

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	October 20, 2020
SUBJECT:	Approve Federal COVID-19 Relief Funding for Rural Public Transportation
AGENDA ITEM:	5-7
STAFF CONTACT:	Kathy Urlie, Senior Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has provided additional funding for rural transit operations for expenditures incurred due to COVID-19 under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. For rural services, in places like Shasta County, these funds are passed through Caltrans, Division of Rail and Mass Transportation (Caltrans). In August, SRTA applied for \$250,806 of CARES Act funding through Caltrans for rural, general public transit, provided through Dignity Health Connected Living (DHCL). In addition to the CARES Act, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act was passed by Congress on October 1, providing \$750 million nationwide for rural transit.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the board of directors authorize the executive director to apply for federal COVID-19 relief funding for rural public transportation through the FTA 5311 program, both the CARES Act Phase 2 funding and future CARES Act or HEROES Act funding, pursuant to the attached resolution.

DISCUSSION:

In March 2020, Congress provided emergency monies under the CARES Act to assist transit operators with the impacts of COVID-19. One fund source – FTA 5311 – is for rural, general public transportation. A first phase of FTA 5311 CARES Act funding was distributed by formula earlier this year only to transit operators who had previously received FTA 5311 funds. As a result, Shasta County Department of Public Works will receive \$424,404 of CARES Act Phase 1 funding. In mid-July, Caltrans solicited applications for a second phase of FTA 5311 CARES Act funding open to all eligible transit operators. Applications were due in August. SRTA shared the grant funding solicitation with the cities of Anderson, Redding, and Shasta Lake, Shasta County, the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council, and the region's two federally recognized tribal governments.

For the Shasta Region, \$723,711 of FTA 5311 CARES Act Phase 2 funding is available. Shasta County Department of Public Works applied for \$472,905 for Burney Express operations after consultation with SRTA. SRTA applied for \$250,806 for rural operations contracted through DHCL. Other than Shasta County and SRTA/DHCL, no other entities applied.

To date, Caltrans has requested multiple items from SRTA and DHCL in consideration of eligibility, which have been provided. In mid-September, Caltrans conditionally approved the FTA 5311 CARES Act Phase 2 applications in order for FTA to be able to obligate the funds. However, Caltrans made clear that their approval was conditional, subject to the outcome of on-going eligibility review. Caltrans has assured SRTA

staff, in writing, that if SRTA/DHCL are not deemed eligible for FTA 5311 CARES Act Phase 2 funding, that the funding would be retained within the Shasta Region for reallocation—not redistribution to the state.

On October 1, 2020, Congress passed the HEROES Act which includes \$750 million for rural transit. SRTA staff expects that Caltrans will be providing additional FTA 5311 grant funding opportunities under the HEROES Act.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may request staff consider other eligible projects or request additional information at the next board meeting.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The FTA 5311 CARES Act Phase 2 grant funding solicitation was shared with local agencies, social services transportation providers, and tribal governments. Applications were coordinated among Shasta County Department of Public Works, DHCL, and SRTA.

FISCAL IMPACT:

If found eligible and approved for funding, FTA 5311 CARES Act funding would be made available to DHCL to offset increased expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Future funding applications under the CARES or HEROES Act may provide the same.



Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

Attachment: Resolution 20-13: Authorize Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 Funding

RESOLUTION



RESOLUTION NUMBER:	20-13
SUBJECT:	Authorize Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 Funding

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Transportation is authorized to make grants available to states through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to support capital/operating assistance projects for non-urbanized public transportation systems under Section 5311 of the Federal Transit Act (Circular 9040.1G); and

WHEREAS, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has been designated by the Governor of the State of California to administer Section 5311 grants for transportation projects for the general public for rural transit and intercity bus; and

WHEREAS, the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency desires to apply for said financial assistance to permit operation of services and purchase of capital equipment in the Shasta region (Shasta County); and

WHEREAS, the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency has, to the maximum extent feasible, coordinated with other transportation providers and users in the region (including social service agencies).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency authorizes the Executive Director to:

1. file and execute applications on behalf of the agency with Caltrans to aid in the financing of capital/operating assistance projects pursuant to Section 5311 of the Federal Transit Act (FTA C 9040.1G), as amended;
2. execute and submit all certification of assurances, contracts or agreements or any other document required by Caltrans;
3. provide additional information as Caltrans may require in connection with applications for Section 5311 projects; and
4. submit and approve request for reimbursement of funds from Caltrans for Section 5311 project(s).

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 20th day of October 2020, by the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency.

Leonard Moty, Chair
Shasta Regional Transportation Agency