

Middle-Mile Advisory Committee  
 July 22, 2022  
 Meeting Recap and Transcript

The Middle-Mile Advisory Committee met on Friday, July 22, 2022 at 10:00am PST via virtual conference.

**Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Overview**

Chair Bailey-Crimmins welcomed everyone to the meeting.

A quorum for the meeting was established.

Member		Designee	Present	Absent
California Department of Technology	Liana Bailey-Crimmins		X	
California Public Utilities Commission	Alice Reynolds		X	
Department of Finance	Gayle Miller	Teresa Calvert	X	
Government Operations Agency	Amy Tong		X*	
Department of Transportation	Tony Tavares		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	

\*Secretary Tong left the meeting early and Jiwon Jeong served as her designee for the remainder of the meeting.

Chair Bailey-Crimmins welcomed new California Department of Transportation Director Tony Tavares to the Committee.

Committee members Tavares, Quirk-Silva, Reynolds, and Tong provided comments.

**Agenda Item 2: Executive Report Out**

Mark Monroe provided the executive report out.

### **Agenda Item 3: Project Updates**

Mark Monroe provided the California Department of Technology's (CDT's) update focusing on a recap of work that has been accomplished to date and next steps

Janice Benton provided a California Department of Transportation update focused on project delivery, dig smart, permitting, and preconstruction. Committee members Wood, Tong, and Quirk-Silva asked questions.

Tony Naughtin provided the Third-Party Administrator update focusing on ongoing development and deployment.

Jonathan Lakritz provided a California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) update focused on local agency technical assistance, California Advanced Services Fund grants received, last mile investments.

Scott Adams provided a California Department of Technology local engagement updated and Mark Monroe provided CDT's market research update.

Mr. Monroe provided information about future meeting items.

### **Agenda Item 4: Public Comment**

Staff noted written public comments were submitted by (attached):

- Jay (private citizen)
- Katie Heidorn

Public comments were made by:

- Stan Santos
- David Griffith
- Stan Moore
- Katie Heidorn

### **Closing Remarks**

Committee members had no closing remarks.

Ms. Bailey-Crimmins thanked Committee members, staff, and attendees and noted upcoming meetings are scheduled for:

- August 19
- September 16
- October 21
- November 18
- December 16

The meetings adjourned at 11:10am PST.

(meeting transcript attached; video and presentation slides from meeting posted to Committee web site)

## Transcript

MMAC Meeting – Friday, June 22, 2022

Thank you everyone we'd like to call the middle mile advisory committee to order. As you can...if you've probably noticed, we are completely virtual today. And because as a part of the 2022-23 budget, all state bodies that are subject to Bagley Keene are permitted to continue holding meetings virtually from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 and July 1<sup>st</sup> 2023. Therefore, the middle mile advisory committee meetings will remain 100% virtual unless otherwise posted. First order of business is to call roll call. Ms. Stein, if you please call the roll.

Good morning. Director Bailey-Crimmins.

Here.

President Reynolds.

Here.

Ms. Calvert.

Here.

Director Tavares.

Present.

Secretary Tong.

Here.

Senator Gonzales. Senator McGuire. Assembly member Quirk-Silva. Assembly member Wood. A few housekeeping items, there is time at the end of the meeting allocated for public comment presenters please cue Cole to adventure slides and all committee members, please raise your hand to speak, that your calling on you helps ensure you are heard. Madam chair, we do have a quorum.

Thank you, Ms. Stein. Before we begin I'd like to...

Sorry to interrupt Madam Chair, I just saw I believe Assembly member Wood is in the audience because I saw a hand raised in the participant list. I'm wondering if there's a link.

Yeah we can get a link to him. We'll...we can elevate him.

Okay, I want to make sure he hears it...if there's a hand raised.

Assembly Member Wood, we promoted you to 'panelist' so you should be able to speak. And put your camera on.

Yeah, this is Jim Wood, it won't let me put my camera on so, now...that won't, it says unable to so anyway, but I am here.

Thank you, we'll work on that behind the scenes.

Thank you.

Same thing with me, Sharon Quirk-Silva.

All right. Should be able to turn on your cameras now.

Okay looks like it, thank you!

Welcome. Before we begin, I wanted to have a quick opening comments to officially welcome our new Caltrans director Tony Taveras, who was appointed and to his position last month, so welcome Tony and would you like to start with any opening remarks.

Well, thank you very much Chair and thank you members and Assembly member Wood and Quirk-Silva for being here today as well. It's quite an honor to be part of this council and in this committee, I'm very honored to have been selected as a 34th director for CalTrans. I will say you have my full commitment I understand the urgency and the importance of delivering the broadband program for the California department of technology. And chief deputy director Keever and I are fully committed to delivering this so we look forward to working with everyone on this committee, look forward to working with the staff in the various agencies to ensure that we provide a broadband for all, a California for all, which is the vision for Governor Newsom, thank you very much.

Thank you, Director now I'd like to open it up to any other committee members who would like to provide brief comments before we move to the project updates. Yes, Assembly member Quirk-Silva.

Good morning, everybody. Good to be on recess, as they say in the state legislature, but I did want to note that the legislative...legislators approved in a recent budget to authorize an additional 550 million to the middle mile broadband initiative over two years and that funding does come with additional accountability and reporting language and oversight by the legislative body. We, or I should say, I not only support that as well as I know others did we talked about that in the past, as far as not only inflation, but other ongoing costs that we'll know that will be something that we need to look seriously at so we're happy about that and just again happy to see the progress that's made. Thank you.

Thank you Assembly member. Are there any other comments? Yes, President Reynolds.

Thank you um two things first, I just wanted to extend a welcome to director Taveras. We at the PUC are really excited to work with you on all of our joint efforts so just on behalf of the Commission staff and myself, welcome and really looking forward to working with you, and then I wanted to briefly note some of you may have seen that yesterday, President Biden and Vice President Harris began rollout nationwide to boost enrollment in the affordable connectivity program or the ACP. And so, this is the program that enables households to cut their monthly

Internet bill by up to \$30 per month and for tribal lands as cost can be cut by \$75 per month. It is in California we're doing pretty well on enrollment, we have the highest number of enrollments of any state, according to the White House, but we, we, as we all know, we have a lot of work to do. And so, we are we're thinking about ways to increase signups even further and thankfully, we have the broadband package that the legislature passed last year. And so, through the through that package, the PUC has been implementing a new round of grants through the CASF broadband adoption account. We do have grant applications pending now to improve broadband adoption and literacy. And so that can be one of our tools as a state that we use to help with outreach and signing up Californians for the ACP and other broadband plans, so I just wanted to note the intersection between the efforts of the White House and our efforts here in California and just that you know really positive about the new resources we have in order to tackle this problem, so thank you for giving me a moment to highlight that.

