

APPROVED MINUTES

SHASTA COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AGENCY (MPO)

Tuesday, February 25, 2003, 4:00 p.m.
Redding Civic Center, City Council Chambers,
777 Cypress Avenue, Redding, California.

(Note: These minutes are not intended to serve as a transcript or verbatim record of the proceedings of the Shasta County Regional Transportation Planning Agency, but rather as a record of meeting time, place and attendance; the order and general nature of discussion; Agency deliberations; and action taken, if any.)

Agency Members Connick, Clarke, Hawes, Duryee, Mathena, Wilson and Alternate Member Stegall were present. Agency Member Kight was absent.

1. Call to Order:

Chair Connick called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

2. Public Comment Period:

There was no one who wished to speak during the Public Comment Period.

Consent Calendar

3-1 Minutes of December 10, 2002, RTPA Meeting

3-2 Future RTPA Meeting Schedule Through February 2004 - Information Only

3-3 Adopt Policies for Administration and Agency Distribution of Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP)

3-4 Accept TDA Fiscal and Compliance Audits for Year Ending June 30, 2002

3-5 Authorize Executive Officer to Begin RFP Process for Future Audits

By motion made, seconded and carried, the items on the Consent Calendar were approved.

Regular Calendar

4. Select New Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

Executive Officer Kovacich explained that Norma Connick's term as Chairperson was over. Usually, the Vice-Chairperson moves up to Chairperson. Mark Reno from Shasta Lake City was the Vice-Chairperson, but he has moved out of

the area and is no longer a member. Therefore, a new Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson needed to be selected. By motion made and seconded (Stegall/Mathena) Pat Kight was unanimously elected as Chairperson. By motion made and seconded (Stegall/Mathena) Glenn Hawes was unanimously elected as Vice-Chairperson. Since Pat Kight was not at the meeting, Glenn Hawes presumed presiding over the meeting.

5. Report on Impact of State Budget Woes on Shasta County

Executive Officer Kovacich explained that he had thought by now we would have received some clarity from Sacramento on how the budget process was going to be solved. But nothing has really happened yet and things are still up in the air. Kovacich continued to say that at the last meeting he informed the Board that the second quarter disbursement of AB2928 was going to be held back; however, that money has been distributed to the Cities and the County. As far as the transportation budget crisis - the California Transportation Commission, Caltrans and regional Agencies have been working together trying to come up with a listing of priorities on how to spend the monies on transportation projects. The goal is to keep the money flowing, continue to develop projects, and try to keep congestion at bay. At this point, there are more questions than there are answers.

6. Report on Efforts Oriented Towards Federal Reauthorization

Executive Officer Kovacich explained that at the last meeting staff was given direction to start lobbying for two projects in Shasta County: the Stillwater Highway 44 project and the Airport Road Corridor project in Redding. A committee consisting of Brian Crane of Caltrans, Ray Duryee of the City of Redding, Board member Norma Connick and Dan Kovacich met with Congressman Herger and Senator Boxer's office. In the packets are responses from those legislators. Attempts are being made to set up a meeting in Redding with Senator Feinstein's office. It has been difficult so far to reach her office. The support of a citizens group in Palo Cedro is also going to be enlisted, which has been asking for improvements to Highway 44; the group will be encouraged to write some letters stating their position. Staff will also be working with the City of Redding to identify some components of the Airport Road Corridor and try to keep something in front of the legislatures on a regular basis so they won't forget about us when they start writing the Federal funding bill.

7. Select Delegate and Alternate to California Association of Council of Government (CALCOG)

Executive Officer Kovacich explained that CALCOG is an association of regional agencies throughout California. Attached to the staff report is their legislative agenda for this year. Dan explained that he attends their Directors' meeting because it is a way to keep in touch with what is going on in the State. The RTPA is eligible to have a delegate. In the past there have been delegates selected who have not been very active. Dan recommended that if a delegate were chosen, it would be beneficial for that person to become active in CALCOG. The minimum would require two meetings a year, one in April and one in November or December that are held in various locations in California. John Mathena volunteered to be a delegate and Norma Comnick volunteered to be an alternate.

8. Consider 2003/04 Transit Needs Assessment and Conduct 2003/04 Unmet Transit Needs Hearing

Executive Officer Kovacich explained that it was time to begin the 2003/2004 Transportation Development Act cycle. It begins with the Transit Needs Assessment, which is an assessment of the current level of services being provided in Shasta County. He explained that after staff member Sue Crowe gave a presentation, the meeting would be open for public testimony to those wanting to describe their unmet transit needs.

