
Request for Proposals (RFP):

Far-Northern California Food Hub Business Plan & Demonstration Project

Interested applicants are encouraged to subscribe to SRTA's bid posting webpage at [<http://www.srta.ca.gov/bids.aspx>] to receive notices when information and possible RFP addenda become available.

RFP issued on December 10, 2015

**Proposals must be received no later than
5:00 PM on Tuesday, February 2, 2016**

Shasta Regional Transportation Agency
1255 East Street, Suite 202
Redding, CA 96001
(530) 262-6190



Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) is the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Shasta Region, located in Far-Northern California. Additional information regarding the agency and its various plans and programs is available online at www.srta.ca.gov.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) seeks a qualified consultant team to prepare a business plan for a food hub located in Shasta County. This effort will not reproduce readily available research and best practices on food hubs; rather, it will apply this knowledge to the local context of Far-Northern California. The business plan will be based on best available data augmented by input from regional stakeholders and technical analysis performed by SRTA and project partners. It will include well-defined start-up and operating costs, market analysis, revenue projections, and phased implementation plan tied to likely funding scenarios. The consultant will employ an experienced food hub operator-broker to inform the business plan and lead a coordinated interregional demonstration project.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The California North State economy is hampered by a lack of intermodal infrastructure for the aggregation, wholesale, and distribution of regional commodities (North State Transportation for Economic Development Study¹, 2013). To address this issue, a partnership was formed between SRTA, Superior California Economic Development (SCED), and Growing Local (a coalition of agriculture industry advocates representing far-northern California). Together, the partnership is laying the groundwork for a centrally-located hub to enable the consolidated transport of goods and freight, both within the region and to external markets. A ‘Strategic Partnerships’ planning grant was awarded to SRTA by the California State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in order to further the initiative.

It is envisioned that the hub will serve the eight northernmost California counties (see Figure 1) and focus initially on agriculture-related commodities (e.g. wild rice, fruits, tree nuts, livestock, nursery stock crops, etc.). The hub may also include on-site processing and related services. The ideal location would provide direct access to Interstate 5 and freight rail service. A pilot project idea (see Attachment A) was submitted to the California Air Resources board in response to the Governor’s recent call for California Sustainable Freight Pilot Project Ideas². A specific site in the city of Anderson was identified in this proposal; however, other candidate sites should be evaluated as part of the business plan.

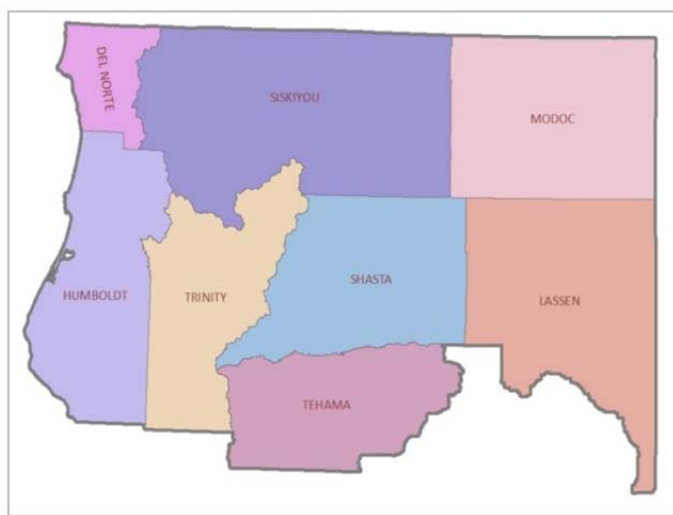


Figure 1: Eight-County Project Area

SCOPE OF WORK

A comprehensive scope of work is shown in Table 1. Only those work tasks in the highlighted ‘Consultant’ column are being requested under this RFP; however, final deliverables will incorporate contributions from SRTA and project partners as indicated.