Thank you, President. Any additional comments, yes, Secretary Tong.

So, thank you, I also wanted to pile on and welcoming director Taveras for joining this MMAC Committee and also take...want to take a moment just to thank Chief deputy Keever and the executive staff. Miss Benton I know there are others, have been you know doing, you know everything they can to keep the momentum going but definitely, a lot more work ahead of all of us, and now in the implementation phase really it's up to Caltrans and our partner Golden State Net. President Naughtin here to really help the state implement this vision of what was laid out as the...we, you know...casually coined it as the 10K map for statewide coverage. So just thank you for you know and...and maybe thank you in advance for more, a lot more hard work to come. And now, lastly, I do want to echo President Reynolds as a congratulations to everyone that is a bit involved in the broadband effort, not only from the MMAC middle mile aspect but for those who are a member of the California Broadband Council. There was also two legislative members sitting on that Council on the conservative push working with CPUC and other entities such as CETF to really promote and get the word out about that affordable program. So as President Reynolds said that there is more work to come right now the expectation is set that California needs to continue to lead so I'm looking forward to hearing more about that. Thank you.

Thank you, Secretary. Yes, Assembly member Quirk-Silva.

Sorry, I would just make a comment and respond to the ACP outreach, I know that will be doing a select hearing in our district regarding access, but one of the best place really to get people connected is through the schools. I'm a former schoolteacher and many times for eligibility, the families that are going to qualify for other support systems would also qualify for the ACP and working directly with schools can make a big difference in that access.

Thank you. Any additional comments. All right, we're going to go ahead and do the first agenda item which is the executive report by Mr Monroe, would you please like to begin.

Absolutely. Good morning chair members. Mark Monroe with CDT. We're happy to join our partners in providing an update on this important MMBI project this morning. In our ongoing efforts to be responsive to the committee's questions and concerns, this morning we will be providing a brief recap of recent key activities that are important for moving the project forward. And we will, will then turn to our partners to provide updates on the status of their work. CDT will be providing an update on the status of the initial 18 projects announced last November. Caltrans will be

providing an update on its build efforts. Given the given the early stage of the project, this will be focused primarily on its dig smart efforts, where it is adding fiber infrastructure to existing transportation projects. Golden State Net will be providing an update on it's work, exploring IRU lease opportunities. Public Utilities Commission will be updating the committee on its last mile efforts. These efforts will provide the vital link between the state's middle mile and unserved and underserved households. And CDT will be providing a brief summary of its efforts this year and engaging with locals on alternatives for broadband connectivity. Before we move on, I also wanted to mention two other points. Up first, as noted by Assembly member Quirk-Silva, the legislature provided an additional \$550 million dollars for an outyear funding for the project in the 2022 budget act package which we are very grateful for, this brings the total MMBI project funding to \$3.8 billion, which will be vital in and helping the state address the cost increases for the project, and secondly since we last met, the Department of Finance's office of audits... Office of State Audits & Evaluations has begun an audit of the MMBI program as part of its broader monitoring efforts for the federal ARPA funding. This audit was built into the project timeline so will be, will provide valuable feedback regarding CDT's use of these federal funds without causing any delays to the project, thank you.

Thank you, Mr Monroe. Do any of the committee members have questions about the executive summary before we go to the general update. Okay, I see none. Item number 2 Department of Technology update, Mr Monroe.

Alright. To recap in recent months, CDT has a signed contracts for 3000 miles or more of fiber and associated materials to mitigate the anticipated competition for these materials in the coming years, as well as supply chain risks. Similarly, CDT has worked with CPUC and Golden State Net to develop and present a 10,000 miles system level network map to connect the state's unserved and underserved communities via the state highway system. It's important to complete this network map because CalTrans needs time to do planning and preconstruction work before the actual construction work on the system can begin. A major time component of this work involves permitting, which CalTrans will be providing an update on this morning as well. This preconstruction work needs to be completed in time to sign construction contracts by the 2024 federal deadline. As an added update CDT has been able to replace the static map of this network on its MMBI website with an interactive map that allows the public to get a closer look at where the network goes and how it connects communities and viewed by county as well as by Senate and Assembly district. So, with these important milestones that project is transitioning into an execution phase and that Caltrans has begun its necessary preconstruction work that I just mentioned, such as permitting and design on the broader 10,000-mile network. CalTrans is also continuing its efforts to add fiber infrastructure to a number of its existing transportation projects. Golden State Net has also developed and presented an initial map of existing infrastructure that may be available for dark fiber IRU leases should current funding be insufficient to build all 10,000 miles. And these efforts will be vital in and optimizing the network to meet the needs of the unserved and underserved in the state. Next slide. If everyone remembers, CDT worked with CPUC last fall to announce the first 18 project sections for the middle mile broadband network. Well, CalTrans will be providing a status update its work on these initial 18. We wanted to quickly review the reasoning used to select these projects. First per SB 156, while PUC was still working on its overall analysis, it had completed enough of its...enough of this analysis to determine that a solution was needed in each of these locations relative to addressing the needs of unserved and underserved communities in the area. And secondly, CDT I wanted to start learning early about the alternatives available in addressing these needs, so we asked Golden State Net to explore

how leases might be incorporated into any final solutions for these projects segments which they've looked at. Similarly, we asked CalTrans to begin with planning and preconstruction process on these initial 18. To inform our broader efforts to this end, we selected a range location statewide that represented a service to tribal communities, urban centers, and rural areas, and network development in a range of geographic locations with projects in coastal, mountain, and desert areas, as well as in the valley. Again, the purpose of starting these projects early was to start learning about how best to approach the development of the overall network and solving for the digital divide gap now, and this morning CalTrans will be providing a brief status update on these 18 projects, thank you.

