

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	April 26, 2016
SUBJECT:	Authorize SRTA to Sponsor FASTLANE and TIGER Grants Requesting \$52.87 Million each for the Interstate 5 Redding to Anderson Six-Lane Project
AGENDA ITEM:	10
STAFF CONTACT:	Kathy Urlie, Senior Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

Two U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) discretionary grants are available this spring for the Interstate 5 Redding to Anderson Six-Lane (I-5 RASL) Project. SRTA intends to sponsor both applications and it is recommended these be affirmed by the board of directors.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the board of directors affirm SRTA's role as project "sponsor" for two USDOT grants seeking \$52.87 million each for the I-5 RASL Project.

DISCUSSION:

Background - The I-5 RASL Project has been a top SRTA priority for over a decade. Over the past two years, SRTA and the city of Anderson have applied for TIGER (Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery) grants for the southern I-5 RASL component that includes the substandard Union Pacific Railroad (UPR) overhead structure.

FASTLANE Grant - FASTLANE (Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-Term Achievement of National Efficiencies) is a new program that "provides dedicated, discretionary funding for projects that address critical freight issues facing our nation's highways and bridges." The grant was submitted by SRTA on behalf of the city of Anderson on April 14, 2016. SRTA was not an eligible applicant.

The FASTLANE grant covers the entire I-5 RASL Project. The application requests \$52.87 million with a total project cost of \$88.54 million. Currently committed Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) funds; State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) funds; and \$700,000 in local funds were pledged to meet a 40% match requirement. SRTA added a \$150,000 multi-modal food hub demonstration project component to the grant to address competitive scoring elements of the grant that could not be met with the I-5 RASL Project alone. The full application is available on SRTA's web page: <http://www.sрта.ca.gov/273/US-DOT-Discretionary-Grants>.

The grant guidelines encourage multi-jurisdictional co-applicants. To show unequivocal regional support, staff proposed to have Anderson act as lead applicant with Shasta Lake, Redding and the county as co-applicants. All agencies were in agreement except Redding, who after much discussion was uncomfortable with the "co-applicant" label. Redding agreed to a reduced level-of-support as a project "sponsor" pending council approval after the grant deadline. According to the USDOT,

co-applicant status does not obligate any agency to deliver or fund any component of the project. This responsibility rests with Caltrans as the delivering agency. Absent a full regional consensus, SRTA staff ultimately backed away from having any co-applicants. Because these grants are submitted annually, Redding may still take an item to council to authorize staff to issue stronger and more uniform support for similar regional projects in the future.

Round 3 TIGER Grant - A new round of TIGER applications are due April 29, 2016. On April 18, 2016, Caltrans notified SRTA that the I-5 RASL Project was selected as one of three TIGER applications statewide that will be submitted by Caltrans Headquarters. Therefore, SRTA will no longer be the applicant and will act as a "sponsor." SRTA is assisting Caltrans to prepare the application, including soliciting letters of support. A draft letter affirming SRTA's role as sponsor is attached for the chair's signature. The TIGER grant will be available on SRTA's website after April 29. The project scope, funding breakdown, and schedule is exactly the same as for the FASTLANE grant.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may choose to not sponsor the FASTLANE or TIGER applications. This is not recommended as sponsorship status carries no financial or legal obligation to SRTA if awarded.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

SRTA has received various levels of support for both the FASTLANE and TIGER grants from public and private entities. All letters of support are included within the grant applications. Caltrans has a substantial role in preparing the grants and would be the responsible party for project delivery. The US Secretary of Transportation determines grant awards.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

SRTA staff time and consultant resources through an existing contract with Green Dot Transportation Solutions were used to prepare the FASTLANE application. SRTA staff will also assist Caltrans in applying for this year's TIGER grant. Funds are budgeted in the Overall Work Program, WE 703.03 – Grant Writing and Technical Assistance.



Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

Attachment: SRTA Letter of Support for I-5 RASL and Multi-Modal Food Hub TIGER Proposal
FASTLANE Grant Application Files are available at:

<http://www.srta.ca.gov/273/US-DOT-Discretionary-Grants>



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Daniel S. Little, Executive Director

April 26, 2016

Mr. Anthony Foxx, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Interstate 5 Redding to Anderson Six-Lane Project (I-5 RASL) and Multi-Modal Food Hub

Dear Secretary Foxx:

The Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) is pleased to sponsor a Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant for a project to widen a section of Interstate 5 severely impacted by long-haul trucks. An essential component of the project is to replace an unsafe overcrossing of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPR).

I-5 and UPR are critical to the nation's economy as the primary north-south goods movement corridor and rail freight provider in the west. Additionally, the I-5 corridor is crucial to connecting people to ladders of opportunity for employment, education and other services requisite to the continued economic advancement of the north state.

The current overcrossing does not meet even the minimum vertical and horizontal clearance standards needed for safe operations and expansion of the UPR line. Train derailments are frequent in our region – A UPR train struck an Interstate 5 bridge support in 2014 just north of the project site. Interstate 5 bridge supports at the project site are in harm's way. A catastrophic structural failure on Interstate 5 would instantaneously halt interstate travel, truck, and rail freight/passenger traffic in one fell swoop.

While addressing a vulnerable pinch-point in the nation's goods movement system, the project also includes an innovative multimodal food hub planning proposal. The food hub would provide opportunities to efficiently ship fresh locally generated goods to the national and global marketplace while creating local jobs.

Locally, the proposed project has innovatively brought together non-traditional partners to ensure its success in an area that is ripe for, and has begun, economic redevelopment. Nationally, the project maintains the integrity of the I-5 and UPR corridors.

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TIGER holds the key to mitigate a major transportation catastrophe while allowing us to move forward with plans to maintain and expand the transportation system and economy. The interstate and railroad have been the lifeline of our economy for over a century—as well as the entire west coast. We look forward to your genuine consideration of this pivotal project proposal.

Please feel free to contact myself, or Executive Director Dan Little, if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Leonard Moty, Chair

Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (MPO)

C: Vincent Mammano, California Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration
Malcolm Dougherty, Director, Caltrans
Dave Moore, Director, Caltrans District 2