

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	February 23, 2021
SUBJECT:	Receive Update on Grant Application for the North State Intercity Bus to Rail Plan
AGENDA ITEM:	16
STAFF CONTACT:	Eamon Johnston, Assistant Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

SRTA submitted a Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning grant application for the North State Intercity Bus to Rail Plan which will evaluate enhanced bus connections to nearby rail hubs as well as future daytime passenger rail service.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

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

DISCUSSION:

On February 12, 2021, SRTA submitted a Strategic Partnership Transit grant application for \$####,### to the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program to fund the North State Intercity Bus to Rail Plan. The grant program provides competitive funding for transportation planning projects. The proposed plan is a comprehensive assessment of near-term (10-year) and long-term (10-20 years) intercity transportation improvements including enhanced bus connections to regional rail hubs and, ultimately, direct daytime passenger rail to Redding.

The proposed plan builds on work that SRTA has done to implement the North State Intercity Bus System through the future Salmon Runner bus service between Redding and Sacramento along the Interstate 5 corridor. The 2018 California State Rail Plan (State Rail Plan) lists several goals that should be addressed by SRTA in accordance with local priorities, as opposed to a top-down approach. The relevant elements of the State Rail Plan are summarized below:

Timeline	Element of the 2018 CA State Rail Plan	Status
2022 Short-Term Plan	"Implement integrated express bus service from Sacramento to Redding..."	Pending start of Salmon Runner operations.
	"Study the potential for regular, daytime passenger rail to Redding."	Pending award to SRTA of North State Intercity Bus to Rail Plan grant.
2027 Mid-Term Plan	"There will be a minimum [bus] service of every 2 hours on the core system, including Integrated Express Bus services to places like Redding and Reno."	Initial planning through the pending award to SRTA of North State Intercity Bus to Rail Plan grant. Operation funds approved to start initial, less frequent express service.

The North State Intercity Bus to Rail Plan will take the next step to develop intercity transportation through:

- assessment of improving bus service to nearby rail hubs both existing (Sacramento) and planned (Oroville/Chico);
- analysis of existing and underutilized rail infrastructure;
- determine feasibility for future daytime passenger rail to Redding and the practical progression of steps needed for this to occur; and
- suggest an alternative governance structure with better North State representation to guide planning and operation of intercity transportation services in the North State.

This project will also complement the North Valley Passenger Rail Extension to Butte County. This is a project that the Butte County Association of Governments is applying for now in partnership with the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA). The proposal is to extend daytime passenger rail service from Sacramento to Oroville or Chico. The BCAG project is further along in the planning stages and could be implemented in the next 5 to 10 years.

If awarded grant funding, staff will prepare a detailed scope of work and procure consultant services subject to approval by the board. A link to SRTA's grant application on the SRTA website is attached for further review.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board may choose not to accept the award anticipated to be announced in June 2021. Similar planning efforts would continue, guided by state and SJJPA local elected officials representing the San Joaquin Valley, with limited representation from Shasta County and the North State.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Caltrans administers the grant program. The grant will require coordination with the state and current public transportation providers in the North State, with a focus on the Interstate 5 corridor between Redding and Sacramento.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The grant request is for \$####,###. A \$####,### (11.47 percent) match is required which can include staff time currently budgeted in the OWP using Planning, Programming and Monitoring funds. In addition, participating agencies in the corridor and in the North State Super Region will be providing staff time to support the effort.

Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

Attachment: North State Intercity Bus to Rail Plan Grant Application (*Grant due February 12: Not available for TAC*)