Thank you, Mr Monroe. Any committee members that have comments or questions for Mr Monroe. All right, I see none. We will go ahead and go to Item number 3, which is our update from CalTrans. Miss Benton.

Alright. Good morning, everybody. Happy to be here, my name is Janice Benton, I am a division chief for CalTrans and will be providing the updates today. Next slide. Caltrans continues to collaborate with the Department of Technology to develop projects to build the roughly 10,000 miles of the middle mile network on the state highway system. I am pleased to report that preconstruction work for the entire network is underway, which includes just over 9000 miles, in addition to the initial 18 locations. Next slide. For the initial 18 locations, preconstruction is underway at all of the locations, this covers approximately 853 miles of the network and represents 39 components or construction projects. Construction will begin and all of the initial at locations within the timeline of the program and we are pleased to share that one of the projects on location 18 will begin as early as October of this year. Next slide. I shared at previous MMAC meetings, CalTrans continually assess opportunities to leverage existing projects and implement deck smart opportunities. We use criteria to assess these projects, this includes compliance with the funding timeline to allocate by December 2024 and expand by December 2026, also look at the ability to add broadband infrastructure within the conditions of the environmental document and ensure that there is no additional need of right-of-way acquisitions or easements. This slide shows the number of potentially viable highway projects that could add broadband infrastructure. To date, we have identified 89 dig smart project opportunities that plan to build approximately 667 miles of the middle mile network. We are pleased to share and that we are targeting 10 of these projects to begin construction this calendar year which will build approximately 83 miles of the middle mile network. Of these 10 projects, three of them are included in the initial 18 locations. One project is currently in-construction and anticipated to complete the conduit installation by the end of this calendar year. Another project is anticipated to begin construction in September of this year. The remaining eight projects are in various stages of finalizing the contract process to add the work to the existing construction contract. Next slide. So, at the previous MMAC meeting, there was discussions of what does Senate Bill 156 provide to assist with streamlining the delivery of these projects. Thanks to SB 156, there is statutory exemption from California Environmental Quality Act or CEQA, for many components of the middle mile network. Without this statutory exemption, many projects would require environmental document pursuant to CEQA. The schedule on this slide depicts a general timeline each line represents a range, depending on the complexity of the project location. On average, CEQA takes approximately 17 months for projects requiring an environmental document. Projects on the state highway system are also required to comply with the Federal National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA, as well as other federal permits. The balance of the time would be spent in securing state and federal permits and approvals. Please note that this chart shows the various permitting requirements, however,

individual projects may only require some of the permits listed above. Next slide. So, this chart shows the benefits of attaining the statutory exemption because of SB 156. The average project that would have otherwise required an environmental document pursuant to SEQA could save approximately 13 months with SB 156. This time savings would occur based on reduced time to prepare and publicly circulate an environmental document. These time savings exist because the project either meets the condition within the bill to qualify for a statutory exemption or is a categorical exemption that would apply under SEQA. As depicted on the lower section, the time savings assumes categorical exclusion would be the appropriate documentation under NEPA. And that cultural studies would not require extended study prior to the NEPA categorical exclusion, we do have some areas where complex cultural study evaluation could take in excess of one year. I do want to note that for projects that require an environmental document under NEPA rather than the categorical exclusion, the NEPA process could take approximately 17 months. To mitigate this potential risk CalTrans is seeking programmatic permits from federal agencies, where these processes are available and have potential for time savings. For example, CalTrans is working with the United States army corps of engineers on a regional general permit. The regional general permit has the potential to substantially reduce the permitting timeframe shown on this slide. Next slide. This timeline is intended to lay out the entire preconstruction timeline covering both the design activities and the environmental and permitting active activities for projects that qualify for the statutory exemption under SEQA and a categorical exclusion under NEPA, we generally estimate the timeframe for completing the preconstruction activities, including the advertising and wording of the project to be approximately 19 months. This includes an estimate for permits both state and federal that will take on average of 12 months we know this varies based on that number and complexity of the permits needed for each individual project. Our strategy moving these projects forward is avoidance—avoidance in terms of selecting location of conduit that will avoid the biological and cultural resources. This also includes avoid other underground utilities that are placed in the state right-of-way. We recognize the flexibility and where the conduit can be placed, meeting close to the right-of-way fence or close to the roadway and even selecting the side of highways that may have less impacts or conflicts. By selecting the location of least impact to biological and/or cultural resources, we reduce and in some cases, can eliminate the need for some of these permits. There are several other strategies being deployed to reduce the overall preconstruction timeline. As I mentioned on the previous slide we are seeking programmatic permits for resource agencies where those processes are available. And for programmatic permanent or not viable option, the early engagement with the resource agency is still very beneficial in establishing the relationship and expectations of these projects. This can establish an early partnership at the project level that can result in reduced timeline on their part for the review and approval of the project permits. In addition to programmatic permits, we are also having discussions with the state resource agencies to establish dedicated staffing that would prioritize the broadband project workflow. This is something we deploy for our own projects, and we are pursuing them with several of the agencies from middle mile network projects. In addition to reducing the preconstruction timeline, we're also using the tools available that allow us to get the work out in the street sooner than anticipated. This includes leveraging the use of alternative delivery methods. For example, by using construction manager, general contractor or CMGC, and job *inaudible* contracting, we are not only eliminating the month needed to advertise and award individual construction packages we can also release the work to the contractor in segments. So as a segment of the project has completed the necessary preconstruction steps, we can hand it over to the contractor to start the build. This allows us to concurrently do construction of the segments while we are also doing preconstruction on the remaining segments within the broader project premise. And lastly on this chart, I wanted to provide a status on the initial 18 locations in



