

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE: October 21, 2021
SUBJECT: Receive Update on Salmon Runner Intercity Bus Project
AGENDA ITEM: 10
STAFF CONTACT: Jennifer Pollom, Senior Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transit (DRMT) rescinded a 2020 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Intercity Bus Program grant award (\$600,000) for the Salmon Runner Intercity Bus service. Procurement for an operator has been discontinued; however, staff continues to work with state partners to resolve the funding issue and is moving forward with the development of zero-emissions motorcoaches.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the board of directors receive an update on Salmon Runner Intercity Bus project.

DISCUSSION:

In June, Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transportation rescinded SRTA's 2020 FTA Intercity Bus Program grant award (\$600,000) for Salmon Runner bus operations. Grant application administrators at Caltrans erroneously awarded the funding in a year which they later determined was not eligible. Not only was the \$600,000 in funding rescinded, the mistake likely caused a loss of an additional \$600,000 when Caltrans determined that only "existing" projects would be funded in the next cycle. When the original \$600,000 was rescinded, the project lost "existing" status and was denied the additional \$600,000 for a total impact of \$1.2 million. SRTA's procurement process for an intercity bus operator was discontinued due to the lack of funding (Table 1); estimated operating costs for two round trips daily is \$1.3 million annually.

Table 1: Salmon Runner Committed Operation Funding

Funding Partner and Program	Amount	Funding Process
Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Intercity Bus Program	\$600,000	Annual grant process
Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transportation State Rail Assistance "Bus Gap" Award	\$470,000*	*Two-year pilot project
San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA) Rail Passenger Commitment	\$200,000	Annually
Tehama County Transportation Commission Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ)	\$100,000	One- to two-year commitment with an annual grant process
Total	\$1,370,000 \$770,000	

The removal of the funding was a major blow to launching this long-anticipated service and a disappointment to those in the community hoping to use the service this fall, particularly considering recent cuts to Amtrak train service, Amtrak Thruway Bus service, and Greyhound service in Redding.

Despite rescinding the grant, Caltrans DRMT is including the start of Salmon Runner in the on-going Statewide Intercity Bus Study and will work with SRTA on the operations plan. The operations plan will need to identify guaranteed long-term funding for the service.

In anticipation of a successful resolution of operational funding, SRTA will continue working with Caltrans DRMT, the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), and regional and state partners on the development of a zero-emission motorcoach that can meet requirements of the Interstate 5 (I-5) bus service and other statewide needs. The 2018 Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) award of \$8.6 million requires a change to the scope of work from seven zero-emission motorcoaches to the development of a prototype fuel cell motorcoach and infrastructure for hydrogen manufacturing and fueling. The new scope of work will be derived from the 2019/20 TIRCP grant application that was denied award. The SRTA Board of Directors [authorized the 2019/20 TIRCP grant application at the December 2019 meeting under agenda item 12.](#) The scope change will have to be approved by Caltrans DRMT, CalSTA, and the California Transportation Commission.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may request additional information from staff or provide direction to staff on how to proceed.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

SRTA is seeking to determine Caltrans DRMT's level of commitment to funding intercity bus service along the I-5 corridor between Redding and Sacramento, including intermediate stops in Red Bluff and Orland. Caltrans DRMT is working with SRTA on an operations plan and will ultimately determine if future funding is awarded through discretionary programs. SJJPA committed funding to Salmon Runner operations to carry rail passengers to and from Sacramento, like the Amtrak Thruway bus. Tehama County Transportation Commission committed \$100,000 in CMAQ funding for new bus service operations if the service starts. The Caltrans DRMT and CalSTA are also working with SRTA to use the \$8.6 million TIRCP award on hydrogen fuel cell zero-emission motorcoaches and supporting infrastructure.

SRTA and rural transit partners have contributed extensive time to regional intercity bus transportation. Since 2015, SRTA has led the planning and coordination effort to develop the North State Intercity Bus Program, including five successful grant awards with one rescinded (nine total applications submitted).

A history of related SRTA Board of Directors agenda items is attached.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was provided an update.

FISCAL IMPACT

Without the FTA grant award of \$600,000 and denied funding in the subsequent cycle, the service has been put on hold indefinitely. Staff will apply for funding in the next cycle but Caltrans's priorities with respect to the service under the FTA Intercity Bus Program are unclear.

Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

Attachment: History of Related SRTA Board of Directors Agenda Items

HISTORY OF RELATED SRTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA ITEMS

2015

MEETING ON APRIL 28, 2015, [AGENDA ITEM #11](#)

ADOPT RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMITTAL OF 2015 FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION SECTION 5311(F) INTERCITY BUS PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION(S)

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. ...; and
2. Adopt Resolution 15-06 authorizing SRTA to submit a 2015 FTA Section 5311(f) application to study public transportation services to Sacramento, the Sacramento International Airport, and to possibly connect to major ground transit and airport facilities in the Bay Area.

