

Date of Hearing: April 7, 2025

**ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**

Lori D. Wilson, Chair

AB 891 (Zbur) – As Introduced February 19, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Transportation: Quick-Build Project Pilot Program

**SUMMARY:** Establishes the Quick-Build Project Pilot Program within the Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) maintenance program for the development and implementation of low-cost projects including but not limited to bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the state highway system. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires Caltrans to develop and publish guidelines for the deployment of district quick-build projects on or before December 31, 2027.
- 2) Requires Caltrans to identify and commit funding to a minimum of six quick-build projects statewide under the Quick-Build Project Pilot Program on or before December 31, 2028.
- 3) Defines "quick-build project" to mean an interim capital infrastructure project that requires minor construction activities but is built with durable, low- to moderate-cost materials, and lasts from one to five years.
- 4) Establishes a sunset of this provision on January 1, 2030.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Establishes a duty of Caltrans to plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain transportation systems that the Legislature has made, or may make, the responsibility of the department. (Government Code (GOV) Section 14030)
- 2) Requires Caltrans to update the Highway Design Manual (HDM) to incorporate the "complete streets" design concept. (GOV 14033)
- 3) Requires Caltrans to commit to specific four-year targets to incorporate complete streets facilities, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities on state highway system entrances and exits that interact with local streets, into projects funded by the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP). (GOV 14526.8 and 14526.6)
- 4) Establishes the Active Transportation Program (ATP). (SHC Section 2381)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:** Quick-build projects are interim capital improvement projects that further the goals of the ATP, according to Caltrans. These projects require minor construction and are built with durable, low to moderate cost materials, and last from one year to five years. A quick-build project is intended to immediately address safety needs. It allows a community to benefit quickly from improvements made, and at the same time give the community the opportunity to test the project improvements before they are permanently constructed. Unlike traditional capital projects, quick-build projects can be adjusted and changed based on community input and further technical analysis over time.

Examples of quick-build project types include; barrier elements (raised lane separator, delineator post, self-watering planters, barricades, etc.), surface treatments (street bond pavement coating, asphalt paint, epoxy gravel, city bench, etc.), street furniture, and signs.

*Quick-build for safety improvements.* Roadway safety for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians is a priority for California, and many cities and states across the country. Vision Zero is an international strategy and organizational campaign to eliminate all traffic related fatalities and injuries while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility. Mitigation strategies to eliminate traffic related fatalities and serious injuries include careful consideration of roadway design, speed limits, and policy changes that can potentially bolster enforcement, promote behavioral change, and the development of technology that maximizes safety. California has begun to implement strategies from Vision Zero, through recommendations from the Zero Traffic Fatality Task Force, including speed limit reform. Additionally, in 2021 the state allocated funds to establish and implement the Vision Zero policy and program, a safety plan, and a slow streets program to promote multimodal roadways. Engineering and design changes are significant factors to the success of Vision Zero.

This bill establishes that within Caltrans' maintenance program, to expedite development including, but not limited to, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and implementation of low-cost projects on the state highway system. These types of projects could help improve road safety.

*Funding for safety improvement projects.* The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is a federal program with the purpose of achieving a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads, including non-State-owned roads and roads on tribal land. The HSIP requires a data-driven, strategic approach to improving highway safety on all public roads with a focus on performance. In 2020, the state received \$2.1 million in HSIP funding for safety projects. In 2021, California was obligated by the federal government to allocate at least 15% of HSIP funds for highway safety improvement projects, due to the total annual crash fatalities across the state. The level of vehicular fatalities triggered the Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Safety Special Rule. The Federal Highway Administration mandates all states to complete a VRU assessment to use a data-driven approach to compile locations and strategies to improve safety for VRUs on state and local roads.

The VRU safety assessment uses a Safe System Approach (SSA), which is a comprehensive and holistic approach to road safety. SSA acknowledges that road safety is a shared responsibility between road designers and road users. Based on the VRU assessment, Caltrans must allocate 30% of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding it receives toward projects that improve safety by 2025. One of the programs funded by IIJA is the Highway Maintenance Safety Program Pilot, designated under the Highway Maintenance 4 (HM-4) Pilot Program, to quickly deliver proactive low-cost safety countermeasures within one to two years from planning to implementation.

The HM-4 Program is a four-year program that funds capital projects and supports statewide safety projects. According to Caltrans, HM-4 was developed to fund quick turnaround systemic and proactive safety projects to quickly reduce roadway fatalities and serious injuries to zero by 2050. The HM-4 Safety Program was approved in July 2023 for four years of funding for FY 2023-24 through 2026-27 and supports costs for installation of safety enhancements across the state highway system.

