

Middle-Mile Advisory Committee
December 15, 2021
Meeting Recap and Transcript

The Middle-Mile Advisory Committee met on Wednesday December 15, 2021 at 1:05pm PST via virtual conference (per [California Executive Order N-25-20](#)).

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Overview

Council Chair Amy Tong welcomed Council members and attendees and a quorum for the meeting was established.

Member		Designee	Present	Absent
California Department of Technology	Amy Tong		X	
California Public Utilities Commission	Marybel Batjer	Martha Guzman-Aceves	X*	
Department of Finance	Gayle Miller		X*	
Government Operations Agency	Yolanda Richardson		X	
Department of Transportation	Toks Omishakin	Michael Keever	X	
State Senate	Lena Gonzalez	(Ex-Officio Member)	X*	
State Senate	Mike McGuire	(Ex-Officio Member)		X
State Assembly	Sharon Quirk-Silva	(Ex-Officio Member)	X	
State Assembly	Jim Wood	(Ex-Officio Member)		X

*Arrived after roll call.

Assembly Member Quirk-Silva congratulated Chair Tong on her appointment to the Office of Digital Innovation and announced she had been appointed Chair of the Assembly Committee on Communications and Conveyance. Secretary Richardson congratulated Ms. Tong, announced Russ Nichols will be serving as Acting Director of the California Department of Technology, is up to speed on broadband issues, and will be chairing the Committee going forward. Mr. Nichols noted he appreciated the opportunity. Ms. Miller noted that everyone anticipates a smooth transition.

Agenda Item 2: Executive Report Out

Mark Monroe provided updates including that the Third Party Administrator contract has been

signed for the next three years - the remainder of the development period, they have the initial work authorization for Caltrans to begin its work, and spoke about the supply chain.

Agenda Item 3: Project Updates

Mark Monroe provided an update on the timeline and cadence of the next Middle-Mile projects. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) will release statewide need information later this month and staff is working on one-page information sheets for the initial 18 projects.

Tony Naughtan of the Third Party Administrator provided an update on initial projects underway and the creation of a program plan for Middle-Mile development. Work is underway on the 18 initial projects including route planning and design specifications; coordination with Caltrans and its contractors and suppliers on new builds; and negotiation for Dark Fiber Indefensible Right of Use (IRUs) in locations where that is the initial development approach decided upon. They are also working on the creation of a program plan for Middle-Mile development to document the processes and operational steps to be followed development at each location for the duration of Middle-Mile program and serve as the foundational piece for an eventual, broader publication that will cover all development and network operations aspects and policies for this Middle-Mile network infrastructure.

Assembly Member Quirk-Silva asked about criteria and consideration for the next round of projects, how the last mile is considered for projects, and California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) allocations. Mr. Keever asked about public comments for the build considerations. Mr. Monroe and Mr. Naughtan responded to the questions and Mr. Osborn added to the responses during his presentation.

Rob Osborn from the CPUC provided an update on last mile initiatives including Technical Assistance Grants, last mile federal funding account, and the Loan Loss Reserve Fund. He provided timeline overviews of all three.

Elizabeth Dooher provided an update on the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) delivery and process.

Scott Adams provided an update of federal broadband funding.

Assembly Member Quirk-Silva asked about meeting dates and public comment.

Ms. Tong congratulated Commission Martha Guzman-Aceves on her appointment as the Region 9 Administrator for the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Commissioner Guzman-Aceves thanked everyone and wished the Committee continued success. She also announced that Alice Reynolds will be the new CPUC President as of the first of the year.

Agenda Item 4: Public Comment

Staff pointed out that questions can be emailed to the Committee staff through [the Middle Mile email account](#) and that there is an [online public comment form](#) for anyone who wishes to make public comments outside of public meetings. Both are located on the bottom of the [Committee web page](#).

Public comments were provided by:

- Stan Santos.
- Shayna Englin.

- Lisa Lavelle.

Closing Remarks

Ms. Tong thanked Committee members, staff, and attendees and wished everyone a happy New Year.

The meetings finished at 2:15 PST.

(meeting transcript attached)

Transcript

We're recording thank you. Alright, good afternoon everyone. Welcome to our final middle mile advisory committee meeting of the year. Great to have everyone continue to participate in this process and looks like we're getting too close to another 100 participants, which is a great, great number of folks that continue to be very interested in this topic. Without further ado, I'd like to go ahead and get this meeting going. Starting with – oh I already see a hand raised, perhaps less establish the quorum first. Let's have Jules to go ahead and do a roll call.

Certainly. So we do have a quorum.

Thank you, Jules.

And Assembly Member Quirk-Silva, since you have your hand raised, is there a comment?

Yeah, there there is. Is there any way we could take the agenda down so I can see who's out there? Sure, let's go ahead and do that. Just for a second. Yeah. Good afternoon to everybody. And I wanted to be the first to congratulate Director Amy Tong on her new appointment as the Director of the Office of Digital Innovation. So not going to far, but we know you'll do an excellent job as you already have in this role. So congratulations. But I also did want to take a personal note to let you know that I am now have been appointed as the Chair of the Assembly, Communications and Conveyance Committee and as you know, there is a direct interrelation and an intersection of what we're talking about here and that committee. We've already held three stakeholder meetings and so are ready to jump in in a robust way. But I will continue to focus on my role as the Chair of Communication and Conveyance, and also as committee member here to make sure that we continue to provide strong oversight, accountability, and transparency for our consumers and for our state. And make sure we meet the goals of providing broadband to all. So thank you so much.

Thank you Assembly Member for sharing that and kind word for for that. And since you just read my mind as we were just going to use the first couple of minutes to do some type of announcement. I was hoping to wait for Commissioner. Oh I don't think she's here yet! All right, we will get to her when the Commissioner joins but since you have already started making the announcement. Yes, I am sure many of you have heard about my new role starting January 1, but I'd like to ask my boss, Secretary Richardson, if she could say a few words about that transition. Secretary?

