

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	April 23, 2019
SUBJECT:	Appoint Transit Policy Committee
AGENDA ITEM:	12
STAFF CONTACT:	Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

SUMMARY

Public Transportation in the region is at a crossroads of opportunities and challenges in terms of new funding programs, declining ridership, new technology and the need to coordinate services. Focused coordination efforts are ultimately needed at the board of directors' level. The SRTA Fiscal Committee recommends appointing a committee comprised of SRTA and RABA board members to sort through these issues and make recommendations. A specific make-up is suggested for discussion purposes.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the SRTA Board of Directors appoint a Transit Policy Committee and invite joint participation by RABA.

BACKGROUND:

Three agencies provide public transportation within the region: RABA, SRTA, and Shasta County. All of these services overlap to some degree causing confusion and, at times, frustration among riders. Each of the three agencies face somewhat duplicative administrative and reporting responsibilities that could be consolidated for efficiency. Each transit service has different staffs and boards of directors. Each of the three transit agencies have overlapping fiscal and policy roles that necessitate coordination at the staff and board level.

DISCUSSION:

Within the background setting discussed above, public transportation has undergone several unprecedented changes in the past three years:

- Transit funding and new transit grant opportunities are at an all-time high, as are the associated reporting requirements and administrative burdens.
- Mobility needs are changing faster than transit systems can adapt and ridership is on the decline.
- Farebox ratios are falling and on pace to result in reduced funding eligibility.
- Technology is rapidly improving providing opportunities to operate more efficiently, reduce fleet diesel and gasoline use, equip vehicles with more active safety controls, and provide detailed data to better respond to rider needs.

- New transit services will launch within the next year including the ShastaConnect Sunday service on-demand pilot project; the Salmon Runner intercity bus service; and possible on-demand service in the city of Shasta Lake area.

These changes have resulted in the need for new policy direction regarding clarification of agency roles; coordination of services; strategic use of new funding sources; and adaptation to changing technology and mobility demands. Challenges encountered to date include duplication of services, lapses in federal funding, lack of mutual support for service changes, and a farebox ratio that continues to struggle across all services.

To this end, the SRTA Fiscal Committee met and concluded that a good place to start would be a Transit Policy Committee comprised of elected officials who represent the three area transit providers: SRTA, RABA and Shasta County. It is also recommended that the RABA Board of Directors and RABA staff be invited to co-participate. The Transit Policy Committee appointed by SRTA could be endorsed by the RABA board, or RABA could suggest additional members while mindful of Brown Act quorum limitations.

The Fiscal Committee recommends appointments representative of the three agencies that provide staff to run the three transit services in our region: Redding, SRTA, and Shasta County. Members that have been directly involved with the aforementioned transit developments over the past three years is also desirable. The recommendations (and representations) are:

1. Kristen Schreder (SRTA Chair, RABA, Redding)
2. Leonard Moty (SRTA Vice Chair, County Chair)
3. Julie Winter (SRTA, RABA, Redding Mayor)

Attached is a list of staff-suggested topics for consideration by the Transit Policy Committee. Four meetings are anticipated over about six months culminating in specific action items and a possible joint-meeting of the SRTA and RABA boards.

Going forward, the committee process would bring in all affected stakeholders before any policy or funding decisions are made. This would be done through existing stakeholder and public involvement processes employed by SRTA and RABA. All city and county staffs would be invited to participate in committee meetings and receive meeting materials. Meeting materials will also be posted on the agency website.

Staff suggests beginning as a temporary ad-hoc committee. One policy consideration could be the establishment of a standing committee once this process concludes.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may decline the formation of a committee or appoint different representatives.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

All action items suggested by the Transit Policy Committee would require approval by the full SRTA Board of Directors and the RABA Board of Directors as appropriate. The Board of Supervisors and city councils will likely be involved depending on policy recommendations. *///The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) concurs with the staff recommendation.///*

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action other than staff time to support coordination efforts associated with the committee meetings. SRTA currently has adequate staff time budgeted for transit coordination and would be willing to conduct the majority of the work. SRTA currently funds RABA and would support programming planning funds to fully cover RABA's added cost to participate.

Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

Attachment: Specific Topics for RABA, SRTA, and County Consideration

Suggested Topics for RABA, SRTA, and County Consideration

- Alternative service delivery options for Burney Express, particularly if farebox ratio is projected to fall below 10%
- Consolidate Burney Express with ShastaConnect or RABA to get the county out of the transit agency business and eliminate duplicative administrative costs, as well as user confusion
- Strategies to avoid transit funding cuts if the RABA farebox ratio falls below 15%, including coordination efficiencies, on-demand service options, private/non-profit partnerships, and technology
- RABA support of Sunday Transit, On-Demand Transit, Salmon Runner, and short- and long-term role in providing these services
- Application of the city of Shasta Lake On-demand Transit Feasibility Study examining partial replacement of RABA services
- Strategic use of flexible funding sources such as FTA, LCTOP, State of Good Repair, and “County Spillover”
- Better coordinate and eliminate duplicative services between RABA, ShastaConnect, and Burney Express
- Appropriate lead to serve state-mandated CTSA provider role and transit coordination role
- Integrated fares, passes, and ticketing, and possible elimination of zone transfer fees between jurisdictions
- Coordinate marketing
- Evaluate CTSA performance and develop a long-term vision for CTSA role and Dignity Health Connected Living capacity to support that vision
- Processes for more accurate and efficient tracking of funds and to avoid funding lapses
- Guidance for mutual agency support and sponsorship of transit grants
- Guidance on pursuing grants for low- or zero-emission buses and vans
- Shared use of support facilities including intermodal facilities, transit stops, maintenance facilities, charging and solar facilities
- Coordinate efforts for driver recruitment, retention, and training
- Modify or reaffirm SRTA’s various transit funding apportionment and allocation formulas
- Develop a joint action plan based on the above outcomes
- Hold a joint SRTA/RABA board meeting to solidify Transit Policy Committee findings and recommendations
- Revise SRTA/RABA/County Transit MOU and possibly the RABA JPA
- Revise policies as appropriate
- Scope of new short- and long-range transit plan funded by SRTA