

Proposition 1B: A Decade of Progress

Transportation Bond Program Approved by Voters in 2006 Funding Projects Large, Small



Caltrans photo by Samer Momani

Newly built Wilshire Boulevard onramps and offramps in downtown Los Angeles connecting with Interstate 405 are part of the massive I-405 Sepulveda Pass Widening Project. Proposition 1B contributed \$730 million to fund a portion of the work intended to ease congested conditions.

The Proposition 1B bond program approved by California voters in 2006 is winding down, leaving a legacy of improvements that have strengthened interlocking parts of the state transportation system.

A total of \$19.925 billion in general obligation bonds was made available for transportation-related projects through Proposition 1B, the Highway Safety, Traffic Reduction, Air Quality, and Port Security Bond Act of 2006. About 90 percent of that money has been allocated over the last 10 years, helping finance more than 2,200 projects that range from a simple wooden bus shelter in Auburn to a multi-year widening project on Interstate 405 in Los Angeles, one of the most congested freeways in the nation.

Proposition 1B invested in transportation corridors deemed high priorities. Those included upgrades of State Route 99, trade route infrastructure and port security, school bus retrofit and replacement, passenger rail improvements, highway-railroad grade separations and crossings, seismic projects for bridges, and other

projects dedicated to highway safety and rehabilitation, local roadway improvements and congestion relief.

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) and Caltrans oversee most Prop. 1B bond programs, and allocate funds. Commissioners recently were updated on the status of the construction work and remaining funds in specific program accounts. *See following story on individual programs, highlights.*

Improvements to the state and local transportation grid are the most obvious benefit of the bond measure, but Prop. 1B has produced other benefits, including:

- The hundreds of millions spent on project planning and construction provided a tremendous economic boost in California at a time when it was needed most. Soon after the passage of Prop. 1B in November 2006, the country plunged into a deep and damaging recession. The infusion of bond money around the state helped the construction industry through a difficult economic period, and saved or created many jobs.

- Because of the soft economy, construction bids came in lower than expected, and money for projects went further.
- Administration costs for projects were kept low. Although the bond's provisions allowed up to 3 percent for administering projects, the CTC challenged staff to keep overall costs at 2 percent or below, and that level has been maintained.
- On a related note about accountability, bonds were only sold when money for specific projects were needed. Bond funds were not stockpiled ahead of the actual need, a significant improvement from past practices.
- Prop. 1B funds have been used to leverage other available revenue sources. California received a total of \$2.6 billion from the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 that financed infrastructure work around the country during the depth of the Great Recession. Several major projects, such as the Caldecott Tunnel 4th Bore project in the Bay Area, the I-405 Sepulveda Pass Widening Program in Los Angeles, and the Otay Mesa Port-of-Entry Interchange in the San Diego area received financing through Prop. 1B and Recovery Act sources.

Through Prop. 1B, smaller transit agencies around the state were able to complete long-awaited projects or upgrade aging, inefficient equipment. Caltrans sought to address transportation needs in every part of the state and achieve a rural-urban balance of projects.

But overseeing a statewide slate of programs brought its share of challenges.

The wide variety of transportation projects submitted for funding under Prop. 1B added to the complexity of the review process. The CTC and Caltrans' Transportation Programming staff had to deal with multiple jurisdictions, and agencies of varying sizes, from very small rural offices to large urban departments, each with different rules and practices.

The transit system upgrades through Prop. 1B also conform to the policy objectives set forth in Caltrans' 2015-20 Strategic Management Plan. The projects in total will contribute to a safe and integrated transportation system for workers and users, reduce pollution in communities, promote healthy transit alternatives, and foster sustainability, livability and economic strength in communities.

Of the \$15.625 billion in Prop. 1B funds under the control of the CTC or Caltrans, only about \$530 million remains unallocated. (The state's Department of Finance, Air Resources Board, and Office of Emergency Services manage or monitor other Prop. 1B programs.) The money remaining in each of the specific program's budget will be distributed on a competitive basis. **MM**

Source: Caltrans Transportation Programming; Program Manager Bruce De Terra, Office Chief Rambabu Bavirisetty, Proposition 1B Specialist Doris Alkebulan; Division of Rail and Mass Transportation.



Caltrans photo by John Huseby

The Caldecott Fourth Bore Project eliminated a longstanding bottleneck on State Route 24 between Oakland and eastern Contra Costa County. Prop. 1B funds helped pay part of the \$417 million cost.



A new transit center at Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill (Contra Costa County) was built through Prop. 1B, one of the many smaller projects throughout the state that received bond funding.