terms of where we are within the preconstruction timeframe. As shown 10 of the initial 18 locations are up to 20% complete. Preconstruction activities underway include gathering mapping and data on existing utilities to develop conceptual plans to show rough locations of the fiber. And also conducting the environmental studies to determine potential impacts to biological and cultural resources. As I mentioned earlier, these activities could lead to time savings in the permitting steps because we are identifying the layout that would avoid any impacts to biological or cultural resources or avoiding conflict with other utilities in the area. If this is the case, the percent complete immediately jumps to a much higher completion by eliminating months for permitting. Six of the initial 18 locations are up to 40% complete, some of the preconstruction activities underway for these projects, including utility investigations, right-of-way easements, permitting and preparation of the construction contract. And one of the initial 18 locations is about 60% of complete. The preconstruction activities underway include permitting and preparation of the construction contracts. And the remaining location, Location #17 will be built by Coachella Valley Association of Governments and, therefore, is not shown on this chart. As for some forecasting of the 17 locations, we expect 70% or possibly more of the locations to qualify for the statutory exemption and categorical exclusion under NEPA, therefore staying within the shorter time frame for permitting. Early assessments also show about half of the projects may require project specific permits. However, the project teams are still conducting environmental studies and utility investigations and they may be able to avoid the permits, based on the placement of the broadband alignment. And then also leveraging dig smart opportunities, we do have three projects that are either in or going to construction this calendar year. And to close, we are committed to the broadband initiative and will continue to collaborate with the Department of Technology to address challenges and find opportunities to accelerate the deployment of the middle mile network build. This concludes my CalTrans update, thank you for your time.

Thank you, Miss Benton. Do any of the committee members have questions for Miss Benton?  
Assembly member Wood.

Yes, thank you and I do appreciate the update and particularly the, the bottom line of that last chart giving us an idea of where some of these projects are in the process so I do wonder, you've got lots of different state agencies and you're obviously engaging with all of them. Is there no possibility of bringing them all into the same room and working through this, you know as a one stop shop rather than independently. And moving the process forward more quickly that way and I appreciate that we're trying to get more programmatic processes in place, but I just...I have to feel that some of the stuff is probably repetitive, and could be you could probably achieve more economic use of your time by bringing everybody to the table and working these things out. I know from other programs at the state level sometimes individual agencies are asking for the same information in a different format, could we not get everybody at the same...at the table at the same time on some of these and knock some more months off these projects.

Yes, thank you Assembly member Wood for the question, so I will say, I want to give a lot of credit for CDT in the early partnerships that they were developing and specifically Scott Adams and his group facilitated a conversation with several of the other state agencies together to really talk about what the project is, what's the intent and expectation of the project, and also lay out what was provided with us instead of SB 156 in terms of partnerships across all the state, so there was that conversation to get them all on the same page and understanding the project and how you know, the program overall. But at the end of the day, what happens is we all go back and we work on the permanence. There really are distinct permits for each of the agencies. Understanding the

dynamics of each one they can all understand that piece of it, but at the end of the day, issuing a permit from Department of Fish and Wildlife versus the California Coastal Commission, they...they, you know they, they have their own processes and means and requirements that, that come in through the permit process. I guess I'm just kind of the ignorant legislator here but thinking of highway projects already are massively invasive on the environment, and there have to have been cultural studies in these highway projects at some point in the past as well. And it just feels like having to repeat...it feels like repeating things here that that maybe we don't why, why do we have to repeat things how much more of an environmental impact. Could the trenching or the placement of conduit have then building the original highways, or the...or doing these projects so I'm sorry to be so persistent here, but my goodness, it feels like you know so much of this is when you look at the timelines and you look at your engineering and construction all of that, those are relatively compact periods of time, but the permitting line is way out here, and so, I anything that can knock off more months is going to be beneficial because one of the things that doesn't show in your bottom flow chart is there, while you show that some of these are you know 40%, 20% completed, that doesn't tell me when they're going to be completely done, that just tells you've got that line out there, so that 20% project you know, may get done a lot sooner than the one that's at 60% so it doesn't...that's not telling me what I, what I, what I'm looking for as you know to see, you know where we really are in this process, unless you're I assume we're going to get continuous updates on those but, but it just...I don't know. Maybe I'm the only one here, but it just feels like really we can't expedite this a little bit more because if this is the template, I'll go back to the very thing I've been talking about from the very beginning, how in the world are we going to get all of these projects done in a reasonable amount of time and not lose the resources honestly. It just doesn't feel like it's going to happen. Unless our programmatic CEQA threw out this project and if there's something we need to do more as a legislature to give you more tools to move this thing along, please tell us. This just doesn't feel like this is moving fast enough, from my perspective.

Thank you, Assembly member Wood. Maybe Miss Bennett, you might want to bring up...we are doing some vendor forums to bring individuals that know how to lay fiber and getting some thoughts around how we can speed this up and you are getting vendors all in a single group I don't know if you have any updates you wanted to provide the Committee regarding that.

Yeah I think that's something that you know, in partnership with CDT, we've got those scheduled. Two of them...one this month and one next month. I think that's going to help provide you some of the input from the industry on construction methods. And that's, what I do want to say is that's the advantage of us using our construction manager general contractor type of delivery is we get the contractor on board earlier than typical and that helps with the conversations with the permitting agencies because they can tell exactly how is this project going to be constructed, what's it going to impact, what's the end result going to be. And that really helps when we're in conversations with, with those resource agencies, they know exactly the construction method, they know exactly what we're placing. They already know that part of it, but they know the construction method and that, that tends to lead to quicker outcomes when it comes to permit approvals.

Could I just one follow-up and then I'll stop, thank you, thank you for that. Is there any possibility of getting all the resource agencies in the same room at the same time to work through some of these challenges.

Yep. Yeah we are exploring a resource agency summit to bring them on board to continue that conversation with all of them.

What is this summit and is that actually working is that...is that...or is that just to get together.

So, we're exploring what that means and what and what's the objective...well, we know what the objective is to get them all on the same page and get us all working together as one, but that's what...that's what we're trying to do is figure out what what's the objective, what...who do we need to bring in and what's the intent, not what's the intent, but what...what kind of conversations do we need to get, so we're all on...can we get a programmatic permit, what...

How long is that going to take, and when...when can we know when that's going to be successful or not?

I will, I will report the status of it in the coming...in the coming weeks, we're just now exploring it.

Ok, this is an issue that's come up before so I'm just...yeah.

Okay.

Thank you.

Thank you Assembly member Wood, we will take that as a committee action. Secretary Tong.

