

APPROVED MINUTES

SHASTA COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AGENCY (MPO)

Tuesday, December 9, 2003, 4:00 p.m.

City of Anderson Council Chambers,
1887 Howard Street, Anderson, 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, Mathena, Wilson and Hawes were present. Agency Member Kight was absent.

1. Call to Order:

Vice Chair Hawes called the meeting to order at 4:06 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 October 21, 2003, RTPA Meeting

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

3-3 Master Fund Transfer Agreement - Consider Approval

3-4 Consider Work Plan for the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update and Approval of Working Group Membership - Consider Approval

3-5 Appoint New Members to the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) - Consider Approval

3-6 Report of Activities of California Council of Governments (CALCOG) - Information Only

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

Regular Calendar

4. STIP Fund Estimate

Executive Officer Kovacich explained that the California Transportation Commission (CTC) released the Fund Estimate for the 2004 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) in November. Shasta County's Regional Share is derived from the Fund Estimate. The RTPA then submits a Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP) to the State. The State takes the 58 RTIP's from the 58 Counties, which forms the Statewide STIP.

In most years discussion would be about how many additional projects could be programmed. This year there is no new money and the direction from the State is to spread the projects that are currently programmed over three years, over five years.

Mr. Kovacich continued to explain some factors that are and are not included in the Fund Estimate. The first item of significant impact on the Fund Estimate and transportation financing in general, is called the "Ethanol Issue". Ethanol is mandated to be in gasoline in California to help clean up the air. Ethanol is more expensive to produce than regular gasoline, so as an incentive to corn growers and the Ethanol industry, the Federal gas tax on Ethanol is 5.2 cents per gallon less than it is on gasoline. Over the five-year period of the 2004 STIP that is approximately a \$700 million per year issue if it is not fixed. The assumption that the Ethanol problem will not be fixed is included in the Fund Estimate. If the Federal government does come up with an Ethanol fix of some fashion that conceivably would make the 5.2 cents a gallon available for transportation. This will become an issue nationwide as other States convert to Ethanol and as Federal transportation revenue shrinks as a result.

Board Member Hawes asked what percentage of Ethanol was being put into gasoline. Dan did not know.

Executive Officer Kovacich concluded that it is estimated that in a few months just about all the gasoline sold in California, except for some areas around the borders where they may get their supplies from another State, will have Ethanol.

The second issue is proposition 42. Several years ago the voters, by 70%, directed the State to take the sales tax on gasoline and make it available for transportation. Before that, the sales tax was going into the State General Fund.

In 2003/04 the State suspended proposition 42, therefore all of the sales tax on gasoline goes into the General Fund. The CTC put this fund estimate together assuming proposition 42 will not be suspended. The CTC has to follow current law, which says proposition 42 revenues go to transportation. Proposition 42 will probably be suspended again this year, and several years in the future until the State gets its financial affairs in order. This is a 1.7 billion dollar hit on the STIP over the five years of the program. If proposition 42 is suspended, then what is presented is not accurate. The money can be programmed at the State level, but when the time comes to actually convert to dollars, the State highway account will be out of money.

Another development that will impact this program is Governor Schwarzenegger suspending the Transportation Congestion Relief Program (TCRP), which was going to make available \$7 billion dollars for transportation. Statewide and in Shasta County TCRP projects will be competing with already programmed STIP projects for scarce STIP dollars. Shasta County does have a TCRP project, the Airport Road Bridge over the Sacramento River. That project is currently in the environmental phase. What will probably happen is after the environmental is complete the County may ask that it become a regional project and come to the RTPA and ask for STIP funding. This is an example of a TCRP project outside the STIP program competing for scarce STIP resources.

Staff Member Dan Little explained the delay of projects currently programmed. He first explained how Cypress Bridge is programmed for Right of Way and Construction to match Federal Bridge Replacement Funds. There is roughly \$4 million combined with Cypress A and Cypress B. The programming target for the year is \$873,000. This project will be delayed one year. With this project's environmental delays, it might not be much of a real hit on this project.

The South Bonnyview widening project is for environmental, design work and construction. Construction is programmed for \$748,000 in 2005/06. This is partial funding for construction. It is recommended that this project be programmed for environmental in the first year and design work in the second year, with construction in the third year.

The next project is Shasta County Bridge matches. These are various bridges that the County wants to program STIP funds to match Federal Bridge Replacement Funds. There is

currently \$670,000 programmed. The County realistically can spend \$350,000 on HBRR match for a couple of bridge projects to be built. The remainder will be put in the second year.

These are all suggestions that have been discussed at the Staff level with local agency staff. As we continue to work with our local partners further modifications may be identified.

