

NOVEMBER 14th SF BAY ITE LUNCH MEETING

The SF Bay ITE Section and East Bay Traffic Engineers (EBTE) had a joint meeting on November 14th focusing on various multi-modal grants and funding opportunities for agencies in the San Francisco Bay Area. The meeting had three presentations made by the following speakers:

- Sean Co (MTC) – Quantifying the Physical Activity Benefits of Transportation Investments
- Beth Thomas and Becky Frank (Caltrans) – Implementation of Plan Bay Area: Availability of State Transportation Grants for Planning, Design, and Construction Projects.
- Eduardo Serafin (UC Berkeley Tech Transfer) – Pedestrian/Bicycling/Traffic Safety Assessments for California Communities.

Quantifying the Physical Activities Benefits of Transportation Investments

Sean Co
MTC

Data shows that trends in obesity have grown since 1990. Factors that contribute to this growth include increased average daily vehicles mile traveled per person, larger portion size for food, and working in low physical activity occupation. As a result, the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) showed that 62% of Bay Area residents are inactive. To end these growing trends in obesity, a push for active transportation through walking and biking is needed.

By increasing physical activity, an individual can save up to hundreds of dollars in health care costs. In the United States, poor diet and physical inactivity is the number 2 cause in premature deaths behind smoking. By increasing physical activity through walking and biking, the risk of individuals in getting diseases such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes are reduced. Furthermore, physical activities can also reduce premature deaths caused by these diseases. For the San Francisco Bay Area, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) wants to push for active transportation by increasing the number of Bay Area residents from inactive to active by awarding projects to local agencies based on health impacts.

Implementation of Plan Bay Area: State Transportation Grants

Becky Frank and Beth Thomas
Caltrans

In September 26, 2013, the governor of California signed SB 99, creating the Active Transportation Program (ATP). The ATP consolidates a number of stand-alone state and federal programs with 25% of the funds to be used to benefit “disadvantaged communities.” The major goals of ATP includes: increase trips by bicycling and walking, increase safety and mobility for non-motorized users, reduce greenhouse gases, reduce childhood obesity, and provide projects that benefit a broad spectrum of active transportation users. The funds will be distributed as follows: 40% to MPOs, 50% to statewide, and 10% to small urban and rural communities. The

next steps of ATP is to prepare guidelines for agencies to follow, oversee the initial 2 year program, and provide outreach and training to local agencies.

In addition to ATP, California has transportation planning grants for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. These grants will focus on Partnership Planning for Sustainable Transportation and transit planning for sustainable and rural communities. The Partnership Planning for Sustainable Transportation grant focuses on funding transportation planning studies of multi-regional and statewide significance in partnership with local agencies that align with sustainable community strategy implementation. The grant has a funding limit of \$2.5 million with a cap of \$300,000. In additions, agencies applying for this grant need to match a local funding of 20% in order to qualify for the grant.

The Transit Planning for Sustainable Community grant funds studies on transit issues in statewide or multi-regional locations to assist in reducing congestion. The budget for this grant is \$1.8 million with a cap of \$300,000. In the San Francisco Bay Area, transit agencies, cities, and counties, and Native American Tribal Government can apply to Caltrans directly. The Transit Planning for Rural Communities grant focuses on funding public transportation studies in rural or small urban areas. The budget for this grant is \$1 million with a cap of \$100,000. Similar to the Transit Planning for Sustainable Community grant, transit agencies, cities and counties, and Native American Tribal Governments can apply to Caltrans directly.

UC Berkeley Tech Transfer: Technical Assistance Services

Eduardo Serafin

UC Berkeley Tech Transfer

The funding for the UC Berkeley Tech Transfer receives funding Caltrans, the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), and self-supporting programs. The Tech Transfer provides training, conferences, resources, and technical assistance to practitioners in local, regional, and state agencies. The technical assistance program provides traffic safety assessments (TSA), pedestrian safety assessments (PSA), and bicycle safety assessments (BSA).

The TSA is funded by OTS and combines experts from traffic engineering and enforcement. The objective of the TSA is to reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities. The TSA is free to cities and counties and will need to be initiated by the public works, planning, or police department. The engineering part of TSA focuses on the top 10 collision locations, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, school circulation issues, cut through traffic in residential streets, and traffic signal timing and phasing. During evaluation, site visits to high collision are done and recommend any pedestrian or bike collision counter measures. The TSA Final Report will provide the evaluator's assessment and recommendation which focuses on best practices and proven strategies tailored to meet the needs of the agency.

The PSA combines experts from traffic engineering and transportation planning. This program enables California communities to improve pedestrian safety at specific locations and to enhance walkability, livability, and economic vitality. The process is divided into three phases: pre-visit, site visit, and post-visit. The pre-visit phase includes data collection and phone interview, the site visit phase includes walking audits and preliminary recommendations, and the post-visit

includes the final report. In order for the assessment to be a success, participation from multiple departments and decision makers is recommended and the assessment should be concurrent with other planning efforts.

The BSA is a new program from the Tech Transfer and combines experts from traffic engineering and transportation planning. Similar to the PSA, the assessment will include benchmarking analysis, phone interviews, field audit, and suggestions for bicycling safety improvement. Because this is a fairly new program, a pilot assessment was done for the City of Stockton and 4 locations will be selected during this grant cycle for assessment. To continue these programs, the Tech Transfer will make a proposal to the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) to include more TSAs, PSAs, and BSAs so that the Tech Transfer can continue to provide technical assistance to local, regional, and state agencies.