

SIERRA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
P. O. BOX 98 – DOWNIEVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95936

COMMISSIONERS

PETER W. HUEBNER –CHAIRMAN
SCOTT SCHLEFSTEIN
PAUL ROEN
PATRICIA WHITLEY

MARIANNE MOORE-VICE CHAIR
ERNIE TEAGUE
MARK MARIN
JAMES BEARD, ALTERNATE

WEDNESDAY
MARCH 23, 2016
10:00 A.M.

SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL
305 SOUTH LINCOLN
SIERRAVILLE, CALIFORNIA

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Paul Roen. A quorum was established.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Huebner; Moore; Schlefstein; Teague; Roen

Commissioners Absent: Marin; Whitley

A Quorum was established.

Staff Present: Bryan Davey, Transportation Planner; Miriam Dines, Executive Secretary; Tim Beals, Executive Director

Others Present: Kaisa McDonald and Arnold Mitchum of Sierra Hot Springs; Jennifer Jacobson, Regional Liaison, Caltrans District 3

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Commissioner Huebner.

3. ELECTION OF 2016 CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR:

Commission Action: Commissioner Moore nominated Commissioner Huebner to serve as Chair for 2016; seconded by Commissioner Roen. Motion was carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Commission Action: Commissioner Huebner nominated Commissioner Moore to serve as Vice-Chair for 2016; seconded by Commissioner Schlefstein. Motion was carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Commissioner Huebner assumed the chair.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commission Action: Commissioner Schlefstein moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Roen. Motion was approved unanimously by roll call.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Schlefstein raised the issue discussed at the previous meeting with regarding the condition of State Route 70 from Vinton to Hallelujah Junction in Lassen County. Discussion ensued on the dangerous conditions. Jennifer Jacobson will contact District 2 regarding the concerns raised.

Commission Action: Commissioner Roen moved to approve the October 29, 2015 minutes; seconded by Commissioner Schlefstein. Motion was approved unanimously by roll call.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS: No announcements were made.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comment was given.

8. TRANSIT ISSUES:

Mr. Davey reported on projected funding for the next fiscal year. Mr. Maddox, County Auditor, provided a fund estimate as follows: Projected revenue for FY 2017 is \$13,000 in STA - State Transit Assistance (which is for capital expenditures) and \$45,000 in LTF - Local Transportation Funds. The Federal Transit Administration appropriated \$48,000 for the next cycle instead of the usual \$40,000. The projected balance in STA at the beginning of the next fiscal year is \$53,000 and in LTF it is projected at \$17,000. The balances along with the projected funding result in the staff recommendation to extend the same program this year, at \$98,000, dividing the available funding between the two agencies that are under contract for transit services.

Commission Action: Commissioner Roen moved to adopt a resolution approving the Program of Projects (POP) for 15-16 FTA 5311 Grant Funding; seconded by Commissioner Schlefstein. Motion was carried unanimously by roll call.

Commission Action: Commissioner Roen moved to approve FTA Section 5311 Transit Grant application as presented; seconded by Commissioner Schlefstein. Motion was carried unanimously by roll call.

Miriam Dines discussed the annual Unmet Transit Needs hearing and explained that due to the 45 day public notification requirement she had scheduled the hearing, and therefore the May meeting of the SCTC, for Wednesday, May 25, 2016.

Miriam Dines reported that contact was made with the public members of the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council at that all public representatives wished to continue their participation. No action was taken.

9. OVERALL WORK PROGRAM

Mr. Davey reported that during reconciliation of the account for the first two quarters it was discovered that we had neglected to modify the budgets for Work Elements 3 and 4 (Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Transportation Improvement Program). Since the RTP updated was completed last year, as was the updated RTIP, those budgets need to be reduced. In all other aspects we're on track and have met goals and are proceeding as expected.

Commission Action: Commissioner Roen moved to adopt a resolution approving the amended Overall Work Program for Fiscal Year 2016; seconded by Commissioner Moore. Motion was carried unanimously by roll call.

Mr. Davey further reported on the draft Overall Work Program for 2017, stating that it had submitted to Caltrans. Essentially it is a continuation of the work we have been doing this year, there are no major modifications. We anticipate receiving comments from Caltrans and reporting back at the next meeting.

