

OVERVIEW

For several years, Caltrans has pushed the message that the state has about \$59 billion in unfunded maintenance needs for the state highway system over the next ten years. Folded in with that is how California needs to identify a stable, long-term source of funding or California's roads will continue to deteriorate.

Caltrans has used several occasions recently to turn up the volume on these messages:

- 2016 Transportation Special Session of Legislature (No successful legislation)
- California Road Charge Pilot Program
- Excessive Storm Damage in January/February 2017
- Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017 (Senate Bill 1)

The communications goals for each occasion have been building public awareness about the extent of the problem and a need for solutions, and to ratchet up media attention on the issue in order to support the Governor's Office and the Caltrans Legislative Affairs team's push for new legislation significantly increasing transportation funding.

COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

Several weeks prior to its rollout, Caltrans would create a media blitz showcasing aging infrastructure and the effects of deferred maintenance across multiple media platforms to set the stage for Governor Brown's latest transportation funding proposal.

Even prior to the legislation, Caltrans' goal would be to use every opportunity possible to work in its talking points about maintenance funding shortfalls and the consequences of deferred maintenance (e.g. noting that over \$800 million in storm damage put years of deferred maintenance on stark display).

ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRATION

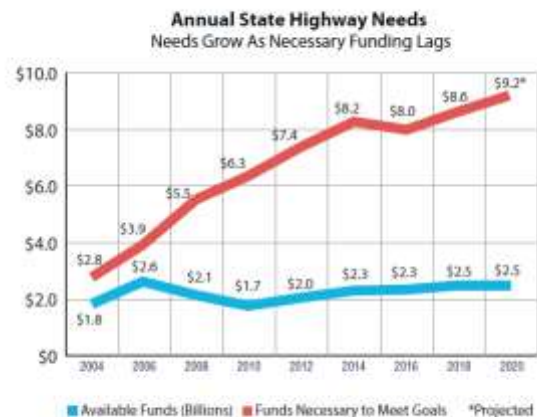
Caltrans produced talking points and an op-ed template about maintenance and funding needs which was distributed to each of the 12 districts around the state for customizations with regional information.

A conference call with all 12 district directors was also held, explaining the communications strategy and planned messaging to ensure that districts stayed on message and carried that message to their regional stakeholders and media contacts.

COMMUNICATIONS IMPLEMENTATION

The media blitz, starting about a month prior to the legislative proposal's announcement and continuing through the passage/failure of the bill, has included:

- Kick-off rally with the Governor at the State Capitol
- A "road show" of press conferences of state and legislative leaders and local officials (Riverside, Concord, Fresno, Bakersfield, San Diego, Los Angeles)
- Social media focus across headquarters and district pages
- Op-eds, both from stakeholders and regionally customized versions of a template written by Headquarters
- Infographic creation to better illustrate the needs gap, both for stakeholder and social media use.
- News releases
- Editorial boards
- Pitching media, including providing specialized b-roll
- News Flashes and News "Dashes" which illustrated crumbling infrastructure.



LESSONS LEARNED

There is still a significant need for education on how transportation is funded.

- The public mainly hears higher gas prices—there is a need to educate them about how the current gas taxes are divvied up, what portion actually goes to funding roadways and how much an increase would hit them in the pocketbook.

Caltrans needs to better articulate how it currently uses funding and will be accountable

- Need to refute the claim that the problem would be solved merely if Caltrans was "fixed" and better used the funding it currently gets.
- Caltrans must continue its dialogue about how it is appropriately using current funding as much as possible given dwindling resources.
- Caltrans needs to talk about the new efficiencies it has in place, staffing levels, what is to come and articulate how the department will remain accountable.

Caltrans has focused on talking about what the department needs to do its job, but should pivot to how that translates into effects on the public: what it would cost them, what they can expect to get and how long until they can see results.