Thank you, Madam Chair. Appreciate it. So and thank you Miss Quirk-Silva for the wonderful, exciting announcement. We recently at GovOps shared that we had an embarrassment of riches in that, as you mentioned, Amy Tong will start a new position as the Director of the Office of Digital Innovation and I could not be more thrilled that I get to continue to work with Ms. Tong. And on top of that, Russ Nichols, who has been a tremendous resource, support and colleague as chief deputy at CDT has agreed to take on the role of acting director at the California Department of Technology. And so I just want to thank him in advance for all his work, including chairing the middle mile Advisory Committee going forward. However, we are not letting Miss Tong off that easy as she will continue to have a role with this advisory body and we look forward to sharing more about that at the next meeting. But congratulations, Amy and Russ on your new roles. Thank you.

Thank you, Secretary. Russ, do you want a couple of words from you?

Just to say thank you, I appreciate the opportunity and I've been a participant in the process

already. So up to speed and looking forward to helping to carry the ball forward. So thank you.

Thank you. Kind of look at...want to open up to the rest of the committee members. Are there any other announcements? Still trying to stall long enough. Oh, there you go. Ms. Miller.

I'll help you stall, Director Tong! I...So perhaps the best thing about Mr. Nichols is that he actually thinks my jokes are funny. He may be the only person on the planet so. But in addition, has been a real partner in this effort and I especially know because this was part of the enabling legislation from the assembly, just that that we're really mindful of the transition and all of our commitments and to make sure that that you're up to speed and that you will see that should feel incredibly seamless to you. That between the Secretary and the director and the acting director, you'll really see a commitment to that level of transparency and continuation and a huge deal of that will also be to Mr. Monroe who were thrilled is here. And when I do think that that I agree, Secretary, it's an embarrassment of riches, but I do think that your ability, Amy at ODI to really to move the idea of innovation forward in general, I think broadband is just the beginning. And I've shared so many times with you, just you know, the incredible admiration we have for your ability to get things done and really do the work in government which is extraordinarily difficult... Is really second to none. So it's a privilege and I just look forward to getting to work with this team. And I'm really grateful that you and GovOps managed to put together this, this team of broadband folks that will really execute and follow this through. And so thank you very much for that and thank you, Miss Quirk-Silva for your introduction of that as well.

Thank you, Miss Miller for the kind words. And once again, congratulations to Assemblymember Quirk-Silva. I'm sure we're going to come back to the announcement portion because I just looked and I still do not see Commissioner here yet. So let's go ahead and get moving with the agenda because we have quite a few items, I believe, from the staff that are going to present and let's go to Mark Monroe.

Yes. Good afternoon, Mark Monroe with CDT and wanted to start with something that's not on the agenda: to introduce Laura Sasaki. Laura recently joined us at CDT at the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy as the Statewide Broadband Initiative Manager. Her job will be to lead on collaborating with partners and stakeholders throughout the state on broadband for all and supporting middle mile. Laura comes to us from the California State Library where she was the Broadband Program Manager. She has worked extensively with the California Broadband Council and was a member on CENIC's board. Laura, are you showing your...can we see you yet? I don't know if we can see her. But prior to that, Laura worked on E-Rate IT and broadband infrastructure for a number of entities including school districts in San Francisco Unified and the Central Valley. So we want to, want to welcome Laura to our team.

Thank you, Mark. Yeah, it was just a little-a little technical issue, getting that stopped there. So thank you for that. I'm very happy to be part of the team and look forward to working with all of you on the broadband initiatives.

Alright welcome. So first of all, I wanted to give a kind of a program update in terms of...we can kind of move on to the next slide there. The...I wanted to announce that we had, you know after having had an initial contract with a third party administrator, we have signed a contract for the remainder of this development period for the next three years. So this contract is intended to get us through the next three years of development of the network to build a connected resilient system primarily through builds but also through IR use strategically throughout the system. The TPA will provide an update of its activities and next steps and in a few minutes. We had discussed I think, in the previous meeting that there were questions about the supply chain concerns. We have started the process of reaching out to fiber manufacturers to discuss what the state will be

needing how industry is planning to adapt to the anticipated increase in demand and what tools are available to California to ensure that we can keep pace with the project. We're working with DGS, Caltrans as well as the third-party administrator on the analysis for material needs and then meeting with industry and ask the TPA to start conversations with major manufacturers and vendors to assess kind of what the best tools will be available to make sure that we're able to move forward with this project as planned. And keep on schedule. And regarding the joint build opportunities, we have begun reaching out to PG&E to start some preliminary conversations to explore synergies for joint build opportunities, because I think most people are aware of the IRUs or other providers, you know are in the process of you know, going through a long term undergrounding of infrastructure to reduce fire risk and so we've asked the TPA to reach out and explore opportunities to build together to help share the costs and really help the funding that's been...the federal funding that's been provided for this project to go further. Regarding kind of the project updates: since the November announcement of the 18 initial projects, we have issued work authorizations for Caltrans to begin its pre-construction work. The design and everything involved in that will need to be done before the project can go to construction. Similarly, we have issued a work authorization for the third-party administrator, excuse me, to begin reaching out to providers, middle mile providers, and others to look at what options there might be and the associated costs and issues for IRUs for deciding where it's going to make the most sense to lease segments of existing infrastructure. As I think most people are aware, we're going to...that will be an important component of the overall approximately 8000 mile system in terms of using a maximizing the use of existing infrastructure in combination with the majority of the of the system that we plan to build. Can move to that? There we go. So in terms of kind of the timeline and cadence that we're expecting here, as we mentioned before, the Public Utilities Commission is going to be coming out with more of a statewide look at where the needs are, where the unserved populations are in the state. And so, you know, towards the end of December. So, in the coming year, we in January, we'll be having a broader discussion about really the statewide need and the approach of how we want to handle that. We anticipate in the in the first two quarters of 2022 coming out with really the broader plan and the broader list of projects that are going to make up this the statewide open access system. And then, in addition to that, we have the...some of the meetings with members...we have, there's been mention that they're putting together a kind of a desire to have a one pager on each of the 18 initial projects that were announced in November and so that's a format that's still being worked on. But that is something that we're looking forward to, to the to coming out with by the next time we meet as well. So with that, with the third party administrator provide an update.