¹ www.srta.ca.gov/140/Transportation-Economic-Development-Stud

² Executive Order B-32-15, October 23, 2015

TABLE 1: CONSULTANT SCOPE OF WORK (FOR INCLUSION IN PROPOSALS AND BUDGET)

TASK/SCOPE OF WORK	SRTA/PARTNER ROLE/DELIVERABLE(S)	CONSULTANT ROLE/DELIVERABLE(S)	TIMELINE
1. Project initiation			
1.1 Organize and administer project steering committee	Recruit steering committee members	Advise, participate, and record	March 2016
	Prepare agenda, invitations, and conduct initial kick-off meeting		
	Prepare agendas, invitations, and conduct periodic steering committee meetings		
2. Data Collection & Analyses			
2.1 Transportation data collection	Assemble transportation system data (attributes) and travel data (usage)	Receive and incorporate transportation system data into analyses for final report	March – June 2016
2.2 Travel and emissions modeling	Develop freight demand model	Receive and incorporate regional/interregional travel demand and emissions model outputs into analyses for final report	
	Perform greenhouse gas emissions post-processing (EMFAC)		
	Coordinate and exchange data with Caltrans Transportation/Freight Modeling & Data Branch for input into the California Statewide Travel Demand Model (CSTDM)		
2.3 Agriculture industry data collection	Review and provide comment	Draft and final data acquisition plan, including list of target data and sources	
		Technical memo summarizing results of data gathering, including metadata and data gaps	
2.4 Augment agriculture industry data with direct contact		Develop contact list of producers, distributors, and buyers of agricultural commodities in consultation with SRTA and project partners	
		Prepare questionnaire(s) and perform outreach (may include interviews, focus groups, surveys, site visits, and other strategies as appropriate)	
2.5 Prepare technical memo documenting results and analyses			

TASK/SCOPE OF WORK	SRTA/PARTNER ROLE/DELIVERABLE(S)	CONSULTANT ROLE/DELIVERABLE(S)	TIMELINE
3. Business Plan Development			
3.1 Develop draft and final draft business plan	Review and provide comment	Develop business plan containing the following major elements and sample content (may be refined in consultation with SRTA and project partners): <u>Executive Summary</u> - Proposed business concept - Current situation - Key success factors - Financial situation/needs <u>Project Description</u> - Goals and objectives - Benchmarking/applicable best-practices - Proposed business concept - Primary and secondary partners and roles - Performance metrics/milestones <u>Market Analysis</u> - Industry/market overview, including trends and business environment - Supplier/buyer segments, characteristics, needs, and decision factors - Spatial/seasonal analysis of product availability and demand (w/in region and externally) <u>Business Strategy</u> - Key competitive capabilities - Key competitive weaknesses - Business development and implementation strategy, including milestones and phasing options <u>Marketing and Sales</u> - Promotional strategy and market strategy - Coordination with sub-regions within Far-Northern California <u>Operations</u> - Management and organizational structure - Start-up equipment and other requirements - Project siting evaluation <u>Financial spreadsheets</u> - Prospective fund sources (e.g. grants, incentives) - Financial forecasts - Financial requirements (start-up and operational) - Break-even analysis - Sensitivity/risk analysis - Milestones and phasing	June – November 2016

TASK/SCOPE OF WORK	SRTA/PARTNER ROLE/DELIVERABLE(S)	CONSULTANT ROLE/DELIVERABLE(S)	TIMELINE
4. Consolidated Freight Demonstration Project			
4.1 Plan demonstration project	Review and comment	Design demonstration project concept, communication protocols, transportation logistics, partner responsibilities, and operational procedures/guidelines	To be determined
4.2 Perform demonstration project	Participate and provide support	Lead a consolidated freight demonstration project, including one round trip (two-way exchange) serving a minimum of three collection/distribution points within the Far-Northern California region (e.g. Eureka, Redding, Chico) and a minimum of one collection/distribution point to/from an external market (e.g. Sacramento, Bay Area)	
4.3 Document demonstration project	Review and comment	Assess and document all aspects of the demonstration project, including data, photos, transcripts from post-project interviews, and lessons learned	
5. Final Report			
5.1 Draft report	Contribute content and review and provide comments/edits	Prepare and circulate draft report for review	To be determined
5.2 Final report		Prepare and circulate final draft report (50 hardcopies plus electronic version) and formally present to SRTA board of directors	

PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Consultants interested in providing the services specified in this RFP should submit a written proposal comprised of the following required information:

1. Transmittal letter stating that the proposal represents a firm offer for a minimum of 90 days, signed by an officer who may contractually bind the business.
2. Description of the consultant team, including relevant experience and qualifications. The team shall utilize an experienced food hub operator-broker to inform the business plan and lead a coordinated interregional demonstration project.
3. Narrative demonstrating: a) a clear understanding of the project scope and objectives; and b) expertise and experience relevant to the food hub operations and brokering.
4. Minimum of three relevant professional references.
5. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation level, including sub-consultants if applicable.
6. Cost proposal itemized by sub-tasks (i.e. 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, and so forth).