The ATP is a competitive grant program, intended to encourage increased use of active modes of transportation by achieving the goals of increased trips by walking and biking, enhancing public health, and increasing safety and mobility for non-motorized users. ATP funds quick-build projects, such as bollards on streets to increase cyclist safety.

*Quick builds could inform permanent ATP or “complete street” projects.* Complete streets is an approach to permanent street design changes that enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders. Complete Streets design updates promote the development of multimodal transportation infrastructure which can potentially lead to more choices for travel, increased safety, health benefits, and greenhouse gas emission reduction. Quick build projects could be a useful way for communities to “test” road features to assess if they truly improve safety, for example in an intersection where there have been safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists. In the guidelines, this bill directs Caltrans to establish, Caltrans may wish to require an assessment of the quick build projects to determine if they have increased safety as intended.

*According to the author,* “Traffic violence—crashes involving cars, bicyclists, and pedestrians—is rising at an alarming rate in California. Simple bikeway and intersection improvements can provide significant safety benefits, and as more Californians turn to alternative transportation, these changes should be implemented more quickly and effectively. By developing quick-build projects on the state highway system, we can deliver critical safety infrastructure faster while allowing local jurisdictions to plan for more permanent, community-driven solutions over time.”

*The sponsors of this bill,* California Bicycle Coalition and their partners, write in support of this bill, “Despite significant investment for more than 15 years in planning for safe and accessible bike lanes, implementation of facilities proposed in these plans has been much too slow at every level of government. Community support for these facilities is overwhelming despite piecemeal efforts by state and local agencies. Given rising traffic fatalities for people walking and biking, we need to ensure that opportunities are not missed to implement bikeways and safe pedestrian infrastructure on pavement repair and rehabilitation projects that are safe for users of all ages and abilities. Caltrans should demonstrate leadership in implementing bikeways quickly on pavement maintenance projects.

The Quicker and Better Bikeways Act establishes a quick-build bikeway pilot program within the Caltrans Maintenance Program to demonstrate that all Caltrans districts can quickly and cost effectively implement quick-build active transportation improvements as part of routine repaving projects.”

*Previous legislation.* SB 1216 (Blakespear), Chapter 788, Statutes of 2024, would prohibit the ATP from funding a project that creates a Class III bikeway or a sharrow, unless it is on a highway with a design speed limit of 25 miles per hour or less, as specified.

SB 960 (Wiener), Chapter 630, Statutes of 2024, would, among other provisions, require to the extent feasible that facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists be provided and improved on all SHOPP projects.

AB 2363 (Friedman) Chapter 650, Statutes of 2018 required the Secretary of Transportation to establish and convene the Zero Traffic Fatalities Task Force, on or before, July 1, 2019, and prepare and submit a report of findings based on the efforts of this task force by January 1, 2020.

SB 1 (Beall), Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017 increases several taxes and fees to raise roughly \$5.2 billion in new transportation revenues annually, and incorporated the “complete streets” design into the Highway Design Manual, among other provisions.

AB 2290 (Friedman) of 2024, would have required the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to establish the Bikeway Quick-Build Project Pilot Program, as specified, and to implement one bikeway quick-build project in each district by December 31, 2027.

SB 127 (Wiener), which was vetoed by Governor Newsom in 2019, would have changed state policies for the management of the state highway system, including requiring Caltrans to incorporate new pedestrian and bicycle facilities into projects in specified areas.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

350 Bay Area Action  
Active San Gabriel Valley  
Bike East Bay  
Bike LA  
Bike Monterey  
Bike SLO County  
Bike Temecula Valley  
CalBike  
Chico Velo  
ClimatePlan  
Families for Safe Streets San Diego  
Marin County Bicycle Coalition  
MOVE Santa Barbara County  
Napa County Bicycle Coalition  
Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition  
PeopleForBikes

Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates  
San Diego County Bicycle Coalition  
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition  
Santa Ana Active Streets  
Seamless Bay Area  
Shasta Living Streets  
Slow Down Sacramento  
Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition  
Streets are For Everyone  
Streets are For Everyone  
Streets for All  
Transbay Coalition  
Transportation Agency for Monterey County  
Transportation Authority of Marin  
Transform  
Walk Bike Cupertino

**Opposition**

None on file

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