Yes, thank you. Two items I wanted to just maybe ask for clarification, first of all that the...the last diagram was very you know telling in terms of, Miss Benton, in terms of the entirety of what makes a preconstruction, permitting is a huge part of it, which is a long pole. But then, if I'm hearing correctly, if you can, you know, confirm or modify, that the permitting time can be further trimmed if there's more creative design conversations or design a method that can be applied, and hence, having the early engagement with the vendors who are going to be doing the construction, as well as early engagement with a design to think about whether there's a way to leverage what's already being done, could potentially further streamline the number of permits that you need and the type of permits that you need. So, if there's a little bit of that chicken and egg, that kind of the feed off each other as a totality of squeezing or shortening the preconstruction time. Is that a correct understanding?

Yes, absolutely. So, this is...it's really hard to put down on paper, you know, in 2D what really is the timeline because there are a lot of other dependencies, but it doesn't give us the opportunity to really show where we are, have opportunities for streamlining. So, like I mentioned earlier, you know, we can select the design strategy, we can select the alignment of this conduit to avoid all those permits. So, this is, in general, and that's kind of what, you know...was implied with Assembly Member Wood is, you know, that bottom row shows there's a grouping of them that are in this low percentage. Well, once we're done with that, a couple of those specific activities, they could jump over to 80% complete because we've done everything we can to avoid some of the permitting. But at the same time, simultaneous to all of that, we are doing the design work. We're looking at, you know, putting the packages together and so forth. So, this somewhat shows a linear aspect of it, but it's not linear at all we're doing all of these activities simultaneously.

Got it, thank you for that and then maybe that will lead to my second comment and maybe just following on to what Assembly Member Wood suggested. I think there's one thing to be said, and as a part of the administration, please let us know in any way we can to help convene, not only a discussion from the multiple permitting agency, but into a workshop to say, you know, how to get that done. And then, of course, the fact that if the design could help create that flexibility on what type of permits, what kind of permits that are actually needed. That, you know, can further expedite, you know, these efforts. But in addition to that, assuming for those, especially those big ones, right, not all of them are big opportunities, but those big ones, the fact that if there's already construction, we're rolling construction work, I wonder if there is like environmental study or conscious study that was done before in a certain number of year prior that could be simply dug up, for lack of a better word, to re-leverage those as opposed to re-conducting those studies. I don't know if it's a possibility for contractors to explore.

There are certain situations where we will refer back to an environmental effort and activities in terms of the inventory, you know, identifying the resources, but each time you go out there and do different kinds of work and that's why the construction method is really important, that's why it helps to have the contractor on board with us because sometimes it's the construction method that will drive the conditions of the permit itself.

Okay. All right, thank you, so that definitely is going to be a very interesting topic to continue hearing briefings on a monthly basis on, you know, various ways, multiple prompt approach to streamline the preconstruction time frame. Thank you for that.

Thank you, Secretary. Assembly Member Quirk-Silva.

Yeah, I think what you're hearing, and you've heard before many times, is kind of the urgency and the timeline, and I think the frustration, if you want to say it that way, or fear, is that we're going to run out of time, and I know chairing the communication and conveyance committee, we have our Vice Chair Jim Patterson get very nervous and upset at the idea that we could have this over \$7 billion investment and then very well not get the goals met, so that's one of the things you're hearing, and I've said it as well, so I know from local government to county to state...

Assembly member, I think we lost your sound. You want to test your MIC one more time?

Yeah, my computer has been going in and out, can you hear me now?

Yes, thank you

I don't know, if it does just raise your hand and I'll stop talking because, can you hear me now?

Yes, we can hear you.

Okay, anyhow, real quickly, to follow up, one of the points that are related, but not related, are the workforce part of this as we move forward with contracts as we move forward with plans if we could "agendize" at some point, what is the workforce going to be so we don't get far out and then find we have a workforce issue. And I know that many others are having the same issues with housing, and that's what I was going to say, is the permitting, we see this in housing. We just cannot get housing production where we want it, and a lot of that is permits and delays and stalls,

so it's not just a department of technology or a Caltrans issue, it's across the board. We are just layered with so many agencies to work with and it's stalled so many projects, but the urgency and the workforce are really important. Thank you.

Thank you, Assembly member. I'll also add that as a committee action that we'll keep bringing that back to this group. Are there any other comments before we go to the next agenda item? I see none so we'll go to item number three, which is an update from Golden State Net, our third-party administrator, Mr. Naughtin.

Yes, thank you very much, Secretary. Here to give an update on progress with Golden State Net, now if we can go to the next slide please. And I want to start off by saying this slide is an overview, it's not just going to discuss leasing options. Sorry for that mistake on the heading of this slide. We continue to make good progress with development and deployment efforts and in detail. On the new network build front, progress continues to be made with huts, just to refresh, as we mentioned before, huts are used for reamplification of optical network signal, approximately every 50 miles, as well as to facilitate access to the network, like many aspects of this large network development project, hut development is one example of ongoing work that you'll frankly be hearing about numerous times over the months ahead. Finalizing hut specifications, planning and logistics, those are items that are based on location projected scale for a given area being served. Preliminary planning and coordination with contractors and suppliers, all of that is well underway, but given the size of the network and the need for what will be likely 180 to 190 huts, you will continue to hear in future MMAC meetings about activities and progress being made on this front and others pertaining to the physical development of the middle mile network. Essentially, all the topics shown here and others, as they are addressed, will be recurring themes for the duration of the development phase of the network over the next few years, and we will continue to update in this form on progress details and milestones as they are achieved. As to joint build opportunities with telecommunications carriers, there are over a dozen potential carrier joint build opportunities for this program that Eric Hunsinger from GSN and I are both in various stages of discussions with. We're also currently negotiating our first specific joint build agreement with one such carrier and when that is ready we will be presenting it to CDT for its review and potential approval. Most of these joint build arrangements will be for contiguous long haul backbone routes where the physical route locations of the state's middle mile network and the route locations desired or required by a carrier significantly coincide. Some of these joint build opportunities may also include more than one carrier partnering with the state within a single build on a given route. There should result in many instances of dig once, dig smart, this will also produce more economic efficiency for all parties involved, including the state, of course, especially regarding what is typically the most expensive aspect of new network construction, which is the cost of trenching and boring for underground plant. This is a very promising set of activities being pursued, and you will be hearing about growing progress in the joint build front in future MMAC meetings. Dark fiber opportunities will also lend themselves to economic efficiencies for the middle mile network by leveraging existing carrier facilities for network segments. Where those segments may be unfeasible for new build construction or maybe too expensive for new build as determined by CDT, we have several potential dark fiber opportunities in discussions with carriers right now and a few of those have graduated to a negotiation of terms for IRU agreements. We continue to apprise CDT on progress details with these dark fiber IRU efforts and will be presenting IRU documents to CDT for review and potential approval when they are ready. Active electronics, first just want to revisit briefly so everyone is clear and, many of you already know this, when we refer to active electronics we're speaking about network routers, switches, servers as well in some

