

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE: February 26, 2019
SUBJECT: North State Intercity Bus Progress Report
AGENDA ITEM: 18
STAFF CONTACT: Jennifer Pollom, Senior Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

SRTA is progressing with procuring battery electric coach-style transit vehicles, charging equipment, and developing partnerships for the grant-funded North State Intercity Bus System. The bus system includes the “Salmon Runner” between Redding and Sacramento and a connecting valley feeder service between Willows, Orland, Corning, and Chico.

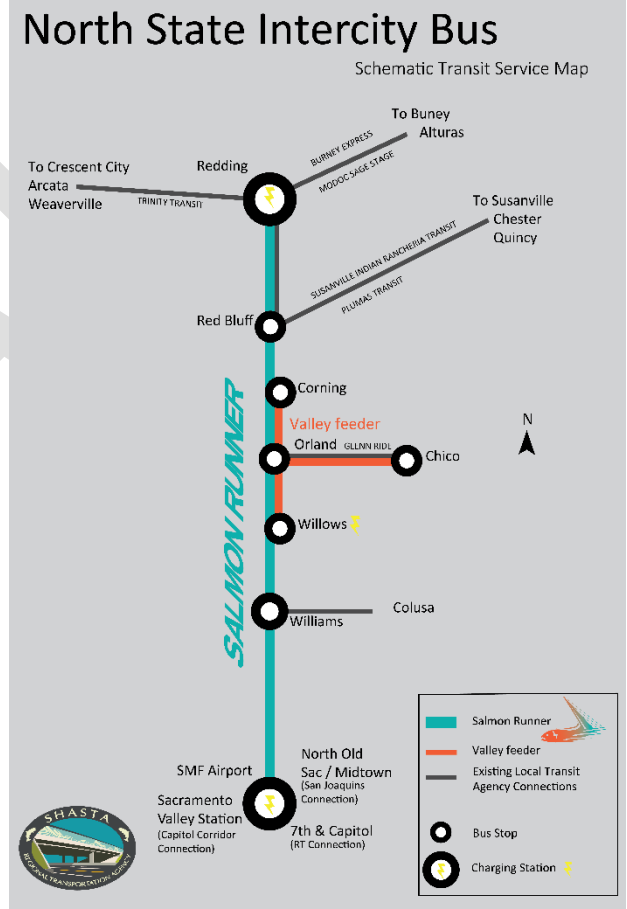
STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the board of directors receive an update on the North State Intercity Bus Project, and provide any additional comments and/or direction to staff.

DISCUSSION:

Background – In April 2018, SRTA was awarded over \$8.6 million in capital funding through the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) for a new zero-emission intercity bus service between Redding and Sacramento, including a valley feeder. The service will offer four inter-connected round trips per day and is described in the [North State Intercity Bus System Business Plan](#). A history of related board actions is attached.

Bus Procurement – Most of the grant award is for battery electric coach-style vehicles that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and carry passengers comfortably on long trips. Transit agencies across California and the nation are introducing battery electric low-floor transit vehicles into their fleets for use on local bus routes. Bus



manufacturers have begun to move the battery electric technology to coach-style vehicles, intended for long trips. Prior to releasing a request for proposal (RFP) for battery electric coach-style vehicles, SRTA staff informally met with bus manufacturers to receive presentations and ask questions about vehicles available or coming to market that could meet the needs of the Salmon Runner.

Salmon Runner vehicles have the unique requirements to travel at interstate speeds and reliably complete the 175-mile one-way trip between Redding and Sacramento on a single charge under strenuous loads (max passenger load, HVAC) over the 12-year life of the vehicle. In January 2019, [SRTA released an RFP](#) for the manufacture and delivery of seven battery electric coach-style transit vehicles and charging equipment. Proposals are due March 4, 2019, and a recommendation for board of directors consideration will be presented at the April meeting.

Service Updates – The bus service is designed as a green, affordable transportation option with fares structured so that the highest fare is \$20 and the lowest is \$5. The service schedule coordinates with local transit system connections as well as passenger rail and other intercity bus connections in Sacramento.

Although SRTA would like to begin running the service on a regular schedule in the fall of 2019, bus manufacturers indicated that the spring of 2020 is a more reasonable delivery time frame. With that said, if SRTA takes on operations of the existing Amtrak thruway bus service, then service could begin sooner with standard buses until the battery electric buses arrive. See below topic: “Operating Thruway Bus Service.”

Valley Feeder – The Salmon Runner includes a valley feeder service that connects with the I-5 backbone service in Orland. The valley feeder connects the cities of Corning, Orland, Willows and Chico. This will result in convenient public transportation between Redding and Chico with one transfer.