The staff recommendations passed unanimously.

MEETING ON OCTOBER 13, 2015, [AGENDA ITEM #5-9](#)

AUTHORIZE TECHNICAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH CONSULTANT FOR SHASTA INTERCITY TRANSPORTATION TO SACRAMENTO AND BAY AREA STUDY

It is recommended that the board of directors authorize the executive director to sign a technical services agreement (attached) with The Center for Business and Policy Research at the University of the Pacific to prepare the *Shasta Intercity Transportation to Sacramento and the Bay Area Study*, for a term ending June 30, 2016, not to exceed \$26,700.

The consent calendar was approved.

2016

MEETING ON FEBRUARY 23, 2016, [AGENDA ITEM #21](#)

UPDATE REGARDING TRANSIT AND INTERCITY RAIL CAPITAL PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION – REVIEW AND POSSIBLE ACTION

It is recommended that the board of directors receive an update on the development of a FY 2016/17 TIRCP grant application and provide further direction, if any, to staff.

The board gave no further direction to staff.

MEETING ON APRIL 26, 2016, [AGENDA ITEM #8](#)

APPROVE THE TRANSIT AND INTERCITY RAIL CAPITAL PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION FOR BUS SERVICE BETWEEN REDDING AND SACRAMENTO

It is recommended that the board of directors approve the attached 2016/17 TIRCP grant application.

The staff recommendation passed unanimously.

MEETING ON DECEMBER 13, 2016, [AGENDA ITEM #9](#)

ACCEPT SHASTA INTERCITY TRANSPORTATION TO SACRAMENTO AND THE BAY AREA STUDY FINAL REPORT

It is recommended that the board of directors accept the *Shasta Intercity Transportation to Sacramento and the Bay Area Study* final report (attached).

The staff recommendation passed unanimously.

2017

MEETING ON APRIL 25, 2017, [AGENDA ITEM #14](#)

AUTHORIZE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE NORTH STATE EXPRESS CONNECT BUSINESS PLAN FOR INTERCITY BUS SERVICE BETWEEN REDDING AND SACRAMENTO

It is recommended that the board of directors authorize the executive director to issue an RFP for the *North State Express Connect Business Plan* (attached), pending award of a Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant.

The staff recommendation passed unanimously.

MEETING ON JUNE 27, 2017, [AGENDA ITEM #14](#)

AUTHORIZE TECHNICAL SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR NORTH STATE EXPRESS CONNECT BUSINESS PLAN FOR INTERCITY BUS SERVICE BETWEEN REDDING AND SACRAMENTO

It is recommended that the board of directors authorize the chair to sign a technical services agreement (TSA) with Green DOT Transportation Solutions (Green DOT) to complete the *North State Express Connect Business Plan*, for a term ending June 30, 2020, not to exceed \$205,852.

The staff recommendation passed unanimously.

MEETING ON OCTOBER 10, 2017, [AGENDA ITEM #9](#)

APPROVE SUBMITTAL OF A TRANSIT AND INTERCITY RAIL CAPITAL PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION FOR BUS SERVICE BETWEEN REDDING AND SACRAMENTO AND AUTHORIZE SOLICITATION OF PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. Authorize the executive director to issue multiple requests for proposals (RFPs) for intercity buses, charging facilities, and passenger and bus parking; and
2. Approve submittal of a Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program grant application utilizing results from the RFP process.

The staff recommendation passed unanimously.

2018

MEETING ON JUNE 19, 2018, [AGENDA ITEM #12](#)

APPROVE THE NORTH STATE INTERCITY BUS SYSTEM BUSINESS PLAN AND DELEGATE AUTHORITY TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO PERFORM RELATED ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. Approve the North State Intercity Bus System Business Plan;
2. Adopt Resolution #18-11 delegating authority the executive director to perform all administrative actions necessary to obtain Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) funds, including agreements with Caltrans and other project partners of the North State Intercity Bus System.

The staff recommendation passed unanimously.

2019

MEETING ON FEBRUARY 26, 2019, [AGENDA ITEM #15](#)

NORTH STATE INTERCITY BUS PROGRESS REPORT

It is recommended that the board of directors receive an update on the North State Intercity Bus Project, and provide any additional comments and/or direction to staff.

By motion made and seconded (Winter/Rickert), the staff recommendation passed unanimously.