Dan continued to explain that the comments then are received, assembled and evaluated by staff as to whether they are "reasonable to meet" or not. Next, the staff will forward comments to the Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC) who will develop their own recommendations. This information will be presented to the Board at the April meeting with a recommendation as to which new requests are reasonable to meet. At that time, the Agency will be asked to make a decision as to what the minimum level of transit service could be provided. Even if services are found not to be reasonable to meet, the local Agencies are free to provide whatever level of service they care to provide in excess of the minimum levels specified by this Agency.

Staff member Sue Crowe showed a power point presentation of the 2003/2004 Transit Needs Assessment. She then advised the audience of the various ways they could get comments to the RTPA. The floor was then opened up to public testimony.

Shelly Anderson, a Consumer Advocate for Far Northern Regional Center, explained that for the past four years she has advocated for better bus service in Shasta County by speaking at these meetings. The first year she asked for longer hours, Sunday service, and also asked for more shelters. Shelly extended her thanks that more shelters were provided, so the people don't have to wait out in the rain. The second year she asked for Sunday service, longer night hours, and organized a group of protesters, but they were told by this Agency that not enough people wanted these services. The third year, once again, she asked for Sunday service and longer hours at night. Once again, no one from this Agency listened. Today Shelley explained that she stands before us as a consumer advocate representing 2,073 disabled people in Shasta County. Again, she asked for Sunday service and longer night hours, stating that better bus service is needed in Shasta County. She closed by stating that disabled people are members of this community, they pay taxes, they vote and they need the Board to listen.

Steve Reed, Consumer of Far Northern Regional Center. Steve stated that he is forced to ride his bike or walk because of the limited hours of the city bus. It is especially hard to get to where he needs to go. The program Steve goes to is very important, because it teaches him many of the skills he needs to live on his own. If the bus service could be extended only a few hours each day and on Sundays, then Steve could utilize the bus service, and it would be much easier to attend his program.

Mike Evans, Chair, of the Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC). Mike explained that he gave a written copy of his comments to the Board and staff. He then explained the process of the Unmet Hearing, and how the SSTAC would present their responses to the RTPA regarding services that are reasonable to meet. He continued to say, this year as in most recent years, the unmet needs will fall into three major categories:

1. A need for Sunday service, for all of the system or at least a part of the system.
2. A need for extended hours, especially for those who work later shifts and those involved in program activities after work as part of their social service provider programs.
3. Some kind of public transportation from outlying communities.

Mike explained that it's been a struggle every year to try and come up with different solutions, and each time the problem is meeting the reasonable to meet criteria. The means of determining the needs is evaluated using the farebox return ratio of 20% for urban and 10% for rural

areas as the standard. He noted that there are three points regarding the process:

1. Costs should be calculated by actual "marginal additional costs" to the system and not on a gross basis. An issue affecting costs are the design of the services and whether or not the most efficient and cost effective solutions are tried.
2. A majority of the burden of providing services is on the City of Redding who has the greatest density of the transit dependent population. Of the total population of the County, 50% live outside the RABA service area. So additional services will have to wait until outlying areas are urbanized to the same degree as the central city area.
3. TDA funds are primarily for the support of public transportation solutions. These funds are being used mostly for the maintenance of streets and roads. The law permits these funds to be used for public transportation solutions, even when farebox ratio doesn't meet 10% or 20% ideals.

Mike ended by saying that making TDA funding work for everyone will take the combined efforts of RTPA, RABA staff, the local jurisdictions, the transit dependent public and agencies serving them.

Jim Gatterdam. Jim asked how many on City Council use the transit system. Jim explained that he does and how it's a three-hour minimum chunk out of his day just to go to the store for milk. It takes an hour to get there, an hour to shop and an hour to get back. Jim lives on Buckeye Terrace, which is about one mile from the closest bus stop on Lake Blvd. Jim can get within two blocks from his house if he takes the number eight all the way to Shasta Lake City and back. He thinks possibly more bus stops along the routes might be helpful. Jim suggested that a poll be done of the passengers to get some kind of objective response to things such as extra hours, later hours and especially Sunday service. He explained that people work on Sundays, go to church, need access to stores and laundromats on Sundays. People who work Monday through Friday only have these days (Saturday and Sunday) to make use of these services. Jim would like it to be mandatory for busses to make connections at all the connection points. Jim was at

a doctor's appointment this week and when he arrived at the bus stop a few minutes before the time, the bus was already gone. That cost Jim another hour to wait for the next bus.