Public Outreach – Staff is working with consultants on branding the service, now named the “Salmon Runner” and developing outreach materials, including a [short video](#) describing the benefits of the service. Branding developed thus far includes logo variations, tag lines, and bus wrap options. Furthermore, staff is coordinating with the organizers of the Whole Earth and Watershed Festival (April 20, 2019) on a transit-focused theme for this year’s festival.

Salmon Runner Tentative Schedule					
Southbound					
		Trip 1	Trip 2	Trip 3	Trip 4
Redding	Downtown Transit Center	5:01 AM	7:31 AM	10:28 AM	5:28 PM
Red Bluff	Hampton Inn & Suites/Holiday Inn	5:31 AM	8:01 AM	10:58 AM	5:58 PM
Orland	CVS	6:06 AM	8:36 AM	11:33 AM	6:33 PM
Williams	SR 20 or E Street Site	6:53 AM	9:23 AM	12:20 PM	7:20 PM
Sacramento	Sacramento International Airport	7:46 AM	10:16 AM	1:13 PM	8:13 PM
	7 th & Capitol Stop	8:08 AM	10:38 AM	1:35 PM	8:35 PM
	Sacramento Valley Station	8:20 AM	10:50 AM	1:47 PM	8:47 PM
Northbound					
		Trip 1	Trip 2	Trip 3	Trip 4
Sacramento	Sacramento Valley Station	5:00 AM	11:35 AM	3:45 PM	7:30 PM
	7 th & Capitol Stop	5:12 AM	11:47 AM	3:57 PM	7:42 PM
	Sacramento International Airport	5:34 AM	12:09 PM	4:19 PM	8:04 PM
Williams	SR 20 or E Street Site	6:27 AM	1:02 PM	5:12 PM	8:57 PM
Orland	CVS	7:14 AM	1:49 PM	5:59 PM	9:44 PM
Red Bluff	Hampton Inn & Suites/Holiday Inn	7:49 AM	2:24 PM	6:34 PM	10:19 PM
Redding	Downtown Transit Center (arrives)	8:19 AM	2:54 PM	7:04 PM	10:49 PM
Valley Feeder Tentative Schedule					
Southbound					
		Trip 1	Trip 2	Trip 3	Trip 4
Corning	Transportation Center	6:33 AM	9:08 AM	4:28 PM	9:23 PM
Orland	9th Street / Walker	6:57 AM	9:32 AM	4:52 PM	9:47 PM
Chico	Greyhound / Amtrak Station	7:34 AM	10:09 AM	5:29 PM	10:24 PM
Orland	9th Street / Walker	8:11 AM	10:46 AM	6:06 PM	11:01 PM
Willows	Walmart (arrives)	8:27 AM	11:02 AM	6:22 PM	11:17 PM
Northbound					
		Trip 1	Trip 2	Trip 3	Trip 4
Willows	Walmart	4:25 AM	7:00 AM	2:20 PM	7:15 PM
Orland	9th Street / Walker	4:48 AM	7:23 AM	2:43 PM	7:38 PM
Chico	Greyhound / Amtrak Station	5:25 AM	8:00 AM	3:20 PM	8:15 PM
Orland	9th Street / Walker	6:02 AM	8:37 AM	3:57 PM	8:52 PM
Corning	Transportation Center	6:26 AM	9:01 AM	4:21 PM	9:16 PM

Partnerships – Staff are working on agreements with local transit agencies, including the Redding Area Bus Authority (RABA), Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) for storage and charging in Sacramento, and Glenn Transit Services (Glenn County) for the valley connection storage and charging. The agreements will generally address where buses will be stored and charged; shared stop locations; and cost sharing. RABA’s agreement will also including solar canopy installation and the potential for shared maintenance facilities. Because Glenn Transit Service will operate the valley connection, that agreement will include operating and performance standards. Other agreements are needed for stop locations along both routes and possible parking and security improvements.

Operating Thruway Bus Service – Staff continues to work with Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transportation and the California State Transportation Agency on transitioning the operations of the current Amtrak thruway bus service managed by the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to SRTA. As it operates now, bus tickets are only available as part of a rail trip. Due to timing of contract renewals, there is an opportunity for the state and the San Joaquin JPA to reconsider how state rail funds are used for connecting bus services. SRTA could receive some of the state rail funding that San Joaquin JPA currently receives to operate Amtrak thruway bus service and take on administration of a renewed Amtrak thruway bus contract. Staff is working with the state on the California Integrated Travel Project whose aim is seamless travel across multiple modes – interconnecting rail, metro, bus and private mobility providers – on a single ticket.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Capital – The TIRCP provides full capital funding for the Salmon Runner, including the valley feeder service. Besides the zero-emission buses, the grant includes funding for charging infrastructure and installation; ticketing equipment; stop location lease agreements and improvements; launch marketing; and discounted rider passes. No match is required. Staff and consultant time for project planning, environmental review, consultant selection, partnership agreements, and program administration is also funded through the grant.