10. STIP UPDATE

Mr. Davey reported that we received a letter from the California Transportation Commission advising SCTC that they want us to revise the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), pointing out that we had submitted an RTIP with no additional programming already. Now the CTC is stating that there is a \$754,000,000 shortfall and projects need to be deleted from the STIP. The SCTC projects in question are the State Highway Turnouts and the Smithneck Road Rehabilitation and Smithneck Road Bike Project. The request was to delete all. In response, Mr. Beals drafted a letter declining to delete projects and did not offer to revise it voluntarily. A resolution affirming that position was presented for review and approval.

Mr. Davey further reported that a large effort is being put forth to rectify the transportation funding crisis with the STIP. All road departments throughout California are severely impacted by this funding crisis and the Governor has addressed this in his budget as one of his top priorities. Some counties have volunteered reductions to the STIP, and as was reported at the last Regional Counties Taskforce meeting, \$500 million in projects had been offered up by the counties. The CTC will be meeting on March 24, 2016 to review the issue. The expectation is that they will direct the CTC staff to pick projects to delete. Commissioner Schlefstein stated that we should keep fighting until they delete us.

Discussion ensued on whether the Regional Counties Task Force ascribe to the position that smaller counties shouldn't be touched in this process, and the basic conclusion is that all jurisdictions are fighting for their budgets.

Mr. Beals reported that there is a good news regarding the State Route Truck Turnouts project in that Caltrans has offered to fund the project in advance for us should it get deleted, and it looks like if we agreed it could be constructed in 2017. Commissioner Roen and Mr. Beals had been in touch with Tom Brennan of Caltrans regarding the project. Caltrans will draft an agreement that SCTC would have to commit \$750,000 in future funding to one of their projects.

The Smithneck bike path project was discussed and it still appears that Federal Lands Access Program is a good possibility for funding for that project. The application will need to be beefed up with some economic drivers. It is clear that Sierra County is a county that deserves FLAP funding for projects with 75% of the land in Sierra County being National Forest.

Commission Action: Commissioner Schlefstein moved to adopt a resolution opposing deletion of STIP projects; seconded by Commissioner Roen. Motion was carried unanimously by roll call.

Further discussion ensued on the State Route Truck Turnout Projects, noting appreciation for Commissioner Roen's interaction with Caltrans on this project and that anyone traveling on State Route 89 will understand the value of the project.

Commission Action: Commissioner Roen moved to adopt a resolution to support the project and execute an agreement with Caltrans to deliver the project in advance of the funding; seconded by Commissioner Schlefstein. Motion was carried unanimously by roll call.

The letter to the California State Legislature regarding the transportation funding crisis was considered. Mr. Davey explained that it is similar to the letter that was on the Sierra County Board of Supervisors agenda for consideration, with a somewhat different spin with the Regional Transportation Planning Agencies, which have a bigger role in this in that they are more closely connected to the California Transportation Commission.

Commission Action: Commissioner Roen moved to approve and authorize a letter to members of the California State Legislature regarding the transportation funding crisis; seconded by Commissioner Schlefstein. Motion was carried unanimously by roll call.

Mr. Davey reported on the California Road Charge Pilot Program which has been legislated to see if road user charges could replace the gas tax for funding transportation. Commissioner Schlefstein stated adamant opposition to the concept, stating that he has real concern about how this will impact rural residents. Brief discussion ensued, no action was taken.

11. TRANSPORTATION ISSUES AND PROJECT STATUS REPORTS

A. Bicycle Trail Project and Smithneck Creek Road Rehabilitation: Status covered under previous discussion: Mr. Davey reported that we have engineering firms who've submitted Requests for Proposal however we haven't selected among them, and we may not want to proceed with that if the project ends up deleted from the STIP.

B. Campbell Hot Springs-Lemmon Canyon Road: Mr. Beals reported that the Sierra Hot Springs project has put a bulls eye on this road, and they are attempting to have the SCTC assign a higher priority to that road because of its condition, its value to the airport, and to the SHS property. Some good progress has occurred in that the land use project is in process, and the airport has received the interest of the California Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics and is receiving funding for an over lay, and hopefully also for construction of the taxi/tie down area which now looks like an ancient Roman highway. The immediate issue is that the environmental review tied to the land use project has triggered a Level of Service (LOS) issue on the road, which is that they've almost reached a level of use capacity that will require the road to be upgraded, which puts 100% of the burden on the project applicant, which is disproportionate to the SHS. Sierra Hot Springs is requesting that the SCTC put the rehabilitation of Campbell Hot Springs - Lemmon Canyon Road at the highest priority.