Ella Slemph, of Shasta People First. Ella explained that People First helps people with development disabilities, helping them to be more independent. People First has chapters all over the world. She continued to say that one of the things People First does is show the world that people with disabilities are like everyone else. They have hopes like everyone else, they want to have jobs with good pay, and own their own house. They also want the ability to go out and do things like everybody else. But they have problems; many of them don't have driver's licenses or cars, so they have to use RABA. Many of them ride RABA everyday, to work or to shop or to have fun or go out to dinner. They are very happy to have RABA, however, there is the problem that the busses stop at 6:30 p.m. and don't run on Sunday. Ella explained that this means if they are offered a job after 6:00 p.m. they can't take it, because they won't have a way home. If they want to go to a movie after 6:00 p.m. they can't do that. If they want to go to college at night, they can't do that. If they want to go to church or shop or visit their friends on Sunday, they can't do that either, because the busses don't run on Sunday. She continued to explain that because there are no busses on Sunday, many of them stay home. Many of them don't have a chance to worship God like everybody else because they have no way to get there. Ella ended by stating that, for Shasta People First, she is asking us to please accept her request for Sunday service. They need Sunday bus service so they can be more independent just like everyone else.

Debra Salyers stated that she has many issues, most of them good. One is concerning Demand Response; she uses it as she needs it. However, it quits at 7:30 p.m. and if she needs to go grocery shopping, and is in her program all day, she cannot do this. The other thing that is a concern to her is that one day she got out of a dentist appointment up on Hilltop Drive and then found out the bus didn't go back downtown. Fortunately she had money for a taxi.

Elizabeth Nichol would like to go to church on Sunday, but there is no way to get there.

Mark Miller stated that he had a few unmet needs issues. First he definitely agrees that we need to have service on Sundays and later into the evenings so that people can be

assured of a ride home if they are going out in the afternoon. Also, Mark takes the bus everyday to Shasta College and having an express route, especially in the morning, so they can get to their class on time is very important. He thinks this would increase ridership. He noted that State money is available to Shasta College to provide alternative transportation. Mark then explained about bio-diesel fuel, and how diesel engines can be converted into bio-diesel engines. This is an opportunity to save a native species and strengthen our local economy. Bio-diesel burns much cleaner. He continued to say that several other transit providers have converted to bio-diesel, and their busses run just as well and just as efficient and they are a lot cleaner than standard diesel.

Celeste Droisher first thanked the Board and especially the people who ride RABA. She thinks that if the routes are extended it will allow people to use the system more. She noted that looking into alternative resources is a good idea. She thinks it's a good idea to get community input about putting murals on the busses. She also suggested that a park be made with statues to commemorate the bus drivers. She believes a park would liven up the downtown area.

Executive Officer Kovacich explained that staff will evaluate all of the comments against the reasonable to meet standard and work with the SSTAC to assist them in developing their recommendation. These will be presented to the Agency at the next meeting in April and the Board will be asked to make a decision as to what the minimum level of transit service is that should be provided.

Board Member Stegall stated that she is here for Pat Kight and since she probably won't be at the April meeting she is going to make a statement now. She has sat in on the unmet needs meeting for a couple of years now and, as Director of the Women's Refuge, she is very aware of what people have been requesting today. For example, some women would like to go back to school but can't take classes because they are unable to get back from Shasta College in the evenings, and people who can't get to church or work on Sundays. She continued to say that people have been asking for these services for a number of years now and she thinks at this particular point and time, with gas prices what they are today and people not being able to afford to use their cars for work, we ought to be looking at an opportunity to make RABA convenient for people. One of the reasons she doesn't ride the bus is because it's not convenient and she's not going to wait an hour for the bus. If it were effective, efficient, on time, came regularly, ran into the evenings and ran on Sundays she would be far more likely to use it.

Board Member Duryee asked if it would be possible sometime in the next month to conduct a poll from the people who do use the bus, those that would be likely to take the transit longer hours, as opposed to those who say that they will.

Executive Officer Kovacich said that a poll could be done.

Board Member Stegall noted that one speaker today said Shasta College has money for transportation. She wanted to know if that was so. Dan Kovacich answered that he believes the money they get must be used for their own transportation system. He said he would check into this and see if there is any money that can be tapped into.

There being no other business to discuss, Board Member Hawes adjourned the meeting at 4:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel J. Kovacich, Executive Officer

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