Before we go into the third party administrators, I just want a quick ask if there's any questions or comments from the committee members. All right. Hearing none. Let's keep moving.

Thanks very much, Amy. Tony Naughton with the third party administrator. Yes indeed the work is well underway on the 18 initial projects and this work includes planning the physical network routes from selected middle mile locations upstream to the most feasible core access locations. It includes review of dark fiber availability options, if any, on each route. It includes execution on the initial development approach for a given location that is new build versus dark fiber, as decided upon with CDT, our partner. It's worth noting that the regional – pardon me - that the approach here is to develop regional ring network topologies. That's the objective for this carrier class network. This will enable redundant service routes to avoid single points of failure on the middle mile network. So an example of our approach could be for instance, start with a dark fiber alternative where possible, and then complete a protected ring topology with a path reverse route that oftentimes will be newly built fiber. In addition, our work with these initial 18 projects includes, of course, design specifications. Beyond just the standard specifications, these are site specific because each location will have slight variations, or at least oftentimes will have variations. Very important also is our work in coordinating with Caltrans and its contractors on new build locations

and also coordinating and interacting, starting right now as Mark mentioned, interacting with manufacturers and providers of the physical network materials and the required electronics for switching and routing network traffic, with a particular focus on supply chain issues and delay avoidance that we can plan around as much as possible. And there is also negotiation activity for dark fiber and locations where that is the recommended development approach. So quite a few moving parts now that we have some actual middle mile locations that we're developing towards and we're really, already learning quite a bit from this activity as is our partner CDT, and that, of course, was one of the main objectives of these initial projects. In addition to the initial project work, we're spending a lot of focus time now on development of a program plan, which formally documents the processes and operational steps to be followed for middle mile network development. This will document the processes that CDT and TPA will follow going forward. Processes for route planning with both new builds and dark fiber options, specifications and costing, oversight of network development implementation, which is one of the main roles of the TPA in this effort, reporting and communications to stakeholders. The development program, pardon me, the program plan will also include acceptance testing, process and procedure of newly developed fiber plants, new network activation into production capability when a network span is ready for that. This program plan will also include eventually, documentation of network operations practices and policies for this middle mile network. But documenting the network development processes comes first of course. I think it's important to remember that what we are creating here with our partner CDT is a carrier class open access network that will be scaled and operated by applying standardized policies and processes as much as possible. The program plan I'm referring to is a key foundational piece that will document the development operation of this network. And it's an important step just like it would be in any large network development or infrastructure development endeavor. And that concludes my report.

Thank you, Mr. Naughton. I do, before I open up to the committee for any questions or comment, I do want to acknowledge that Senator Gonzalez just joined so welcome. All right, any question/comments specifically to Mr. Naughton?

Hi, I have a few questions, but it could be either addressed in this section or in the next section under project updates, but but they're kind of general questions. So how do you want me to do that? Would you like to go ahead and ask the question first, and then we'll ask if Mr. Monroe or Mr. Naughton either they can address or if there's more information coming up that would address later as well.

Right and they can intertwine that. I mean, generally on when it comes to the initial 18 projects, I first of all, give a huge cheer to how fast those were move forward. We definitely were excited to see projects already determined and moving forward. But my question is with the second round of projects, on the decisions of where those will be, the criteria to a guess I guess what I would say is, to be considered to be in the round two, will there be a specific type of information put forward so that if there are people in line hoping to be part of that second round, that they'll understand what factors they will need to abide by in order to be considered? So it's all about second round, and how will that be determined? And as a member of this committee, will we get some information so that if we are asked, we can convey that to others? So that's one question. The second question is, as we look at these projects moving forward is I'm assuming that Mr. Monroe, and the third party administrators are working very closely, closely together throughout this process. Because again, as I said, I just was named chair. So I've already some of the terminology as far as making sure we're also of course, focusing on middle mile but last mile so that we're not stranded out there with investment in middle mile, and then we actually don't connect to the final destination. So really re-emphasizing that. And then the last and I have I think asked about this before and others have as well, is the CASF projects is making sure so I'm not really sure if this is a question or really request is that we move forward with them as quickly as

possible without delay, knowing that some of these applicants have been waiting for quite a long time. And that question would be for the CPUC. So those three areas that new projects coming up, again the second round, working on the last mile, and then finally, CASF making sure we can get some projects determined and move forward without delay. Thank you.

