is related to developing equity criteria. We will present the TAC's feedback and consensus recommendations to the Board at their November meeting, and will follow the Board's directions for revising the final draft of the RTP update (which the Board will review and consider adopting in December).

Complete Streets Project Table

While the PAC and Board voted to release the public draft, they are also interested in determining a useful and meaningful way to more closely align projects that are listed in the RTP with the goals, objectives, and targets of the RTP. Several public stakeholders have requested the same thing in their comments on the RTP administrative drafts.

One of the central purposes of RTPs is to identify, in an open process with community input, regional transportation projects that will help achieve the RTP's goals. For some state and federal funding programs, projects must be listed in the adopted RTP to be eligible for funding. For discretionary, non-formula funds that HCAOG oversees, this is the case for Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) funding (which is part of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)).

Staff would like the TAC to discuss and give insight and recommendations on criteria or thresholds that we could use to "test" if proposed projects get included in the RTP. We can use the Complete Streets' Action Plan (i.e., project table) as the guiding example for this discussion.

In the 2017 *VROOM*, high-priority projects are those that will fulfill all six of the RTP's main objectives/planning priorities[1], or would fulfill five of the objectives including Balanced Mode Share/Complete Streets. There is no criteria for including proposed projects in the RTP.

The draft update *VROOM* 2022-2042 states in the Complete Streets Element, "Project priorities are illustrated by which objectives a proposed project will help achieve, based on the objectives and targets from the RTP's Safe & Sustainable Transportation Targets" (mode shift, lowers VMT, access, vision zero). Some of the jurisdictions (Arcata, Ferndale, Fortuna, City of Trinidad, and Trinidad Rancheria) have rated projects; other jurisdictions' projects are not rated.

I would like TAC members' thoughts on entertaining the proposal to omit projects that are not likely to meet any of the SST targets. For example, in the current draft table, the following rated projects meet none of the targets and therefore would be deleted: roadway rehabilitation, maintenance paving, drainage improvements, and centerline and edge striping.

I would like to know if there are other meaningful, goal-oriented criteria that are missing from the current array in the project table (mode shift, lowers VMT, access, vision zero). The project table does not include the full array of SST performance measures, which is:

- reduce GHG emission in the air district
- percent mode shift
- reduce VMT (vehicle miles travelled by car)
- zero-emission infrastructure
- zero-emission school busses and public fleet vehicles
- efficiency and practicality in locating housing
- convenient access to destinations
- vision zero
- active transportation education
- invest in complete streets (increase regional funding or secure new funding)

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[1] Complete streets; economic, environmental, operation, system preservation, and safety.

Please suggest criteria and share any concerns for evaluating projects for inclusion in the RTP's action plans (and project tables).

Equity

The draft update *VROOM 2022-2042* has goals and policies for supporting and delivering an equitable regional transportation system, including prioritizing funding for projects that increase equitable outcomes. As one approach for starting to consider equity outcomes, we have drafted a map that shows "disadvantaged communities" defined by the following criteria. *(Criteria are based on definitions and data from the U.S. Census (2016 5-year ACS data).)*

☐ <u>Conditions A</u> – Census block groups with indicators:
  - ○ Racial/ethnic minority – where 20% or more of population is either Hispanic or not White, and
  - ○ Households with low incomes (80% or less than the statewide median household income)

☐ <u>Conditions B</u> – Census block groups with indicators:
  - ○ Households with low incomes (80% or less than the statewide median household income), and
  - ○ at least 3 of 9 following variables
    1. Poverty – where 45% or more of population lives at 200% or less of the federal poverty.
    2. Unemployed – Census block groups where 20% or more of the labor force is unemployed.
    3. Elderly – where 10% or more of population is aged 75 or older.
    4. Young – 20% or more of population is under age 18.
    5. Linguistic isolation – where 5% or more of households have no one over 14 who speaks English only or speaks English very well.
    6. Limited mobility-vehicle access – where 40% or more of housing units with 0-1 vehicles
    7. Limited mobility-active transportation – Smaller block groups without bike facilities access within ½ mile radius.
    8. Limited mobility-transit – Smaller block groups without transit access within ½ mile radius.
    9. Housing cost burden – where 20% or more of occupied housing units pay more than 50% of household income in housing costs.

See the attached map for results of these criteria.

Staff is looking for comments on the criteria and suggestions for additional approaches.