Overview of Proposition 1B Programs

Major Corridors, Public Transit, Rail, Bridges, Local Projects, Ports Receive Help

Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA)

\$4.5 billion was set aside to improve travel conditions on heavily traveled routes in the state, the bulk of the work done in Los Angeles-San Diego and the Bay Area-Sacramento metropolitan regions. Of the 90 projects that received CMIA funding, 70 are complete, with 13 more listed as 95 percent finished.

Prop. 1B money was used to create a total of 307 miles of new high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, 292 miles of new mixed flow and auxiliary lanes, 24 new or reconstructed interchanges, and numerous other operational improvements.

The upgrades improve travel times and safety for drivers.

The Public Transportation Modernization Improvement and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA)

Public transit projects and equipment received a \$3.6 billion share of Prop. 1B funds. Allocations have been made to 1,200 projects around the state, and 744 have been completed, according to Caltrans' Division of Rail and Mass Transportation that administers the program.

The largest allocations went to the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, due to receive a total of almost \$308 million in Prop. 1B funds for its \$1.6 billion Central Subway project, and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority expected to receive a total of \$128-138 million in bond funds for five transit projects.

The bond money also allowed smaller transit agencies to complete long-awaited projects such as transit stations or upgrades to their aging, inefficient fleet of vehicles.

Trade Corridors Improvement Fund (TCIF)

Routes deemed vital commerce arteries in the state benefitted from \$2 billion in Prop. 1B funds, augmented by \$500 million from the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP), \$5.4 billion in matching funds from the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and other sources. The goal of the TCIF was to improve freight system connectivity, efficiency and commerce flow along key trade corridors.

There are 94 projects on the TCIF list, with 41 completed, 51 under construction, and two unallocated. Most projects were clustered around ports. In Southern California, 11 seaport projects were initiated (\$1.8 billion), 32 railroad crossing grade separations (\$2.41 billion), 17 highway projects (\$1.32 billion), and 12 railroad projects (\$458 million). For Northern California, four seaport projects (\$629 million), 12 highway projects (\$617 million), three railroad projects (\$130 million), and one railroad crossing grade separation (\$42 million) were funded.

State Route 99

The aging highway that links the Central Valley received \$1 billion in Prop. 1B money for projects that improve safety, freight movement and air quality, and reduce congestion. Twenty-three projects, from Bakersfield to Los Molinos, near Red Bluff, were green-lighted. A total of 54 new lane miles were built to widen the original two-lane sections of 99, five interchanges were upgraded, 11 miles of expressway with intersecting roads were brought up to freeway status, and all remaining at-grade highway/local road intersections were eliminated in the San Joaquin Valley and Sacramento County.



Caltrans photo by Bruce Damonte

The Tahoe City Transit Center, opened in 2012, was allocated almost \$385,000 through Prop. 1B's Public Transportation Modernization Improvement and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA).

Caltrans photo by Scott Lorenzo



Highway 99 that cuts through the Central Valley received \$1 billion in Prop. 1B funds to finance 23 projects along its length from Kern to Tehama counties, including this stretch of 99 near Manteca.

State-Local Partnership Program (SLPP)

A total of \$1 billion was made available through the SLPP as a matching-funds source for local transportation projects. The program helped finance 257 projects in 27 counties, mostly through a formula that allocated 52 percent of available funds for local transit, 29 percent for state highways, and 19 percent for local roads and grade separation projects.

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Prop. 1B provisions directed \$2 billion in augmentation funds to the multiyear program for state highway improvements, intercity rail and regional highway upgrades.

State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP)

The bond set aside \$500 million to augment the SHOPP.

Intercity Rail Improvement Program

\$400 million was dedicated for passenger rail improvements on state-sponsored rail corridors or urban/commuter routes. Nineteen projects have been financed since 2007, resulting in 30 miles of new track and 14 enhanced grade crossings, improvements to three passenger stations, purchase of 22 locomotives and 58 passenger railcars, and replacement of an aging railroad bridge.

Highway Railroad Crossing Safety Account

Prop. 1B paid for approximately \$254 million of the \$1.14 billion cost to construct eight grade separations and make safety improvements at 13 other crossing locations around the state.

Traffic Light Synchronization Program (TLSP)

As of September 2016, \$250 million was allocated for 81 projects with the goal of improving motorist safety and reducing air pollution. Seventy-four light-synchronization projects have been completed.

Local Bridge Seismic Retrofit

\$125 million of Prop. 1B money provided the match that was part of a \$1.52 billion expenditure to upgrade earthquake-vulnerable bridges in the state. To date, 378 bridges are part of the overall retrofit project, with 301 completed, 22 in construction and 55 in the design stage. **MM**

Source: Caltrans Transportation Programming, Division of Rail and Mass Transportation