



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE:	5/7/14
SUBJECT:	Approve Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 Program of Projects and Related Actions
AGENDA ITEM:	8
STAFF CONTACT:	Jennifer Pollom, Associate Transportation Planner

SUMMARY

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 program funds public transportation in rural areas. The Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) must select projects and funding amounts. Section 5311 allows funds to be used for bike and pedestrian facilities that connect to public transit in rural areas. Such projects can be built more efficiently by exchanging the federal funds for state dollars. This year, \$421,543 is available for distribution.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the board:

1. Approve the FTA Section 5311 Program of Projects for Federal Fiscal Year 2014; and
2. Authorize the exchange of federal Section 5311 funds for state funds, and direct staff to prepare an exchange agreement and corresponding Transportation Development Act budget for approval in June.

DISCUSSION:

FTA Section 5311 provides funding for public transportation and related uses in rural areas. Funds are provided on a reimbursement basis. Section 5311 funds in this cycle apply to activities in the current fiscal year. Historically, all Section 5311 funds have been directed to the county of Shasta. Program funding levels have increased this year due to the consolidation of other grants into Section 5311. SRTA must now solicit projects from all qualified public and non-profit agencies. The projects must be approved by the SRTA Board of Directors. \$421,543 is available. SRTA emailed a letter and pre-application to transit providers in the region soliciting proposals. Two eligible proposals were received and both are recommended for full funding.

1. Golden Umbrella requested \$16,000 for continuation of the Foster Grandparent Program. The program provides low-income seniors with a small stipend and transportation reimbursement in return for 20+ hours per week of service to children in Shasta County schools (brochure attached). Mileage support from Section 5311 enables participants to work more days per week mentoring and tutoring children.
2. SRTA requested that the county of Shasta apply for the remaining \$405,543 for public transit in rural areas. Although this is more than the county can spend on public transit, all Section 5311 funds need to be allocated, or they can be lost to the region. Approval in this way will commit the funds to the region, but leaves the option to exchange funds for bikeways and walkways as discussed below.

Section 5311 and Spillover - The county of Shasta typically receives more Section 5311 revenue and State Transit Assistance revenue than is required to meet its public transit needs. Excess funds "spillover" to the cities. Under existing SRTA policies, the county – or any other eligible applicant such as Golden Umbrella – can apply for new types of projects such as expanded transit services or bike and pedestrian facilities. To the

extent there are others who apply or there are new proposed activities under Section 5311, there will be less spillover for the cities. SRTA's spillover policy was not intended to be a guarantee to cities nor limit public access to Section 5311 funds; it was intended to redirect funds that cannot be used by one agency to another agency that can.

Section 5311 for Bikeways and Walkways - After funding the Golden Umbrella program, \$405,543 in Section 5311 funds remains available for distribution. The county – or any other eligible applicant – could request Section 5311 for bike and pedestrian facilities in rural areas served by transit. Staff supports using some Section 5311 funds for this purpose because there are many documented project needs in our rural communities to make cycling and walking more convenient and safe. In addition, there are more Section 5311 funds than identified rural transit needs, resulting in an annual carryover.

Federalized Projects – Utilizing Section 5311 funds for bikeways and walkways in smaller regions is problematic. Federal funds are less flexible and cannot be pooled over multiple years for larger projects. Small projects are not practical because federal administrative oversight costs are far higher for brick-and-mortar projects compared to transit operating projects. The end result is higher costs, more staff time and fewer walkways and bikeways when federal funds are used.

Exchange Funds – If Section 5311 funds are approved for bikeways and walkways or other brick-and-mortar projects, it is recommended that the federal dollars be exchanged for state dollars. SRTA has done this in the past using the same method the state of California uses to exchange federal highway dollars. The concept is simple: If ten projects are each funded with 50% federal funds and 50% state funds, there are ten federalized projects with higher overhead costs. With the same money and for those same projects, one could instead fund five projects with 100% federal funds and the other five with 100% state funds and lower overhead costs.

SRTA Fiscal Committee Review - The SRTA Fiscal Committee reviewed the concept of using Section 5311 funds for bikeways and walkways in rural transit areas, and the exchange of federal funds for state funds. They recommended that the full SRTA Board of Directors consider such projects. The committee recognized that this would result in less spillover to the cities, but also recognized legitimate bikeway and walkway needs that can complement public transit and benefit the region as a whole. The SRTA Board of Directors could also select bikeway and walkway projects that connect rural areas to our urban cities to achieve mutual benefits.