Operation – An estimated \$1,200,000 in annual operating expenses is needed for the Salmon Runner and valley feeder service. Anticipated operating revenues include SJJPA and CalSTA financial support, Federal Transit Administration Section 5311(f) Intercity Bus Program awards, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds from Tehama County, and a 20% farebox recovery. A fallback for operational funding is the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) annual regional allocations from both the Shasta Region and other North State Super Region counties. No local Transportation Development Act funds are proposed to be used for operations.

Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

Attachments: History of Related SRTA Board of Directors Agenda Items

HISTORY OF RELATED SRTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA ITEMS

2015

MEETING ON APRIL 28, 2015, AGENDA ITEM 11

ADOPT RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMITTAL OF 2015 FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION SECTION 5311(F) INTERCITY BUS PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION(S)

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. ...; and
2. Adopt Resolution 15-06 authorizing SRTA to submit a 2015 FTA Section 5311(f) application to study public transportation services to Sacramento, the Sacramento International Airport, and to possibly connect to major ground transit and airport facilities in the Bay Area.

The staff recommendations passed unanimously.

MEETING ON OCTOBER 13, 2015, AGENDA ITEM 5-9

AUTHORIZE TECHNICAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH CONSULTANT FOR SHASTA INTERCITY TRANSPORTATION TO SACRAMENTO AND BAY AREA STUDY

It is recommended that the board of directors authorize the executive director to sign a technical services agreement (attached) with The Center for Business and Policy Research at the University of the Pacific to prepare the *Shasta Intercity Transportation to Sacramento and the Bay Area Study*, for a term ending June 30, 2016, not to exceed \$26,700.

The consent calendar was approved.

2016

MEETING ON FEBRUARY 23, 2016, AGENDA ITEM 21

UPDATE REGARDING TRANSIT AND INTERCITY RAIL CAPITAL PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION – REVIEW AND POSSIBLE ACTION

It is recommended that the board of directors receive an update on the development of a FY 2016/17 TIRCP grant application and provide further direction, if any, to staff.

The board gave no further direction to staff.

MEETING ON APRIL 26, 2016, AGENDA ITEM 8

APPROVE THE TRANSIT AND INTERCITY RAIL CAPITAL PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION FOR BUS SERVICE BETWEEN REDDING AND SACRAMENTO

It is recommended that the board of directors approve the attached 2016/17 TIRCP grant application.

The staff recommendation passed unanimously.

MEETING ON DECEMBER 13, 2016, AGENDA ITEM 9

ACCEPT SHASTA INTERCITY TRANSPORTATION TO SACRAMENTO AND THE BAY AREA STUDY FINAL REPORT

It is recommended that the board of directors accept the *Shasta Intercity Transportation to Sacramento and the Bay Area Study* final report (attached).

The staff recommendation passed unanimously.

2017

MEETING ON APRIL 25, 2017, AGENDA ITEM 14

AUTHORIZE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE NORTH STATE EXPRESS CONNECT BUSINESS PLAN FOR INTERCITY BUS SERVICE BETWEEN REDDING AND SACRAMENTO

It is recommended that the board of directors authorize the executive director to issue an RFP for the *North State Express Connect Business Plan* (attached), pending award of a Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant.

The staff recommendation passed unanimously.

MEETING ON JUNE 27, 2017, AGENDA ITEM 14

AUTHORIZE TECHNICAL SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR NORTH STATE EXPRESS CONNECT BUSINESS PLAN FOR INTERCITY BUS SERVICE BETWEEN REDDING AND SACRAMENTO

It is recommended that the board of directors authorize the chair to sign a technical services agreement (TSA) with Green DOT Transportation Solutions (Green DOT) to complete the *North State Express Connect Business Plan*, for a term ending June 30, 2020, not to exceed \$205,852.

The staff recommendation passed unanimously.

MEETING ON OCTOBER 10, 2017, AGENDA ITEM 9

APPROVE SUBMITTAL OF A TRANSIT AND INTERCITY RAIL CAPITAL PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION FOR BUS SERVICE BETWEEN REDDING AND SACRAMENTO AND AUTHORIZE SOLICITATION OF PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. Authorize the executive director to issue multiple requests for proposals (RFPs) for intercity buses, charging facilities, and passenger and bus parking; and
2. Approve submittal of a Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program grant application utilizing results from the RFP process.

The staff recommendation passed unanimously.

2018

MEETING ON JUNE 19, 2018

APPROVE THE NORTH STATE INTERCITY BUS SYSTEM BUSINESS PLAN AND DELEGATE AUTHORITY TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO PERFORM RELATED ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. Approve the North State Intercity Bus System Business Plan;
2. Adopt Resolution #18-11 delegating authority the executive director to perform all administrative actions necessary to obtain Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) funds, including agreements with Caltrans and other project partners of the North State Intercity Bus System.

The staff recommendation passed unanimously.