cases, that will be placed throughout the network based on anticipated network service demand and network load. This is different than passive electronics which typically refer to things like inline amplifiers or ILAs which are placed in huts as I was discussing a moment ago. Regarding act of electronics, standard default configurations which we refer to as builds of material or bombs, BLMs, for regional exchange points as well as for installation and huts have been in place for a few months now, and those are being refined based on network architecture and scale requirements in an effort led by Ron Hutchins from Golden State Net. Outreach and work to last mile communities, regional broadband consortiums, municipal and regional government planning organizations, as well as to last mile providers in many areas, including cast of grant recipients and potential recipients, those efforts continue to expand and progress. This topic is another example of work that will be advanced towards connectivity service solutions between middle mile and last mile networks for the many months ahead. And last, I just want to report the initial versions one dot zero of both the systems, their design and the program plan are now complete. You've heard me refer to these documents in past sessions, so they are now completed in version 1.0 form. Again, the systems layer design is a projection of operating requirements and policies, where the program plan is different, as it is more of a playbook of processes around network development and eventually network operation as well. As operating policy and development operational documents we've noted before these are living documents that will be added to and modified on an ongoing basis as we make progress toward developing and operating the state's middle mile network. That's my overview report and I'm happy to take any questions you might have.

Thank you, Mr. Naughtin. Is there any committee members that have questions...for Mr Naughtin? All right, I see none, thank you very much, we'll go ahead and go to our next agenda item which is from Mr Jonathan Lakritz of Public Utilities Committee.

Sorry to interrupt Chair, I just want to let you know, I do have to step out, but my colleague Jeong will be stepping in for me.

Thank you Secretary. Mr Lakritz.

Thank you, Chair. Good morning. I'm Jonathan Lakritz and I'm a manager at the California Public Utilities Commission, Communication Division. I'll be providing a snapshot of the CPUC latest last mile broadband initiatives. Next slide, please. This slide provides a summary at the Local Agency Tactical Systems Grant Program. CPUC has established a \$15 million grant program to provide local agencies and tribal entities with grants of up to \$1 million to help them plan for broadband infrastructure projects to serve their communities. A broad range of local agencies are eligible and grant funds can be used to form joint power authorities and co-ops. A wide range of activities that are eligible for funding including environmental feasibility and engineering design studies, needs assessments, and broadband plans. On our website, we have posted a grantee manual, a recorded webinar, grant rules and grant application. In the next two weeks, we'll be posting another recorded webinar that will include a detailed walk through the grant application. We will be hosting a live webinar August 2nd to provide further information. Lastly, I'm happy to announce today that we'll begin accepting applications on August 1<sup>st</sup>. We're very excited about this, as you can probably sense and we look forward to working with local agencies on their broadband solutions, this is the first step toward having them be ready to apply for last mile grants, next slide please. This slide provides an update on the grant opportunities that President Reynolds referenced in her opening remarks and which we presented at the May Middle Mile Committee

meeting. These grants activities...these grants fund activities supports the last mile broadband initiative. We had three grant opportunities open in July. Broadband adoption grants fund projects by public entities and community-based organizations to promote digital literacy and broadband access. Grants to consortium help regional organizations developed broadband projects that complete the grant application process. The third opportunity was for grants to build broadband networks, offering free broadband services for residents of low-income communities. In total CPUC received 118 applications, requesting a total of nearly \$30 million. We received applications for 19 projects and public housing facilities for a total of \$1.4 million. We received 99 applications for adoption activities for a total of \$28.5 million dollars to delve a little bit deeper into those 19 applications, they can be divided into three categories. Eighty-eight applications for digital literacy projects which are present \$22.8 million. Six applications to fund call center projects seeking a total of 5.2 million and five applications to fund public broadband access, seeking a total of a half a million dollars. The third grant funding opportunity for rural and urban regional consortia closed on July 15 and we will have summary data available later this month. Next slide please. This is my last slide and it's an overview that we've presented many times. This slide provides a snapshot of the CPUC activities to implement the last mile broadband initiative programs. I've just gone over two of the key activities: Technical Systems grants and the California Advanced Services Fund grants. The other two key activities that will support deployment of last mile broadband is the Loan Loss Reserve account which will enable public entities and nonprofits to secure financing for broadband infrastructure into space, issuing a staff proposal from public comment in August. And the federal funding account will award grants to fund last mile broadband infrastructure projects in every county. We are developing priority areas that will be published, releasing those areas prior to accepting applications. More information on these great opportunities are available on the public web pages, the links are in the presentation and we can provide context for each of the grant programs to those who email: [statewidebroadband@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:statewidebroadband@cpuc.ca.gov) and this concludes my remarks, thank you.

Thank you, Mr Lakritz. Does any of the committee members have questions? All right, I see none. We'll go ahead and go to the next agenda item which is Mr Adams.

Good morning, Chair Bailey-Crimmins and community members and members of the public. My name is Scott Adams. I'm the Deputy Director of broadband and digital literacy at the California Department of Technology. Next slide, please. Partner and stakeholder engagement is essential to completing both the middle mile broadband initiative in the States other broadband initiatives to achieve broadband-for-all. We wanted to provide a highlight today for the middle mile advisory committee members of the work that the California Department of Technology and departments, they're here today, the PUC, Caltrans, Golden State Net and even other members of the California Broadband Council have done to demonstrate this priority. We are pleased to share that in the last several months that collectively we have engaged with over 1000 partners and stakeholders, that includes local and tribal governments, regional broadband consortia, metropolitan planning organizations, schools, libraries nonprofits and agricultural interests. We have engaged through broadband for all roundtables through meetings and conferences and also individual consultations. For the larger meetings that we put together, many of the recordings, transcripts and slide presentations can be found on the broadband for all portal for folks who may not have been able to attend those, and we just wanted to stress here that we will continue to increase engagement activities to support program implementation of the middle mile and other broadband for all efforts from the action plan implementation, middle and last mile initiatives, and really stress how those fit together, and continue to stress the importance of broadband and digital literacy

efforts that we've spoken about at the top of today's meeting, that includes the promotion of the affordable connectivity program. And that is my update.