PROCUREMENT SCHEDULE AND INQUIRIES

To assist in the preparation of responses to this RFP, a pre-proposal conference will be held as follows:

Time: 10:00 AM
Date: Tuesday, January 5, 2016
Location: 1255 East Street, Suite 202, Redding, CA
Call in option: 1-866-906-9888, participant code 8514637

Written questions will be accepted through January 27, 2016. Please submit questions to Daniel Wayne, Senior Planner at: dwayne@srta.ca.gov. All questions and SRTA's responses will be posted online as they are received at www.srta.ca.gov/bids.aspx.

TABLE 2: PROCUREMENT TIMELINE

Release RFP	December 10, 2015
Pre-proposal conference	January 5, 2016, 10am
Deadline to submit written questions	January 27, 2016
Proposals due	February 2, 2016, 5pm
Evaluation and ranking of proposals (and interviews, if needed)	February 3 - February 12, 2016
Highest ranking proposal presented to SRTA Board of Directors for approval	February 23, 2016
Anticipated contract start date/notice to proceed	March 1, 2016

Interested proposers are encouraged to subscribe to SRTA's bid posting webpage to receive notices when information and possible RFP addenda become available: <http://www.srta.ca.gov/bids.aspx>

CONTRACT TERM AND BUDGET

An 18 to 24 month contract with a start date of March 1, 2016 is anticipated. SRTA has budgeted up to \$110,000 for this effort; however, proposed fees should reflect only what is necessary to complete the project. Both cost and value of services to be provided will be considered in accordance with scoring criteria shown in Table 3.

STANDARD CONSULTING AGREEMENT

A sample copy of SRTA's standard Technical Services Agreement (TSA) is available on SRTA's website: www.srta.ca.gov/bids.aspx. SRTA may consider addenda to the TSA during the negotiation process with the highest ranked proposal. The TSA shall not be in force until approved by the SRTA Board of Directors and after written authorization to proceed has been provided.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Proposals received shall be reviewed according to the criteria and weighting shown in Table 3. In addition to SRTA staff, the evaluation panel may include representative(s) from project stakeholders. A recommendation to award contract(s) will be presented to the SRTA Board of Directors for approval. Consultants may be invited to interview at the discretion of SRTA. Should interviews be held, SRTA will provide a list of questions and evaluation criteria before the interviews. Presentations will be allowed, with a specified time limit.

TABLE 3 – SCORING CRITERIA

Criteria	Points
Understanding of the project and objectives	20
Relevant qualifications and experience of the project team, with an emphasis on business development, food hub operations, and the brokering of agricultural commodities	40
References	10
DBE participation level	10
Cost and value of services to be provided	20
Total:	100

PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL

Please submit one original proposal and three (3) copies (total of 4) to:

Shasta Regional Transportation Agency
Attn: Daniel Wayne, Senior Transportation Planner
1255 East Street, Suite 202
Redding, CA 96001

The cost of preparing and submitting a proposal, pre-contract meetings, and participating in an interview—if held—are at the sole expense of the proposer. SRTA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, and to waive any informality, technical defect, or clerical error in any proposal at SRTA's discretion. Solicitation of proposals in no way obligates SRTA to contract with any firm or individual. The decision to approve and award a contract or contracts is at the discretion of SRTA.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & TERMS

Public Records Act: All proposals submitted in response to the RFP will become the exclusive property of SRTA. At such time the SRTA Executive Director recommends a proposal to the board of directors and such recommendation appears on the board agenda, all proposals submitted in response to the RFP shall become a matter of public record and shall be regarded as public records. If there are any trade or proprietary secrets included by the consultant, the consultant may provide a different copy of the proposal that would be acceptable to release to the public. If an alternate document is not made available to SRTA by the consultant, then the original proposal, as submitted, will be released as requested. Proprietary information can include secret formulas, processes, and methods used in production. It can also include a company's business and marketing plans, salary structure, customer lists, contracts, and details of its computer systems. In some cases, the special knowledge and skills that an employee has learned on the job are considered to be a company's proprietary information.