Right. Yeah. I will go ahead and take those first two, I think regarding round two, excuse me, the cadence that we're expecting to follow here is that as we mentioned, the PUC will be coming out with statewide look, map and some level of analysis at the end of December. And so kind of what really my intended approach there is to...I think that the initial lens is where are the unserved areas right? Kind of there as we were developing SB 156, there was a general desire to follow a worst first approach. And so, so, I would say to certain extent, what will be provided in terms of how explaining what round two has in it will, will depend in part of what we get from the Public Utilities Commission. And so we're still kind of working out some of the details on that. But I think that's really the intent is to identify the areas in the state that are the larger areas at least that are unserved and to see, and to really target those. And so that, you know, there's going to be some analysis that needs to be done there. And, and then I would hope that in the coming months, we would we would come out with a next list of projects. But I would just note that you know, if we come out with a list of projects in February, I think will continue to be working towards another list in March and another list in April. So, you know, as we kind of develop, we have those analytical tools and the criteria that you're talking about, will be, we should be able to explain kind of how we've how we've worked our way up that the tier list. And then in terms of the the last mile, you know, I know that when an important component of the middle mile project is that what one of the ways that the market has failed to really reach some of the some communities is this absence of a middle mile and the cost associated with building it. So there is there is broadly an expectation that the market will even absent the funding that was provided in this package, that the market would, the providers want to come in and actually build because now it makes fiscal sense for them to do it. They can make enough money because they don't have to, to lay their own wire going up and down the state. And so I think that's really a really important market factor, That said, this package does provide \$2 billion dollars in last mile funding. And so there's a there's a process that the Public Utilities Commission is following right now with regards to how that will go out. As well as there is a rate payer, you know, an existing rate payer funded program that that is ongoing. It's been in the past and it's it will continue the feature that will go to fund these types of projects is last mile projects. And so, there...Yeah, certainly the intent is not to build any stranded middle mile, but, but we do have this one time, one time funding to go out there and develop this this system. And so that there is an understanding that you know, well, we're there's no intention of building, building stranded middle mile. There are several different ways that we plan to address that both through the market and through the last mile funding. And with regards to your question, the CASF, I think that is something that the Public Utilities Commission is planning on talking more about in the next section. Thank you.

Thank you, any other questions particularly following Assembly Member's, question on those are Mr. Naughton, do you have anything you'd like to add? Because I do have a quick follow on as well

I'm sorry. I mean, were you addressing that to me?

Yes. I was just asking do I because you came off on new I was wondering if you have any add on to Mr...

No, I don't I don't have really too much to add on to what Mark stated. Certainly the worst first approach is the approach we need to take with a specific view initially to unserved locations. And you know, expediency is really the rule of the day, the unserved locations as well as underserved

locations that require new build activity. As Mark and I and the rest of the CDT team we work with have talked about numerous times, we need to get moving quickly. If it's new build activity, it's a process that can take two or three years sometimes, and this of course, is another reason why we want to at least have awareness of what dark fiber options may be available. In addition to or in parallel to a new build activity, because dark fiber can be activated much more quickly. So above and beyond that everything Mark said is spot on. We're looking forward to the CPUC report coming out at the end of this month. And that's when the work we've already started on the 18 projects will really have to be scaled up obviously. We have a long journey ahead here and we look forward to it because the this mission is the best mission in the network world I can think of. So that's all I have to say in that regard. Thank you.

I see Mr. Keever. You have your hand raised.

Yeah. Thank you, Director Tong. So my question is maybe for both Mark and Tony, and maybe PUC. Are there any aspects of the plan that had been discussed that requires a public comment period that we take, whether it's the PUC's report that's coming out in the mapping, the program plan, or anything else that we should be aware of that would require putting it out for public comment and input just trying to understand that so there is an awareness? Thank you.

Yeah, I think I'll primarily defer to the Public Utilities Commission on this. There isn't one for as far as the middle mile project, as it relates to the broadband, the middle-mile broadband initiative. But there's one is already been followed by the Public Utilities Commission relative to identifying those locations. That's what the Public Utilities Commission has is in the process of finalizing right now and and then certainly there is for those last mile projects, but I'll let the public utilities commission I think Rob Osborn is on the line who will be able to speak more to that. Rob, would you like to address that or do you want to cover that during your portion of update?

I can address the last mile portion during the PUC update.

Okay. Is that okay, Mr. Keever?

Alright, okay.

Um, are there any questions or comments from the committee members before I move this to the next update? All right, seeing none, I'll hold my follow up question to a little bit later as well. Let's, let's keep moving to the next portion of the update. All right. So, thank you Chair Tong. I'm Robert Osborn from the Public Utilities Commission communications division.

So in addition to the statutory direction to the PUC to identify middle mile locations, priority areas and solicit and receive middle mile public comment, SB 156 included three last mile initiatives. So in addition to the long standing, California Advanced Services Fund broadband grant and public purpose programs, I'll go through these in a little more detail. First is the technical assistance grants. And these are to assist local agencies and tribes in preparing and deploying broadband projects. This is \$50 million in this fiscal year and modeled in part on the PUC successful Tribal Technical Assistance Program. The grants are being implemented through the California Advanced Services Fund rulemaking, which is a public process rulemaking 20-08-021. So that staff proposal has been published. And commented on by the public. We've also had reply comments. And so our aim is to have a grant program for that that will be available to reimburse local and tribal governments for costs associated with the development of broadband network deployment projects, including the cost of outside consulting for joint powers authority formation, environmental studies, network design, and engineering studies. The second one is the last mile federal funding account. So this is for grants to unserved and underserved areas, 2 billion over