MEETING ON JUNE 25, 2019, [AGENDA ITEM #16](#)

CANCEL EXISTING SALMON RUNNER BUS PROCUREMENT, DEVELOP AND RELEASE NEW BUS PROCUREMENT, AND AMEND CONTRACT WITH CENTER FOR TRANSPORTATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. Cancel Procurement 2019-01 – Request for Proposals for Battery-Electric Vehicle Procurement for Salmon Runner and North Valley Feeder;
2. Authorize the executive director to release a new zero-emission bus procurement for the Salmon Runner intercity bus service, including the valley feeder service; and
3. Authorize the executive director to amend contract #2018-06 with Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE) for Project Management for Procurement of Battery-Electric Buses and Charging Stations, increasing the budget by \$12,500, for a total amount of \$62,500 to assist SRTA with the new procurement.

By motion made and seconded (Moty/Winter), the staff recommendation passed unanimously.

MEETING ON DECEMBER 10, 2019, [AGENDA ITEM #12](#)

RECEIVE INTERCITY BUS UPDATE AND AUTHORIZE TRANSIT AND INTERCITY RAIL CAPITAL PROGRAM (TIRCP) GRANT APPLICATION

It is recommended that the board of directors authorize submittal of a TIRCP grant application to partner with 1) a manufacturer for the design, engineering, and building of one or more prototype fuel cell motorcoaches and 2) a vendor for related hydrogen fueling infrastructure in Redding and Sacramento.

By motion made and seconded (Moty/Rickert), the staff recommendation passed unanimously.

2020

MEETING ON FEBRUARY 25, 2020, [AGENDA ITEM #12](#)

ADOPT RESOLUTION APPROVING A FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION SECTION 5311(F) INTERCITY BUS PROGRAM APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2020 BY THE SHASTA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY TO OPERATE THE SALMON RUNNER

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. Adopt Resolution 20-02 (attached) approving a FTA Section 5311(f) Intercity Bus Program application for Federal Fiscal Year 2020 by SRTA to operate the Salmon Runner; and
2. Authorize the executive director to provide certifications, assurances, and other requested information to Caltrans and FTA.

By motion made and seconded (Rickert/Schreder), the staff recommendation passed unanimously.

MEETING ON APRIL 28, 2020, [AGENDA ITEM #5-5](#)

ADOPT RESOLUTION APPROVING A 5339(C) LOW OR NO EMISSION PROGRAM APPLICATION TO CONSTRUCT CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE NORTH STATE INTERCITY BUS SYSTEM

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. Adopt Resolution 20-05 (attached) approving an FTA Section 5339(c) Low or No Emission Program application by SRTA for charging infrastructure for the North State Intercity Bus System; and
2. Authorize the executive director to provide certifications, assurances, and other requested information to Caltrans and FTA.

By motion made, seconded (Watkins/Chimenti), and unanimously carried by roll call vote, the consent calendar was approved.

MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2020, [AGENDA ITEM #11](#)

CONSIDER DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL STUDY (PUBLIC COMMENT) AND RECEIVE UPDATE ON SALMON RUNNER INTERCITY BUS SERVICE

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. Accept public comments on and consider the development of an intercity passenger rail study and provide direction to staff; and

2. Receive an update on the Salmon Runner intercity bus service.

By motion made and seconded by roll call vote (Schreder/Rickert), the staff recommendation passed with five board members in favor (Chimenti, Rickert, Morgan, Schreder, and Watkins); and two board members opposed (Browning and Resner).

2021

MEETING ON FEBRUARY 23, 2021, [AGENDA ITEM #15](#)

RECEIVE UPDATE ON GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE NORTH STATE INTERCITY BUS TO RAIL PLAN

It is recommended that the board of directors receive an update on the North State Intercity Bus to Rail Plan grant application.

Update only, no action taken.

MEETING ON APRIL 27, 2021, [AGENDA ITEM #12](#)

APPROVE RELEASE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR OPERATIONS OF SALMON RUNNER BUS SERVICE BETWEEN REDDING AND SACRAMENTO

It is recommended that the board of directors approve the release of a request for proposals (RFP) for intercity bus service operations between Redding and Sacramento.

By motion made and seconded by roll call vote (Schreder/Rickert), the staff recommendation passed unanimously.

MEETING ON JUNE 28, 2021, [AGENDA ITEM #9](#)

ACCEPT A CALTRANS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP GRANT AWARD OF \$291,819 FOR THE NORTH STATE INTERCITY BUS TO RAIL PLAN

It is recommended that the board of directors approve Resolution 21-12 (Attachment A) to accept the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021/22 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Award of \$291,819 for the North State Intercity Bus to Rail Plan and direct staff to begin procurement of consultant services.

By motion made and seconded by roll call vote (Schreder/Rickert), the staff recommendation passed unanimously.