Modification or Withdrawal of Proposal: Any proposal received prior to the deadline may be withdrawn or modified either personally, through e-mail, or by written request of the consultant. To be considered, the modification must be received in writing (email acceptable) prior to the deadline. Proposals may be withdrawn following the proposal deadline for good cause; please consult with the RFP contact person to discuss this.

RFP Addendum(a): Any changes to the RFP will be made by written addenda issued by SRTA, and shall be considered part of the RFP. The RFP deadline may be extended dependent upon the nature of the changes issued. Upon issuance, such addenda shall be incorporated into the agreement documents, and shall prevail over inconsistent provisions of earlier issued documentation. Any addenda will be posted on-line only. It will be the consultant's responsibility to assure that all addenda are incorporated into the proposal as required according to all the terms and conditions for submittal of the proposal. In no event will SRTA modify the RFP with less than five (5) days remaining to the deadline, without extending the RFP deadline.

Verbal Agreement or Conversation: No prior, current, or post-award verbal conversations or agreement(s) with any officer, agent, or employee of SRTA shall affect or modify any terms or obligations of this RFP, or any contract resulting from this procurement.

Special Funding Considerations: Any contract resulting from this RFP will be financed with funds available to SRTA. The contract for this service is contingent upon the provision of these funds to SRTA. In the event these funds are reduced or eliminated, SRTA reserves the right to terminate or revise any contract.

Alternatives: Consultants may not alter objectives and deliverables of the RFP in the response to the RFP. If the consultant brings to SRTA's attention, at least ten (10) days before the RFP deadline, an alternative end product than the RFP delineates, SRTA reserves the right to cancel the RFP and re-bid the project.

DBE Requirement: SRTA has determined that disadvantaged business enterprises, as defined in 49 CFR Part 26, will have the opportunity to compete fairly for contracts financed, in whole or in part, with federal funds. SRTA has a disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) goal of 5.1% for federal fiscal years 2015/2016/2017. SRTA encourages respondents to include the participation of DBE businesses within your proposal.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action: In awarding a contract to a consultant, SRTA includes language within the contract which requires the consultant to certify their compliance with federal regulations.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Sustainable Freight Pilot Project Idea submitted in response to Executive Order B-32-15

CALIFORNIA SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT ACTION PLAN

PILOT PROJECT IDEA

I. Name and contact information:

Daniel Wayne, Senior Planner
Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA)
1255 East Street, Suite 202
Redding, CA 96001
530-262-6186
dwayne@srta.ca.gov

II. Project title:

Far-Northern California Consolidated Freight and Renewable Energy Hub

III. Project location:

Interstate 5
Shasta County
Post mile SHA R4.297
Longitude 40.438978 N, latitude-122.282263 W)

IV. Executive summary

The uncoordinated transport of \$1 billion in agricultural commodities each year within Far-Northern California and to external markets is a major contributor of statewide greenhouse emissions. Addressing transport-related inefficiencies in this sector will affect the region's grossest emission sources, expand economic opportunity, and more effectively utilize California's essential freight corridors. A consolidated freight and renewable energy hub with direct access to Interstate 5 and freight rail is proposed. The hub would be located in the city of Anderson and serve the eight-county Far-Northern California region (see Attachment A). Support is needed to: 1) attract a qualified hub operator-broker; 2) connect the hub to the neighboring renewable energy power plant; 3) provide shared-access to advanced vehicle and logistics technologies; and 4) develop and administer an incentive program to accelerate industry clustering around the hub.

Rather than an incremental advancement of an existing program, the proposed project represents a new model for sustainable freight movement – one with the capacity for exponential performance gains over time. The need for such a hub was first documented in the North State Transportation for Economic Development Study completed by SRTA in 2013. A partnership between SRTA, Superior California Economic Development, and Growing Local (a coalition of agriculture industry advocates representing far-northern California) was subsequently formed to develop and implement the hub concept. A detailed business plan, greenhouse gas emission model, and demonstration project are presently being performed with funding support from a Caltrans Strategic Partnerships grant. Representatives from ARB and the California Energy Commission toured the candidate site on November 3.