three years. Then finally, the last one is the loan loss reserve fund. And this provides credit enhancement funds for public entities that want to leverage bond financing for broadband deployment and that is 750 million over three years. Next slide please. So I apologize. This is a rather busy slide, but it basically lays out the timeline for the technical assistance grant program. So the information is based on the scoping memo and the public document and the docket is where the program is being implemented into the California Advanced Services Fund rulemaking that I mentioned earlier. 20-08-021. The slide covers the inception of the program during the legislative session, links to the staff proposal with the draft rules on which comments were filed, and it covers the proposed decision with rules is to be issued this month. That's our target. Next slide, please. The federal funding account again, this is the \$2 billion last mile grant funding program this funding is being implemented in the different proceeding of the broadband deployment proceeding under Commissioner Guzman Aceves. rulemaking 20-09-001. Comments on the draft rules and the proposed allocation of grant funds to the projects for urban counties and rural counties were received through in October and through this month and we're just about working...I think today's the deadline for reply comments on that urban versus rural definition. So the PUC is drafting a proposed decision for early next year. And the target would be to begin accepting applications for the funding in the second quarter of 2022. So a little more on the urban versus rural split. So in statute, currently, a billion dollars is allocated to urban counties and a billion for rural counties, but there's no definition in the statute. In addition, 5 million would be for projects in each county and then there would be allocated the remaining money would be allocated to the respective urban and rural counties based on the proportionate share of households without access to 100 megabits per second down. So the ruling on November 10 proposes several methodologies for which we're receiving public comments. The first proposal, one of the three is a classification of urban versus rural that was proposed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) definition. The second was proposed by RCRC, the Rural County Representatives, their definition of rural. And then the third was the US Census Bureau rural definition. So we're soliciting comment on those and we should be will begin summarizing comments and reply comments after today. Next slide, please. So the last is the loan loss reserve fund. This is a timeline based on the CASF California Advanced Services Fund preceding scoping memo. It's the same in the docket which is which has the technical assistance funding that's being implemented. So some key dates here. Staff proposal with draft rules for comment is planned for the first quarter of next year. And the proposed decision would be planned to be issued within 90 days of the comments. So this means that the loan loss reserve will, of the three happen the last compared to the technical assistance and the federal funding account. So I want to provide a couple updates on the California Advanced Services Funds and Assembly Member Quirk-Silva raised the question. So this is a program that was revised and reauthorized in AB 14, SB 4, and SB 156 last year. The status of the previous round of California Advanced Services Funds infrastructure grants, which were submitted in May 2020. Came up with the last MMAC. Briefly, there were 54 applications submitted to the PUC in May last year for over \$533 million. Of those 19 have been approved so far. 13 are on the agenda for approval at the voting meeting tomorrow. The remaining 22 have been withdrawn or will be deemed denied under the CASF rules. So a combination of factors depending on the application are behind the deemed denied category. So there was in some cases a larger ask for funding than was available in the fund at the time. And so projects there's also projects that were withdrawn by providers due to lack of viability. The list of approved projects is on the PUC website, that's up to date. But we don't post approved projects until we've received the consent from the grantee. So that's probably the best place to find out where grantees have accepted the funds and those projects going forward. So as I mentioned, the voting means tomorrow we have a number of projects that are under consideration. So thank you.

That's great news. This is Assemblymember Quirk-Silva. Just a real quick question on the projects that were denied either because the applicants pulled a map or funds, or asked, do they have an option to reapply? And is there a status for applicants to reapply so they don't have to start all

over?

Yes, you're correct. Assemblymember. So we had an unprecedented number of applications in May last year, 54. We've never gotten something that large. It certainly demonstrated the need for broadband juxtaposed against the limited remaining funds that we had available and CASF and that was pre SB 156. It also uses an outdated six megabits per second down one megabit per second up eligibility threshold that's been revised upward because of SB 156. So um, these applicants can reapply for funding when the federal fund account begins accepting applications in the second quarter. Thank you.

Thank you for that. Mr. Osborn.

I want to make sure the question from Mr. Keever was also addressed specifically about the public comment. Mr. Keever does this address your question?

Yeah. Thank you. Yes, Mr. Osborn's comments are very helpful. And I think I also understood from the response by Mark Monroe row that the project selection, the specific project selection in order is not part of that process. So that was part of my question as well. So thank you. All right. Any other questions for Mr. Osborn, or comment? On the committee? All right, seeing none. Mark, do we have one more? If there's... so what's coming after the CPUC? It's Caltrans, right? Yes, we've got Caltrans and then CDT. It's got it.

All right. I'll just hold my question and keep going. Thank you, Mr. Osborn.

So good afternoon. This is Elizabeth Dooher with Caltrans. And I'm here to share a follow up from last meeting on the process for the delivery of the broadband middle mile projects. So at last month's meeting, I discussed very high level of the delivery process. And I wanted to summarize this when I start today, that the process begins with CDTs direction and authorization to begin working on specific build locations. With this direction Caltrans will carry out project development activities and then award and administer the construction contract. As you can see on the slide the lower portion of this flowchart provides some details from what I shared last week in my summary I've just provided for you. The detail includes and shows how Caltrans' project development process has is set up in phases with various checkpoints included along the path of delivery. So Caltrans begins with planning and development of a project, which leads to what what is known as programming of a project for our work. And that's the approval and funding by the California Transportation Commission. So for broadband middle mile network projects Caltrans begins our work on projects at this point, where we received the authorization from CDT to start work. The next phase is the project approval and environmental document phase or PA&ED, during which time Caltrans performs environmental studies we obtain permits and acquire right of way as appropriate. This phase results in the production of an environmental document and a project report. The environmental document is a critical milestone that will impact the contract award schedule. Following PA&ED is the completion of the design. So that's the development of the plans specifications and estimates or PS&E and that is the construction contract package that Caltrans will put out to bid. The PA&ED and the PS&E, any timelines that are shown here are for information and they're not drawn to scale.

For broadband middle mile projects. It's anticipated that this PS&E timeline is much shorter since most of the draft design plans can be done during the PA&ED phase. The final phase then is construction. And the construction includes the administration of the construction contract, as well as project closeout activities. So in closing just as a note that this process flow chart that I share here with you today, addresses the delivery of design bid build projects only. Other alternative delivery methods, including design, build or CMGC have variations to this flowchart hopefully this helps to add a little more detail since the last meeting in terms of the project delivery process that

Caltrans uses. Thank you so much.

Thank you Ms. Dooher. Questions or comments from the committee?

I just have a quick one, Ms. Dooher.

I don't see any other hands raised, could you?

I know this is this is more of a general approach and thank you for laying that out in such a detail in a more of I don't know if it's an, a range, or approximation. What is a process like this typically take in terms of length of time? Or would you anticipate giving that, you know, the middle mile build probably would be more streamlined.