Thank you, Mr. Adams. Does any committee members have questions? All right, thank you. We'll go and before we do public comment, we have one more update from Mr. Monroe from Department of Technology. Mr Monroe.

Yes, thank you. So, some of the next steps that we'll be reporting on in the near future include several vendor forms that have already been mentioned, and we're calling them contractor forums, to explore the best way to contract for the construction of this project, to make sure that the vendors and equipment are available when they are needed in the places that they're needed throughout the state. Similarly, we will be reporting on the outcomes of a market sounding effort that we've talked about in the past. We've been working on to better assess the needs of potential last mile providers in unserved and underserved communities to optimize development of a network that meets the provider and the community needs. And then we are also working with Golden State Net on development of a business plan for the ongoing maintenance and operation of the network. We want to remind the committee that the 10,000-mile network will likely be covered by a hybrid of build sites and lease locations throughout the state as costs are assessed and optimization alternatives are identified. And then, as noted, we will continue holding these MMAC meetings at least through the end of the calendar year on a monthly basis to take the opportunity to provide regular updates on the items presented today to this committee and to the public. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Monroe. Are there any committee member comments before we go to public comments? All right, we'll go ahead and move on. Jules, will you please provide the public comment guidelines and again the public comment process.

Certainly, in order to ensure that everyone who wishes to make public comment has the opportunity to do so, we respectfully request one speaker per entity and two minutes per speaker. We will go in order of online submissions, Zoom, and online submissions that were submitted after the meeting began. We do have one online submission from a private citizen named Jay. He expressed desire for a wireless network due to climate and environmental issues. If that person is here, he or she please raise their hand. I'm not seeing that person, so I will go ahead and attach that to the meeting recap. Mr. Santos, please go ahead.

Making sure my MIC is unmuted. Wow, this is really great conversation and I'm really happy and glad that I'm able to be a witness to it, but sometimes I feel like I'm the kid at the end of the line trying to raise his hand and get some attention, but also try to make the best of it. One of the things that I know as a technician with AT&T, and just as a disclaimer, I'm not here necessarily promoting AT&T, but as a CWA member, I go into central offices of AT&T in virtually every town in our footprint throughout California. Frontier has the same and due to the retirement of the copper network, we have whole floors in buildings that are, you know, two or three or four stories tall in some smaller facilities in virtually at least every rural community and throughout the cities that are having all kinds of spare floor space. And these places are built for network operations centers, so they have power, they have controlled environments, you know, heating and air conditioning, they have generators, they have all this capacity, which is exactly what you need. A terminal for a SER server or for electronics or, for that matter, repeaters any type of equipment that you need for cable pad for fiber. So, I'm just suggesting that I don't know if that's been tapped as resource, but I



know they're there and I know that we have excess capacity, to do the retirement of the copper plan. Second thing which may appear to be kind of goofy but there's, you know, I've been thinking about how in some places they use irrigation pathways as well as, you know, railroad tracks and I designed 53 miles of West side Fresno county for the middle mile project. But I was looking at a map of East Fresno county or hard to get to places, and you have rail systems and canals that cross, it angles, so you're cutting out following the normal path of a freeway. And, you know, those places that were suspected been *<inaudible>* and analyzed and looked at for environmental impacts. I don't know why you couldn't access those but I don't see that on any of the maps so I'll leave it there, but really just, please, just to reiterate the capacity and network service-related operational buildings and facilities of some of the ilex is seeing there because of the idling of the copper and also I think you need regional meetings to discuss this, like Mr. Patterson is very aware of the valley and how to get in and out of all these communities and people like that. Why couldn't we have a regional workshop to discuss the things that we can come up with in terms of local resources that could fold into this map instead of one big statewide. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Santos. Mr. Griffith, please go ahead.

Thank you and thank you to the committee for taking the time for doing all the work that you've been doing. My question may have been answered on the latest edition of the map that Mark Monroe showed on this slide, it flashed by too quick for me to check, but maybe I saw it properly. What I want to ask the Committee is to give consideration to the highway four corridor, from Arnold in Calaveras County to Lake Alpine in Alpine County for the middle mile, or in the original first map it showed it going all the way over to the junction of highways 4 and 89, but at least from a local perspective we don't need all of that, we only need it to go from Arnold in Calaveras County to Lake Alpine in Alpine County. We've been told that there is approximately 10,000 addressable locations along that. There's many campgrounds agency facilities such as the forest service, sheriff's deputy, sheriff's offices, ski resort, we have thousands of visitors that come to our area, not just in the wintertime for skiing and cross country, snowshoeing, et cetera, but also in the summertime and some of these people are basically city folks and they get into trouble and we have to maintain search and rescue operations. And search and rescue isn't really the way it used to be, where, you know, somebody will go there with a couple of dogs and friends of the family, to try and find the person and help them. Today, it requires access to the cloud for the sophisticated software systems that are used to make the searches much more efficient and we just don't have the bandwidth to do that. So that's an important point for us. I know it's available to use last mile funding to expand the middle mile network where it is necessary, but there's simply not enough allocated in the last mile network for Alpine County or Calaveras County to fill in this gap. We really need it to be part of the middle mile. So, I thank you very much for your time and listening to me and I really hope that there's a way to fill in that gap between Arnold and Lake Alpine.

Mr. Moore, please go ahead.

Good morning, this is Stan Moore from Calaveras County. I'm the CIO for the county and I'm largely echoing what supervisor Griffith just spoke about. A significant portion of that stretch from Arnold to Lake Alpine is in Calaveras County. Supervisor spoke to the number of approximately 9700 addresses that we have identified that would typically be served off of that middle mile section that for us to serve now if we end at Arnold, will have to be done through to the last mile program as opposed to tying into middle mile and as it is we already will have to be prioritizing which areas of Calaveras County are supported within funding that is available, so we would

certainly like to have our middle mile go as far as we possibly can. And also, if we are using last mile for that section of highway four, there are, as everyone knows, differences pretty significant in terms of the architecture of what is done with middle mile versus last mile. So, wherever we can have consideration for extending the middle mile from our own to the Lake Alpine area, any consideration would be greatly appreciated, thank you.