V. Detailed description of how the pilot project idea components will incorporate advanced technologies, alternative fuels, freight and fuel infrastructure, and local economic development; and advance goals of improving freight efficiency, transitioning to zero-emission technologies, and increasing competitiveness of California's freight system

Building upon existing regional investments shown in Exhibit B, a joint pilot project is proposed with the following major work tasks:

Task #1 – Hub Start-up and Initial Operations Revenue Assistance

The absence of intermodal freight infrastructure to support freight consolidation and transloading between truck and rail was identified as a major economic disadvantage in the North State Transportation for Economic Development Study (2013). Without supporting infrastructure, partial loads, deadheading, and other inefficient practices are contributing unnecessarily toward interregional travel demand and greenhouse gas emissions. A consolidated freight hub situated at the geographic center and transportation crossroads of Far-Northern California is proposed, one that provides direct access to Interstate 5 and freight rail.

A capable, experienced, and motivated operator-broker is needed manage the hub and make it self-sustaining within three to five years. At least three interested and qualified operator-brokers have been identified. Similar to incentives provided to airlines to establish passenger air service in smaller regional markets, it is proposed that start-up and initial operating revenue assistance be provided to reduce financial risk and afford the operator-broker a time-limited period to build up the hub.

Task #2 – Renewable Energy Connecting Infrastructure

The ideal candidate site for the hub is adjacent to one of the largest renewable energy power plants in California (54.9 megawatt capacity). A unique opportunity exists to utilize this renewable energy source to directly power the hub and to charge electric vehicles pulsing in and out of the hub. It is proposed that an electric utility infrastructure connection be made between Wheelabrator Shasta Energy Company and the hub site. It is further proposed that fast-charging stations be installed for use by the hub's cooperative electric vehicle demonstration fleet (see Task #3). Charging would be available to all hub participants to further encourage private sector transition to electric vehicles.

Task #3 – Cooperative Advanced Vehicle and Technology Component

Of the 6,400 farms operating in Far Northern California, the majority are small- and medium-sized producers. The productivity of these producers is capped by the lack of viable transport options. Individual producers are unable to acquire and apply advanced vehicles and technologies to increase efficiency, scale-up operations, and compete effectively in state, national, and international markets. The hub will act as a cooperative, increasing access to and sharing the cost of acquiring and managing: 1) a demonstration fleet of advanced vehicles (e.g. local delivery trucks, renewable energy fuel delivery trucks, on-site fork lifts, etc); and 2) the deployment of advanced logistics (e.g. tracking, and other efficiency-enhancing technologies).

Task #4 – Industry Clustering and Coordinated Transport Incentive Program

A successful hub will be reinforced by direct and indirect private industry investment. It is proposed that seed funds be provided for SRTA to develop and administer an 'Industry Clustering and Coordinated Transport Incentive Program'. This program will accelerate the development of 'Strategic Freight Areas' being developed for SRTA's 2018 Regional Transportation Plan update. Within Strategic Freight Areas, local, regional, and private sector investments, policies, and programs will be layered to maximize performance potential. The resultant nodes of interrelated industry will support freight consolidation as well as the development of origin-destination charging infrastructure for intra-regional trips.

Clustering interrelated industries around the hub and Strategic Freight Areas will in turn support local production, processing, and consumption of commodities. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), in collaboration with Dr. Jacob Brimlow, an agricultural economist at California State University, Chico, determined that 70% of consumption needs could be met with local production compared to actual local food consumption of about 5%. The clustering of interrelated industries around the hub will capitalize on this economic growth potential while reducing food miles traveled and associated greenhouse gas emissions.

To further enhance local economic development and increase the competitiveness of California's freight system, travel demand reduction efforts described above must be employed in combination with roadway maintenance, safety, and capacity-increasing investments. Notable projects include:

- Deschutes Road Interchange (Interstate 5);
- Cottonwood Hills Truck Climbing Lane (Interstate 5);
- South Redding Six-Lane Project (Interstate 5);
- Dana to Downtown Project (Interstate 5/State Route 299 Interchange);
- Buckhorn Grade Realignment (State Route 299); and
- Future near-term projects (e.g. Redding to Anderson Six-Lane Project (Interstate 5) and the Stillwater Road Interchange Project (State Route 44)).