The next projects programmed are the Redding Mall project that will restore streets through the downtown mall, and the Downtown Grade Separation. Previously funds were shifted from the proposed Parkview Avenue Bridge to develop these projects. Redding is looking to start environmental on these projects. Current programming is \$345,000 for each project for the environmental review. Further input is needed from Redding, but at a minimum it will have to go out to the second year for programming in 05/06. Redding may want to consider moving it out beyond that, or not to program these projects at all and put the money toward a project like Bonnyview. Environmental may not want to be programmed now because it may be ten years before construction funds are available. Environmental reviews only have a certain shelf life and there is no sense tying up funds. Therefore it may be better doing the environmental when it is nearer to construction.

The next project is PPM; these are funds that the RTPA is entitled to for programming projects or monitoring project development. In the last 2002 STIP cycle \$250,000 was drawn and shifted to Redding to help develop the Downtown Mall and Grade Separation projects. There is still \$60,000 left. It is proposed that \$20,000 go to Anderson for their Ox Yoke project, \$20,000 to Shasta Lake for Shasta Dam Blvd. and \$20,000 for the Shasta County Bridge projects.

The next project is the Shasta Dam Blvd. Reconstruction. There was partial funding in the City of Shasta Lake for \$155,000. This project is ready for construction and can stay in the first year and still make the targets. Also, \$20,000 may be added to that total.

It is the same situation with the Ox Yoke Drive Traffic Signal on State Route 273 proposed by the City of Anderson and Caltrans. It can also stay in the first year.

The next project is the Redding Downtown Couplets. This is a Caltrans project that is currently in right-of-way. Construction funds of 2.4 million may be shifted out one year. That is more in keeping with the actual schedule, as

Caltrans is not able to do the right-of-way and is delayed anyway.

The last project is broken into two, the Dana to Downtown Project that has been on the books for a long time, and to widen State Route 44 over the Sacramento River to the downtown area. In the last STIP cycle construction was delayed to 06/07. Because it is such a large dollar project, it will not fit into any one target-year. It is twenty million dollars in construction money alone. To be true to the targets the State has given, it needs to be pushed out into the last years to be delayed another two years. The environmental is done on this project and it is ready for construction. It is proposed to keep this in the 06/07 even though it does not meet the targets. If other regions have to move big projects out, maybe this one can come in.

There are two other projects where the environmental component only is currently programmed. They are the Stillwater project on SR44 and the Buckhorn Grade. These are both still in the environmental review phase and will be for some time.

Dan Little asked if there were any questions on the project delays. There were no questions.

Dan then explained the Federal Transportation Enhancement (TE) Program. This is Federal money available for non-motorized projects such as bicycle lanes, landscaping, etc. Over the next five years over \$2.4 million is projected to be available to Shasta County.

In previous programs the region had the option of exchanging these federal entitlements for State Highway Account funds. However this cycle the TE funds must be programmed as part of the STIP. As a result these projects will be "federalized" requiring full environmental reviews.

If a project is not more than \$500,000, it is not worth it to do a Federalized project. The environmental and administrative costs would run about \$100,000. There has been discussion at staff level about what to do with these TE funds. They can be used toward other motorized project needs such as Bonnyview construction. But there is a catch in that they cannot be programmed in this cycle. They have to be programmed five, six or seven years out for regular projects. The problem with that is not knowing if the money will still be there or not.

Staff level discussions have been held with the jurisdictions. The consensus of the group on the TE funds is to have one, two or three large projects delivered by one agency, but the project would have region wide interest that everyone could agree on. Further it was agreed that a prospective TE bike lane project would basically be widening existing roads with four-foot shoulders. Not only are there bike lane benefits, but the benefit of a wider, safer road and is something that can be delivered now instead of 6 or 7 years out. A potential project would be to add bike lanes to Shasta College up Old Oregon Trail; connecting from Shasta View to Old Oregon Trail on Old Alturas Road.

Dan continued with the possibility of widening State Route 273 for bike lanes. This project would have the ability to leverage Statewide TE funds, which is more than what the regional share is.

The last idea is to use the money to fund the TE eligible components of the Dana to Downtown project.

Dan finished by saying that a specific project recommendation does not have to be made for purposes of adopting the Regional Transportation Plan. The lump sums need to be programmed, but project specific decisions do not need to be made now, but will be later. The general consensus of the staff level meeting was to use the TE funds for non-motorized projects.

Finally, Dan indicated the Regional Transportation Improvement Program would be presented to the Agency for adoption in February.

Board Member Hawes noted that this proposed strategy seemed like a good idea; the money probably will not be there in 6 or 7 years.

Board Member Clarke stated that in thinking of bike lanes, not to forget Deschutes.

Dan Little noted that the County is currently working on Deschutes with some old TE funds, which makes it easier and faster. This project is in the works up to Cow Creek School.

Board Member Kight complimented Dan Little on an excellent report, noting that it is just too bad the money is already all spent.

By motion made and seconded (Clarke/Comnick) the staff recommendation passed unanimously.

5. Adjourn

There being no other business to discuss, Vice Chair Hawes adjourned the meeting at 4:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel J. Kovacich, Executive Officer

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