Thank you for those on the phone who like to make public comment, please press star nine. Ms. Heidorn, please go ahead.

Good morning, and thank you so much for the opportunity to give public comment. My name is Katie Heidorn and I'm the executive director of ensure the uninsured project. We're a health policy organization dedicated to making the lives Californians healthier and a big part of that is digital equity and that has turned into a conversation around connectivity and broadband. Without that we can't really evolve our health system and do all the wonderful virtual care and telehealth work and data exchange that frankly the state is investing in, so that's why we're here and I just have a few items that I'd like to bring to this committee's attention. Really appreciate all the information and the dedication of the team here to making broadband for all work for all Californians. Three comments. One, would you please consider adding the words health and human services to your public facing websites and materials? We've attended a few roundtables and there seems to be a focus on schools and libraries and what I would like to submit that health and human services also have facilities and infrastructure that is absolutely critical to both middle mile and last mile projects. We've been having some very exciting conversations at local levels in Los Angeles, in the central valley and even up in Plumas County about how hospitals and clinics and even community centers that are owned by some of these public agencies and private agencies can be part of this network and they're very excited to engage. But, local engagement on infrastructure and state engagement has also been very haphazard with this community, so would appreciate just adding those words so that these communities feel like we can actually be engaged in the conversation. I remember, too, I really appreciated the conversation with Caltrans about an interagency group around infrastructure, and I would just recommend, if possible, adding the Department of Health Care access and information to the infrastructure conversations. They have jurisdiction over hospital building plans and there's a huge conversation around seismic upgrades to hospitals. We have over 400 hospitals in the state of California, not to mention the over 1000 clinics and these all again can be plugged into those conversations and would love to see them engaged. We've had some preliminary conversations with them and they would love to learn more and are not terribly engaged, but would love to see them added to that. And then, finally, my organization has been convening meetings with health stakeholders, including hospitals, health plans, clinics and consumer advocates, all of whom play a huge part in CalHHS's work and would love to see them engaged. They're very excited about this, would love to know how they can become anchor institutions, and so I would just love to invite the deputy directors who have discussed this as well as anyone else who's interested in meeting this group. They're very dedicated and interested and love to learn more, and I think that would absolutely contribute to the stakeholder outreach that you all have already done, so thank you so much, really appreciate it.

Thank you. All those who submitted public comments after the meeting began have raised their hand and spoken and there does not appear to be any additional public comments. Madam Chair.

All right. Thank you, Ms. Stein. Do any of the committee members have any questions or would like to give any comments before we close out the committee meeting? All right, I see none so I

want to personally thank the committee members, the presenters and attendees, and the public for their contributions today. Just a reminder, SB 156 require that this committee meet monthly for the first year and at least quarterly thereafter. Given the amount of work that's going on, we will continue meeting monthly through the end of this calendar year. The upcoming meetings which will be noted on the committee website within the next few days that are scheduled for 2022 are August 19th, September 16th, October 21st, November 18th and December 16th. And again, that is on our committee website if you need to make note of that. They are all on Fridays from 10 to 11:30. We will then assess the meeting cadence for 2023 and then move forward from that on the calendar year. The state has made tremendous progress over the past year and I look forward to seeing continued progress on this very important project. With that, the July middle mile advisory committee meeting is adjourned. We look forward to seeing you and everyone in August. Thank you.

**From:** Microsoft Power Apps and Power Automate  
**To:** CA Middle Mile Advisory Committee  
**Subject:** MMBI Public Comment Form Response  
**Date:** Friday, July 15, 2022 6:40:16 AM

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Sent by: Jay  
Email: [REDACTED]  
Organization: Private Citizen

Middle-Mile Initiative Comment:

What about developing, strengthen and hardening a WIRELESS NETWORK for better connectivity? With climate change and extreme weather activity now a real aspect of life in the State of California, a network of buried cables, wires and ground based infrastructure along roadways and bridges is highly susceptible to flood, wildfire and accident damage - not to mention earthquakes in California! With remote infrastructure along far and away rural roadways, damage to it will take a very long time to find the problem and fix it. In an earthquake, this will extremely exasperate the damage timeliness repair problem in a an emergency/natural disaster event when rapid and reliable information communication is needed most. Also, a physical materials network strung out along thousands of miles needs a high level of maintenance - broken conduits, utility strikes, pull boxes and junction box maintenance. Use FUTURE technology California and not past/old technology - utilizing satellites, repeaters, 360 degree distribution antennas on mountain tops, neighborhood distribution antennas., localized and stand-alone solar and generator power stations, etc. These systems are localized and are easier to diagnose for problems and repairs.

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**From:** Microsoft Power Apps and Power Automate  
**To:** CA Middle Mile Advisory Committee  
**Subject:** MMBI Public Comment Form Response  
**Date:** Friday, July 22, 2022 10:38:10 AM

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Sent by: Katie Heidorn  
Email: [REDACTED]  
Organization: Insure the Uninsured Project

April 22, 2022 Meeting Comment:

As you consider the inter-agency summit, please consider including the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI). They have jurisdiction over hospital construction and permits. Hospitals, as anchor institutions, should be a key part of the Middle-Mile construction/infrastructure conversation, and neither they, nor HCAI, are currently engaged in any meaningful way.

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[REDACTED]

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**From:** Microsoft Power Apps and Power Automate [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 22, 2022 11:00 AM  
**To:** CA Middle Mile Advisory Committee  
**Subject:** MMBI Public Comment Form Response

Sent by: Katie Heidorn

Email: [REDACTED]

Organization: Insure the Uninsured Project (ITUP)

April 22, 2022 Meeting Comment:

Over the past 2 months, ITUP has organized multiple meetings with health stakeholders (hospitals, consumer advocates, CA WIC Association, health plans, etc.). We would welcome an opportunity to bring Deputy Directors Adams and Monroe to meet with our groups to better understand the exciting opportunities available with health and human services facilities. Thank you.

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