Regional partners are also vested in a variety of supportive initiatives and programs, including but not limited to:

- North Valley Food Hub (<http://northvalleyfoodhub.com>) – This virtual online food hub was successfully launched in the summer of 2014. This project serves as the underlying operational model for the proposed hub.
- Permanent Shasta Farmers Market Initiative – A broad community coalition was formed to establish a permanent home for the farmers' market in Shasta County. The McConnell Foundation (www.mcconnellfoundation.org) and the City of Redding are working toward a land swap to obtain Union Pacific Railroad property located in the heart of Redding. This future facility will serve as a satellite to the larger hub.

VI. Estimated cost for implementation and existing funding commitments (include any funding limitations or constraints) by stakeholder and amount

A detailed line-item budget is being prepared as part of the Caltrans-funded *Far-Northern California Consolidated Goods & Freight Hub Study*. Actual costs may vary from the following estimates:

TASK/DESCRIPTION	EST. BUDGET
Task 1	
1.1 Start-up costs	\$3,000,000
1.2 Backfill initial operating costs	\$900,000
Task 2	
2.1 Connect hub to Wheelabrator Shasta Energy Company	\$300,000
2.2 Hub and vehicle charging infrastructure	\$500,000
Task 3	
3.1 Acquire and manage advanced technology demonstration fleet	\$1,300,000
3.2 Acquire and manage advanced technology applications (logistics, tracking, etc)	\$500,000
Task 4	
4.1 Develop and administer <i>Industry Clustering & Consolidated Transport Incentive Program</i>	\$1,000,000
TOTAL:	\$7,500,000

By comparison, the cost for the Redding to Anderson Six-Lane Project (adds one additional southbound and one additional northbound lane for 5.5 miles) is estimated at \$32 million. Optimizing transportation system utilization *in combination with* strategic and timely system capacity improvements (including but limited to the Redding to Anderson Six-Lane Project) constitute a holistic approach to ensuring the long-term utility and preservation of the Interstate 5 and State Route 299/44 corridors.

VII. Timeline

TASK/DESCRIPTION	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>Far-Northern California Consolidated Goods & Freight Study (Caltrans-funded)</i>							
1.1 Start-up							
1.2 Initial Operating							
2.1 Renewable Energy Connection							
2.2 Hub & Vehicle Charging Infrastructure							
3.1 Advanced Vehicle Demonstration Fleet (Acquire & manage)							
3.2 Advanced Technology Applications							
4.1 Industry Clustering Incentive Program							

VIII. Means for measuring progress toward meeting goals over time.

SRTA's *Far-Northern California Consolidated Goods and Freight Movement Study* includes the development of a freight demand model and emissions post processing. Outputs will be used to establish baseline data. Targets for annual reductions will coincide with major project milestones and shall be ramped up over time in consideration of actual performance. The study will also include a detailed analysis of initial and ongoing operational costs, and the corresponding volume of hub activity required to meet the goal of a self-sustaining operation. Specific measures and methodology will be available by mid-2016.

IX. Description of the potential roles each of the interagency partners could provide to support the project's implementation.

The benefits of the hub extend beyond a freight transport facility. As illustrated in the Hub Concept Diagram (see Attachment C), the longer-term vision of the hub includes a variety of cooperative support services and programs that target the full range of greenhouse gas emission reductions, including but not limited to industry inputs, agricultural activities, processing, and so forth. Areas of potential interagency support are highlighted below; however, the full extent of these services will require further interagency discussion.

California State Transportation Agency/California Department of Transportation:

- Technical planning and policy support, particularly in the area of freight rail, truck-rail transloading, and the relocating of Union Pacific Railroad switching operations from Downtown Redding to just south of the hub candidate site.

California Environmental Protection Agency:

- Technical assistance and policy support.

California Natural Resources Agency:

- Support effective land management practices, focusing on agriculture, natural resource, and other working landscapes.
- Financial, technical, and policy support needed to ensure the long-term operation and optimal utilization of the Wheelabrator renewable energy power plant.

California Air Resources Board:

- Financial and technical assistance identifying the most project-appropriate and cost-effective greenhouse gas emission reduction technologies and applications.

