

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	June 28, 2021
SUBJECT:	Approve Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 Projects for Rural Transit Needs (Regular and Pandemic-Related) for Fiscal Year 2021
AGENDA ITEM:	5-11
STAFF CONTACT:	Eamon Johnston, Assistant Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas program provides funding for public transit operations in the unincorporated areas of Shasta County. The Shasta Region has been allocated regular cycle rural transit funding through the FTA Section 5311 program as well as additional funds for pandemic-related FTA Section 5311 funding through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act of 2021 (CRRSAA). SRTA submitted projects by the April 30, 2021, deadline. The SRTA Board of Directors must now approve the projects and delegate authority to the executive director to complete the necessary steps to receive both regular and pandemic-related 5311 funding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. Approve the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 program of projects for Fiscal Year 2021 for transit operations in unincorporated areas of Shasta County provided by the county of Shasta (operated by the Redding Area Bus Authority (RABA)) and SRTA (currently operated by Dignity Health Connected Living (DHCL)); and
2. Authorize the executive director to provide certifications, assurances, and other requested information to Caltrans and FTA.

DISCUSSION:

On April 30, 2021, SRTA submitted proposals to Caltrans to fund the ongoing operations of public transit in the unincorporated areas of the Shasta Region. The funding program is provided on a reimbursement basis to the recipients of funding that SRTA designates in the region's program of projects. This grant program sustains fixed route public transit services on RABA outside the urban service area as well as the Burney Express bus route. Burney Express operates between Redding and the rural and intermountain communities of northeastern Shasta County, with additional stops in Montgomery Creek, Round Mountain, Bella Vista, and Shasta College.

The Shasta Region has been allocated \$373,943 for regular cycle rural transit funding through the FTA Section 5311 program. This year, SRTA's proposal includes a guaranteed \$50,000 to be allocated to SRTA for DHCL operating expenses in unincorporated Shasta County. This funding will be able to reimburse rural transit operations through the ShastaConnect program as well as guarantee that transit operators that currently serve unincorporated Shasta County, like DHCL, are eligible to receive funding in future economic stimulus bills. DHCL currently operates ShastaConnect between the rural and urban areas of Shasta County from Monday through Friday, providing residents, students, visitors, and more with transportation options to get where they need to go in the region as well as connect with RABA, Greyhound, Amtrak, and other transportation services.

This year's proposal (see Table 1) is designed as a flexible way of allocating the funding available to the region toward the operating needs of the county of Shasta to run Burney Express while allowing the possibility to reallocate the funds to other rural transit projects if the county of Shasta's competitive FTA Section 5311(f) Intercity Bus Program grant application to fund Burney Express operations is successful.

Through CRRSAA, the Shasta Region has also been allocated \$988,612 in pandemic-related 5311 funding for rural public transit. This funding will be split between the county of Shasta and SRTA (for DHCL currently) for similar eligible public transit operating expenses in unincorporated areas of Shasta County under the 5311 program (see Table 1). Additionally, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) is expected to result in supplementary 5311 funding for rural transit operations; the details of this funding have not been announced yet by Caltrans and FTA.

Table 1: Summary of Proposed 5311 Program of Projects for the Shasta Region

Regular cycle funding	Project	Amount requested
County of Shasta	County operating expenses	\$323,943
SRTA with DHCL	County operating expenses	\$236,755 (\$50,000 is guaranteed.)
Total		\$373,943
Pandemic-related funding	Project	Amount requested
County of Shasta	County operating expenses	\$828,447
SRTA with DHCL	County operating expenses	\$160,165
Total		\$988,612

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may choose to fund alternative public transportation projects in the unincorporated areas of Shasta County as well as determine an alternative funding split between

the transit operators in the proposal that SRTA submitted in April 2021. This may result in a delay in receiving the funds dedicated to maintain the operations of public transit in the unincorporated areas of Shasta County.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Caltrans administers the FTA Section 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas program. The proposal was developed in coordination with the county of Shasta and DHCL to address the operating assistance needs of rural transit services in the region. The county of Shasta and DHCL will coordinate with SRTA to administer the funds received through this program. *///The Technical Advisory Committee concurs with the staff recommendation. ///*

FISCAL IMPACT:

The grant funds requested for regular cycle funding for rural transit operating assistance projects are: \$323,943 for the county of Shasta and up to \$236,755 for SRTA (currently contracting with DHCL). (A maximum of \$373,943 will be allocated to region for regular cycle funding.) The grant funds requested for pandemic-related funding for rural transit operating assistance projects are: \$828,447 for the county of Shasta and \$160,165 for SRTA-DHCL services.

Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director