Discussion ensued with regard to the Smithneck Projects, which are not yet fully funded. It was noted again that the Federal Lands Access Program applications come out next April. If the FLAP funding were to come through it would free up the STIP commitment. In discussing FLAP, Mr. Beals stated that the Gold Lake Road is unraveling, and that as Director of Transportation he has written to the Plumas County Public Works Director about a cooperative application to FLAP, which involves two counties, two national forests, and seems to be a natural for that funding.

Commissioner Huebner stated that Lemmon Canyon should be a high priority due to the economic possibilities and jobs. He would like to tie this discussion in with a discussion about the possibility of a grant writer funded by SCTC.

Commissioner Schlefstein stated that he is not in favor of deferring the Smithneck Projects to put this in front of it.

The discussion concludes with direction to have a grant writer as an agenda item for the next meeting.

C. Bridge Projects: All bridges are progressing as expected. It is anticipated that environmental and design will be completed this season with construction next season, except for the Jim Crow Road facility which will be rehabilitated this season.

D. Low Water Crossing: As with the other 3 bridges, it is progressing as expected and will hopefully be ready for construction next season.

E. State Route 89 Turnouts: This was previously discussed.

F. Speed Feedback Signs: Mr. Davey reported that when these signs had been discussed at previous meetings the City of Loyaltan did not want them, but now a number of citizens have seen the signs and are interested. A letter was submitted by Lorie Horner, and signed by others. Funding will come around annually that can be utilized for these signs, but the next available funding is 2 years out. Staff is directed to respond to Ms. Horner and advise her that they need to approach City Council to gain support for the project so the City representatives on SCTC will support funding for a future project. It is clarified that if the project is in the City, the City will be responsible to arrange to install the project or to request assistance from the County.

Commission Action: Commissioner Schlefstein moved to contact the City with a copy of the letter regarding speed feedback signs and explain the process should the City determine to pursue a project; seconded by Commissioner Roen. Motion was carried by acclamation.

Mr. Davey reported that a neighbor of the speed feedback sign on the east side of Sierra City has been unhappy with the placement of the sign, and that Caltrans has researched the issue extensively and has determined to move the sign approximately 100 feet down the road.

G. Other Transportation Issues: Mr. Beals reported that the Forest Service has agreed to facilitate the grinding of Dog Valley Grade, which is starting today. The County is closing the road for the duration, and the involvement of the County is limited to traffic control, support facilities, and final grading. It is an impressive process, grinding up and re-laying the rock and sub-grade. The road carries a lot of traffic. Mr. Beals reported on a winter logging project outside of Border Town, and that there wasn't enough conditions to allow hauling in the winter, therefore the project is extended and will be hauling in the spring and summer months. Finally, Mr. Beals reported on a meeting with the Forest Service regarding Long Valley Road. Irene Davidson, Ranger of the Carson Ranger District, has learned a lot about this road in the last 6 months and now has realized the cooperative nature of the road. The road provides access to the Crystal Peak Mine and camping. There is a lot of law enforcement activity out there, and the County can't keep up with the demand on the road. She has agreed to meet with the County and one of her road staff members sometime in April.

Mr. Beals also discussed the Grant Writer concept. His opinion is that it is more likely that we might find an engineering firm to sign on with a reduced fee or on a contingency basis to seek funding avenues. He noted that the firms that we currently have proposals from on the Smithneck Creek Projects might be approachable on this concept.

12. Caltrans Update: Jennifer Jacobson introduced herself as the new regional liaison from Caltrans District 3. She reported that she had forwarded the State Route 49 curbs and gutters issue and found out that Caltrans has a maintenance agreement with the City of Loyalton identifying Caltrans as the party responsible for the curbs and sidewalks on SR 49 through Loyalton. After speaking with our Maintenance Division about the curb deterioration, they found a project that is starting up soon: Design-Build ADA Project. They are adding the curb and gutter repair to that project.

13. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be April 20, 2016 in Sierraville at 10:00 a.m.

14. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Huebner at 11:35 a.m.



**Peter W. Huebner, Chairman
Sierra County Transportation Commission**

ATTEST:



Miriam B. Dines, Executive Secretary