In proceeding, staff recommends a two-part approach:

1. The first recommendation is to approve \$16,000 in Section 5311 funds for Golden Umbrella's Foster Grandparent Program and \$405,543 for rural transit in Shasta County. This action is needed in any event to lock-in the federal funds. This action does not preclude Item #2 as described below.
2. The second recommendation is to direct staff to prepare an exchange agreement for up to \$405,543, and – working with member agency staff – develop a list of recommended non-motorized projects for consideration in June. At the June meeting, the board of directors will have the option to approve up to \$405,543 in bikeway and walkway projects with exchange funds (pending project nominations and interest), or not approve any projects or exchange of funds.

The exchange agreement would be structured to maintain the intent of the Section 5311 program but without the Caltrans and FTA oversight costs.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may deny consideration of non-motorized projects or an exchange agreement at the June meeting.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The county of Shasta and Golden Umbrella have been advised of the recommendations. The SRTA Fiscal Committee has reviewed the exchange fund concept and recommends consideration by the full board.

FINANCING:

The proposed action would fund all project requests and result in the obligation of all Section 5311 funds available to the region. A June decision to approve non-motorized projects would provide needed funds for bikeway and walkway needs in rural and urban-rural interface areas. It would also reduce spillover funds to the cities dollar-for-dollar and in proportion to their respective populations. Transportation Development Act receipts are on the uptick with revenues currently at \$500,000 over budgeted levels. This would offset a \$405,543 allocation for bikeways and walkways and the corresponding loss of spillover.



Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

Attachments: Foster Grandparent Program brochure



Join Foster Grandparents Today.
Help Children Who Need it Most.



Giving Back Is Good For You, Too

Older Americans who volunteer frequently live longer and report better health. Volunteering can also lead to more friendships and a more positive attitude.



I try to dream up new activities to help the children in the Head Start program prepare for elementary school. I see them improve and advance, right before my eyes. Their progression is amazing.

- Neil Weare
Foster Grandparent Volunteer



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Help Children Who Need it Most.

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Scan this QR Code to see our website on your mobile device.

The Foster Grandparent Program is a part of Senior Corps, along with RSVP and Senior Companions. Senior Corps is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering.



9/13



FOSTER GRANDPARENTS
Share Today. Shape Tomorrow.



Make a Difference In Your Community Today.



Help Children to Thrive

As a Foster Grandparent, you'll help children in your community develop the academic and life skills that are critical to their development and future successes.

Sharing your time and experience can help children learn how to read, prepare younger students for school readiness, tackle tough subjects and make decisions that keep them on the right path. We'll match your skills and passions to opportunities that interest you, including those in local schools, youth facilities, early childhood education and day care centers.

A Proud History of Helping

Foster Grandparents began in 1965 with 100 volunteers in more than 45 institutions. Today, nearly 30,000 volunteers help more than 280,000 children through our nationwide network of organizations.

These organizations have clear-cut goals, so you can be sure your assistance focuses on high-impact activities like:

- Teaching job skills to economically disadvantaged youth.
- Improving behavioral and educational outcomes—including day care centers, grade school and college readiness—for students with special and or exceptional needs.
- Tutoring and mentoring in local schools and community-based programs.
- Supporting children of veterans and deployed military.

You Have

What it Takes

Our program is open to volunteers 55 and over who can serve between 15 and 40 hours a week.

You don't need formal experience in tutoring or mentoring. You'll receive pre-service orientation and training from the organization with which you will serve.

We also offer a tax-free hourly stipend to help cover costs for income eligible volunteers. You'll even receive supplemental, accident and liability insurance while you're in service.

"Foster Grandparents gives me the opportunity to give students the help they need."
— Helen Hansen, Foster Grandparent Volunteer



Spotlight

Denver, Colorado



At F.M. Day Elementary School in Denver, Colorado the Foster Grandparent Program is thriving.

Foster Grandparent Emma Tourville spends one-on-one time with students who need extra academic help in the classroom. Emma works with Jonah, who quickly benefitted from her aid in the classroom and tutoring. "The impact I've seen on Jonah when he spends time with his Foster Grandparent is tremendous. He feels more involved in the curriculum," said Debbie Stallings, Jonah's teacher. "He thrives because of the time that he spends with Grandma Emma."

"The extra attention our Foster Grandparents give these kids makes a huge difference academically," said Chad Anderson, principal at F.M. Day.