Yes. So the the middle mile build will be more streamlined and certainly the you know the time constraints in order to do this are shortened considerably. So Caltrans is focused on getting the project development phase that you see the center block developed project all completed prior to the end of calendar year 2024. And so it is a very short amount of time. We are looking to streamline that our processes as much as possible in order to complete that what I shared as the PS&E package that would go out to bid in advance of that timeline because that's the latest date possible. So that's where we are accelerating our delivery processes. And then for the construction of the project. We have additional timelines of course that come along with the funding in order to get all of our expenditures completed before the end of calendar year 2026. So those of course are the worst case scenarios for the time schedule and Caltrans will do everything that we can to expedite on top of that where possible.

Thank you. I actually said this...Director Tong?

If I can follow up please.

Yes, yes.

So appreciate everything that Elizabeth has, has said. I just wanted to add to that. One of the things that working with Mark Monroe, and the TPA, working to put together schedules with the status for all of these projects. So as those go forward, we'll be able to show the expected schedule on all of these projects. And that way there'll be an ability to anticipate including during the construction phase, how many working days we expect it will be needed to complete these projects. And so, as part of this process, all of this will be refined as the information is further developed. And there will be updates on all of that information. So just wanted to be clear that although we're talking in very general terms here, there will be very specific information for each of these projects available.

Thank you for that Mr. Keever. In fact, I'll just ask my question now, this one that was been holding off and then and then I'll leave leave it to the team to see which when is the appropriate time to address specifically knowing you know, since we're in the topic of schedule and process, you know, for for the schedule that is within the control of the partners if you would that you guys know what to expect here, you know, there's a way to work through it, but there's also this, you know, just just a broader conversation about a supply chain, you know, challenge and even if the supply chain per se, you know, hopefully to ease up some point soon. There's also the competition of supplies and labor and everything in between. Because almost every other state is going to be you know, doing some sort of broadband improvement. So maybe after the the next update, I'll look to this collective team to speak a little bit about what are the actions that you are taking, to see if any of those risks can be mitigated as much as possible. Thank you.

Mr...Mark, or Mr. Monroe, would you like to finish the update?

Before you address that? I'm sorry, in terms of the... There's one more update after Caltrans from the...Right. So Scott Adams will be presenting the some new information information on the new federal funding that's being discussed.

All right. Scott, before you jump right into I just I do I get a flag that commissioner is able to join so thank you for joining the committee.

Thank you so much, Director Tong.

Thank you, Mark and committee members and members of the public. We wanted to just provide a quick briefing on additional broadband funding that came out of the infrastructure investment in JOBS Act recently. This was at the request of one of the committee members last week. We again, sorry for the busy slide here, but we thought that this graphic did a really good job of laying out you know the total number of funds which is 65 billion, but also the administering agencies, and you know what categories of programs they were doing in the funding amount. So really the the largest bucket of the funding about 48 billion will be administered by the NTIA, the biggest bucket of that about 42 and a half billion will be the broadband equity access and deployment program. That is going to include a significant portion of funding for last mile and other activities. The digital equity program, also administered by the NTIA will have about \$2.75 billion that will include three separate pools \$60 million in funding for state planning grant program, about 1.4 billion in state capacity grant program, and then another 1.25 billion in competitive grants. NTIA will also administer another \$2 billion in funding for the tribal program, which will be just the further you know the focus of the current travel broadband connectivity program. Of importance to this committee, is there's \$1 billion middle mile program that will go specifically to middle mile. Because we're, you know, middle mile is supporting the last mile and broadband for all we also wanted to make sure to point out that and some very good news on the equity side, the FCC will administer a \$14.2 billion fund for the affordable connectivity program, which will replace the emergency broadband benefit and provide subsidies for service and then the USDA is going to administer another 2 billion to extend the rural broadband program through our US service. So this is really just a high level information. For all of you. We are working with our partners at the PUC and the Department of Finance to really understand better the timeline for these programs. Many are either in the comment period or will be in the comment period and the Notice of Funding Opportunities will be sometime in and you know, in 2022 but we'll keep this committee posted on what these mean for the middle mile project moving forward. And that's our presentation. Alright , thank you.

With that, I think that's the end of the today's presentations. All right. Thank you, you all. If you go ahead and unshare we can probably see more people and Mark I'll leave it back to you on that question about supply chain.

Certainly, so yeah. So as we started in terms of understanding the question, yeah, so this is something that we're that we are currently working on with the Department of General Services, the third party administrator and kind of tried to address both the risks and then what kind of tools we might have, I think, you know, whether it's you know, they're multi party agreements, I think is one of the terms that things it's been the tools that's being considered but really just trying to understand how we, you know, engage with the industry understand kind of what the risks are, and then any risks that we encounter probably will be on some level has already been handled. So we're just trying to understand what those tools are and then in the future, as we will look at those will report back to the committee.

Alright, thank you. Want to see if any other questions or comments from the committee members?

I had one real quick question. I know that we'll be moving to public comments, but at one point unless I'm wrong, there was some opportunity for the public to engage on the chat. I know that we're not it doesn't look like it's live right now. But I know that there are a few people have reached out and are feeling like they're not able to get their questions answered. So it might be something that we think about. And then secondly, I know as we start back on session, the legislators, Wednesday and I again, I'm just saying you know, I don't...But Wednesday's meetings will be very difficult because some of us actually have hearings and so forth at that time. So just throwing out there.. There might be a thought about if there's a way that we can adjust the timing of these meetings. Thank you though.

Got it. That's, that's good to know. In terms of the questions and answer, yeah, the public comment period for this meeting. It's more you know, it's actually opened up in a couple minutes. That will be more of a you know, more of a making a public comment as opposed to a q&a. However, if there's a question, I believe, and we can ask Jules, the staff to talk about that process during the comment period. I believe there is a online email box for all the questions. We can definitely have the team to look at make sure that those questions are being answered in a timely manner. And then if not, you know, Mark and team will be the point person to address any follow up that's required. And then in terms of the Wednesday's cadence, but this particular middle mile Advisory Committee, that's a good flag as the session comes back, so probably Mr. Monroe is something that you all can maybe do a quick ask after the meeting to see if there's another day another time. It gets very, very, very crazy was working with people's calendars. But thank you for letting us know about this email opportunity for question and answer.