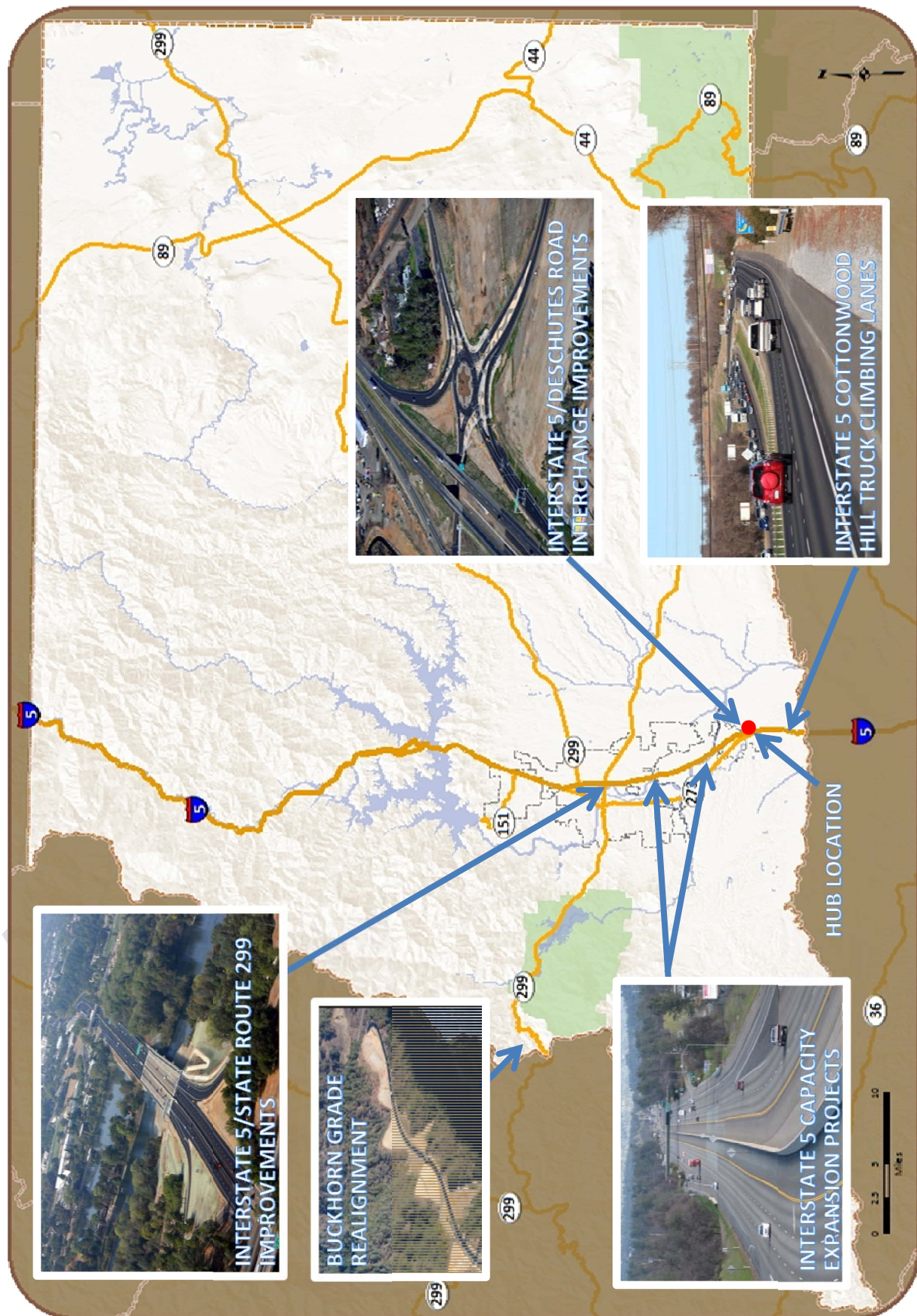
California Energy Commission:

- Technical assistance and policy support to ensure the continued operation and optimal utilization of the Wheelabrator renewable energy power plant. Wheelabrator's exclusive contract with PG&E expires in August 2016.
- Capital costs for charging infrastructure and the selection and procurement of project-appropriate electric vehicle demonstration fleet.

Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development:

- Financial and technical support for the development and administration of the Industry Clustering and Consolidated Transport Incentive Program.

ATTACHMENT A: REGIONAL OVERVIEW



ATTACHMENT B: AERIAL SITE MAP



ATTACHMENT C: HUB CONCEPT DIAGRAM