I think that's really important. The other thing that as we move forward and looking at agenda items, you know, in a few months, is really starting to focus on the education to communities and the sense of how they can be in the queue to understand how to if there's going to be a competitive process for some of this grant funding, if there's going to be criteria that they need to know because as we know, this is probably the big takeaway. And many, many of our underserved communities, even representatives, advocates, getting people to access what is available. So whether it's lifeline, whether it's rental assistance, whether it's PPE, we know that it sounds like we've got the programs up there's a website, there's a place for them to go, but that's not as easily attainable, as we all might think. So really thinking about an education outreach plan. So once we get these systems in place, the people we're trying to get them in place for can actually access them.

Thank you. That's a that's an excellent call out, in fact, Mr. Adams, and if I may call you and this might be spilling over a little bit over to the broadband and digital literacy, but perhaps a quick update about that and from you.

Yeah. Thank you, Director Tong. So Assemblymember Quirk-Silva, in response to that there's, you know, separately on the broadband Council slide, there's a number of work streams related to the broadband for all action plan that are addressing those items that you had just mentioned. Additionally, we will be standing up broadband for all portal that has just a variety of information and serves as a central repository for a number of stakeholders on broadband related information and services. That's going to be up in February of 2022. And then, what's really exciting about the federal funding from the IIJA is the funding for the development of its statewide digital equity plan. And so, out of that we intend to work with our multiple state agency partners and stakeholders to develop a digital equity plan that includes a number of that that outreach portion. And you know, from the state level within the agencies and the various programs, but also at the local level with

the folks that are really doing the blocking and tackling and getting folks connected that level. And I would add on that I know we're kind of falling off a little bit towards the Broadband Council, so so I'll keep it really, really brief. And this came up as you roughly point out simply Assemblymember that, you know, having a connectivity you got to help those household who does not to actually get connected, and the information being available on the website is not the way to reach out to them that they don't even have access to get to that information. So therefore, and you know, taking a page out of the vaccine rollout, which is wonderfully led by Secretary Richardson. Mr. Adams is working with the GovOps agency to take a look what are the you know, the good outreach channel that was utilized before to really bring those information, those services to people's you know, door so that they know what's available to them. And it's a really, really as a way of, you know, delivering services and information to meet where people can receive them and that is an effort I I'm personally very, very passionate about and looking forward to more updates from staff as we begin the new year.

All right, any other questions and comments from the committee members? and all right. We do have Commissioner Guzman Aceves joined. I believe there's another announcement. right to be...?

Yes. Thank you. Thank you, Director Tong. I do want to share a transition that beginning next week actually, I'll be joining the Biden administration at their environmental protection agency at region nine here in California that represents the southwest region, but I I will miss this work terribly. And I'm really excited about what's to come. I'll be watching the builds, asking my colleagues Rob and others for updates, but it's been truly, truly rewarding to work with all of you and to have such great success and such great legislative and Governor leadership this year to making such a tremendous investment possible. So I wish you all the very best and I'm sure when you're when I can be helpful around some of those federal permits, you'll give me a call! But really thank you all and I wish you the best in the work. Lots of work to do. Thank you.

On behalf of the State of California we want to say congratulations to you and to Amy but to women moving into places where we need your voices. Congratulations.

Ms. Miller?

Yeah, I want to echo those sentiments. You have an incredible partner sincerely and I will sincerely miss you and your thoughtfulness and the passion you bring to this and and the pragmatism as well. And certainly happy that you'll be able to continue to be our partner on the federal level. And I know that you will remain committed to California and we obviously really need that at this really important time. So congratulations and thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for your service for like, what is it like two decades in California? I don't know. Maybe I'm aging myself but it really is your privilege. So thank you very much.

Senator Gonzales.

Thank you Chair Tong and Commissioner Guzman Aceves it has been such a pleasure working with you through broadband but just in your perspective of equity first always and people first always I can't say thank you enough as well, like Ms. Miller and my assembly colleague had mentioned it's just it's really it's a breath of fresh air that you're going to be going to another incredible administration but we will certainly miss you and we thank you for your service as well. I definitely want to pile on. Martha, I know we've been working together for gosh I don't know, I think I think we met on the Broadband Council many years ago right and and then also having the great

fortune to have you continue on with the broadband involvement on the middle mile initiative. And it just you know I couldn't say more than everyone already said about you if you just you just your thoughtfulness you're always clear on the priority and then just laser focused on what is doing the right thing in representing you know, the best interest of the community. So you will be greatly missed, but also know that you won't be far away! You will still be looking in the best interest of California and I'm really really happy for you but you will be sorely missed. I still have your number on speed dial just so you know.

And I guess with that, I think this Ms. Miller, I probably I think everybody know by now though there's also a new CPUC President starting January 1, right? Do you want to talk about that or do we have Martha to be the honor to do that?

I would love to give the commissioner the honor to do that.

I was also hoping that maybe she herself was on the call but...Yeah I was trying to look through the list. I know I may not...let me do a quick check. Yeah, I don't I don't think I saw... Well, happy to announce that our incoming president Alice Reynolds who many of you know because she is very, very deep in this policy arena. I was able to talk to her, particularly about, well, many things on the broadband side, but also the importance of this body. And she very much agreed and obviously was involved in the formation of it. So I am very much, I'm particularly grateful that she's coming with such great knowledge and dedication and enthusiasm for this work. So I think in fact we have seen kind of a progression on our presidents on their level of commitment to this work and she will be even a step beyond that. So I think I'm confident that there won't be any sort of loss of priority in any way. She she's excited about the work as much as we are. So yes, I think everyone if you haven't checked it out, you can Google the appointment, but she has been an advisor to Governor Newsom and before that Governor Brown on many issues, particularly energy and broadband. So look forward to her joining you all and keeping moving forward on this very important work.

Thank you, Commissioner. All right, any other comments or questions before we close this portion of the agenda and open up for public comment? Seeing none, Jules?

Following up on Assemblymember Quirk-Silva's comments. So if people scroll to the bottom of the middle mile Advisory Committee page there is information it says contact information and media requests. And so if people have questions, or they wanted to be added to the stakeholder list, they just click on it, click on that email, and they'll go directly to us and we will add them or we will respond to their question or for the questions the CPUC or Caltrans, or whoever else given quite a few of them are outside of the realm of the committee. But very specific. There's also a box underneath it that says Submit public comment, which opens up an online public comment forum and that is for that as constant that does not go away.

So just as we go into public comment, right now, we have not received any public comment for this meeting from the last meeting today. So if we could just a little reminder that in order to allow everybody to the opportunity to provide a public comment, we respectfully request that we limit one person per entity for your comment and two minutes were your comments. Is there anybody on the phone who would like to make a comment given we have no written comments? I don't think there's any phone attendees anymore. I think they may have dropped off. We can loop back in for zoom. If you'd like to make a comment if you could please raise your hand. If you're unable to find your zoom hand feel free to raise your physical hand. And we will start with Stan Santos. Please unmute yourself.

Good, thank you. Well, I don't know who to thank I missed the last meeting and I understand this

round of appreciation given to your committee. I was responsible for the middle mile or the addition to the middle mile maps project number 10 for West Fresno County. And I was really happy to see I was elated to see it. And our city council elected so we had four city councils voted on resolutions to ask for that support. And they're very happy to see that because it is a totally unserved area that this will be a big help and I really appreciate it now. I had somebody called me up and said they saw that governor's announcement or press release and so I learned of it that way. But the only thing they're concerned about and I'm sure this is being addressed in the process, but it's kind of a kind of a process, I guess. The the city councils that have been working with the city managers and the mayors and city council members, they're kind of concerned. They want to make sure that their voices heard so I've been in contact with somebody that was supposed to be facilitating for this, the eight middle mile projects, I guess for eight counties and also in charge in touch with the San Joaquin Valley broadband consortium. And we just want to make sure that those voices will be heard and they'll be taken into account. And I don't see a flowchart that guarantees that I don't see anything in the structure or in any of the information that I've been able to access to any of the websites or postings in your presentations. And so if there was something that could be created that would also include a timeline or chronology for how those folks would be engaged because we really have to keep going. Again, this is a long project it's going to take three years or so to build this looks like from just what I'm hearing today. 2022 You're still going to be deep into the research 2023 will actually maybe see some groundbreaking and to be completed in 2026. It's a long time to keep those city council members and mayors and city managers engaged. If we can have a kind of a very predictable chronology then I think I can work with that and I can try to keep them involved. They're really looking forward to it. It's just such a long timeframe. And then there's a question of what's going to be done in the meantime because they're going to continue to be unserved. The CASF application date is not going to happen for them in February for that matter in March, if they don't have middle mile number, but also if they don't have a partner to somebody, either an ISP or a provider service provider, somebody else. So they're going to have to wait for another three years before they'll see those needs met. And we don't want short term solution. Some people have already suggested well, maybe we can set up some cell towers. You guys could get served that way. Well, I'm afraid the short term then becomes the long term and substitute which is inferior. I'll leave it at that. But again, I want to thank you and I'm really appreciative that you have extended this opportunity to those communities.

Thank you and we're glad you got some funding that you need. The next person is Shana England. Is that the correct pronunciation?

It is thank you. I wanted to second the stance comments and just on it. Thank you for the map that was reflected in that initial projects on the middle mile and in particular for the inclusion of that group three that reflected the comments from communities. We are particularly concerned about Los Angeles County but really appreciated the the acknowledgement and and the kind of outcome of all of the really hard work that CBOs and and localities that really didn't have that that capacity to do so but did so anyway and weighed in so really wanted to just offer thanks for hearing that and for including it and for having that be so visible in the outcomes. So that was all. Thank you.

We're currently not seeing any additional hands and is there anybody else who'd like to provide public comment? Bueller? Some of those got, a few of you got that joke. Is there anybody on the phone who would like to? Oh, I'm seeing Lisa Lavelle Is that correct pronunciation?

It is. Thank you. Ms Lavelle city council member for the City of Avalon and Catalina. Just wanted to thank you for the information today in particular, Scott Adams' slide regarding where some of that funding is coming from and what entities to reach out to for funding and also just encouraged to be able to submit a hopefully relatively soon project for consideration for the next round of

funding that you'll have. But looking forward to getting more involved with this group. Thank you all for your time today.

Thank you. Is there anybody else?

Okay, Jules, I can't tell whether you're still on or just kind of,

I am there it doesn't appear there's anybody else who like to provide comment.

All right. Okay. Well, then with that, let's go ahead and close the public comment section. And I just wanted to also call it out that there was information being provided in terms of that general, website, where questions can be asked to have that direct q&a. And specific to Mr. Santos, probably that's also an area if you could provide contact there? Mr. Monroe and the team could probably help you address some of the question that you have. So with that, last chance for any of the committee members to have any comments before we close out Okay, hearing none. Glad we were able to wrap a little bit early today. It's it's been a very fast running past six months to say the least. But also very, very happy to say there is the initial 18 projects to get the ball rolling with many more to come and looking forward to continue with many of you. And I know Martha will be watching us from not too far away on this endeavor. And wishing everybody have a safe and happy holidays and we'll see you in January. Take care everyone.