

AGENDA ITEM III – A

YUBA-SUTTER TRANSIT AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 21, 2021

I. Call to Order & Roll Call (4:02 pm)

Present: Bains, Blaser, Buttacavoli, Fuhrer, Hudson, Micheli, and Shaw (Chair)

Absent: Harris

II. Public Business from the Floor

None.

III. Consent Calendar

Director Bains made a motion to approve the consent calendar. Director Hudson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

IV. Reports

A. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5339(b) Buses and Bus Facilities Program Grant Application.

Martin presented the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5339(b) Buses and Bus Facilities Program Grant Application item noting that FTA released the Notice of Funding Opportunity on September 20, 2021, for the annual Department of Transportation National Infrastructure Investments called Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program. This national grant program will award a total of nearly \$410 million in federal funds on a competitive basis for eligible capital investments in public transportation buses and bus facilities. The proposed Yuba-Sutter Transit application request would be for a major portion of the design and construction of the Next Generation Transit Facility. AECOM has been engaged to help with the preparation of this application and the current plan is to apply for \$14 million with a scaled option of \$12 million should less funding be available. This is the same firm that prepared the RAISE grant application this summer and that grant will be used as the foundation for this new application.

Martin noted that award announcements are expected soon for two earlier grant applications for the facility project. The Housing Authority grant, with an expected award announcement on October 28th, would include \$8.5 million for Yuba-Sutter Transit for the solar and charging systems at the new facility among other items. If that grant is not received, the scalability options of this new application would need to be changed. RAISE grant recipients, a \$20 million request, are to be announced by November 22nd. The RAISE and Section 5339(b) grants are annual programs so, if unsuccessful in this round, applications can be submitted again in 2022 in the next grant cycle.

Director Bains made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 11-21 authorizing the submittal of a Buses and Bus Facilities Program grant application as proposed. Director Hudson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

B. Feather River Air Quality Management District (FRAQMD) AB 2766 Grant Amendment.

On August 2, 2021, the FRAQMD Board of Directors approved the consolidation and extension of two existing grants for Yuba-Sutter Transit's Discount Monthly Pass program for qualified persons including seniors over 65 years of age, youth under 19 years of age and persons with disabilities. This extension was made possible without changing the total funding amount of the two grants as monthly pass sales have been much less than anticipated due to decreased ridership during the pandemic. The proposed grant amendment would extend the program for an additional year through March 2023.

Director Bains made a motion to authorize execution of the amended FRAQMD grant agreement #VF20-07 as proposed. Director Micheli seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

C. Project & Program Updates

1. COVID-19 Impacts & Response

Martin provided a chart to demonstrate the overall impact of the pandemic on ridership through the 1st quarter of FY 2022. He noted that September continued the recent year-over-year systemwide monthly ridership growth trend that started in July and really took off in August. After a 33 percent increase in average weekday systemwide boardings from August 2020 to August 2021, this same average was up 35 percent in September over September 2020. For the major services, average weekday ridership in September was up 35 percent on the local fixed route service, 57 percent on the local Dial-a-Ride service and 27 percent on the Sacramento Commuter service over September 2020.

Martin noted that while these are all encouraging numbers, there is still a long way to go as average weekday systemwide ridership in September was still just 47 percent of what it was in September 2019 prior to the pandemic. Some Sacramento Commuter riders have reported that they will be returning to in-person work by the first of the year and staff will be watching these numbers closely to see how they trend through the typically lower ridership holiday and winter months of November through February as the spring budget season approaches.

2. Next Generation Transit Facility Project

The project to remove all trees and shrubs from the Avondale property (and the trash and litter underneath them) should be completed by early November. This project will greatly improve sightlines across the property for security purposes. Staff will next be working to get the existing fence repaired and closed-in along the North Beale Road.

3. Annual SACOG Unmet Transit Needs Hearing (On-Line at 1:00 pm on Tuesday, November 9, 2021)

The annual SACOG public hearing has been scheduled for 1:00pm on Tuesday, November 9, 2021. As it was in 2020, the 2021 hearing will again be held only on-line. Copies of the English and Spanish language flyers for this hearing are available on the Yuba-Sutter Transit website and the Administration Office can make copies available for distribution purposes.

4. Free Service Holiday Schedule for Thanksgiving (November 22 – 27) & Christmas (December 20 – 31)

Yuba-Sutter Transit's local and rural routes will operate fare free during portions of the upcoming holiday season. The Thanksgiving period will be November 22 – 27 and the Christmas period will be December 20 – 31. This is part of an ongoing ridership promotion program with the lost fares being reimbursed with State Low Carbon Transit Operating Program (LCTOP) funding. Funding for this periodic program, which began in December 2020 is expected to be exhausted by the end of June 2022.

5. Regional Waste Management Authority (RWMA) Organizational Changes

Martin announced that the amended RWMA JPA has been approved as required and will become effective November 1, 2021. In anticipation, staff has already been working with the member jurisdiction administrators on the staff transition plan which will be discussed in more detail with the RWMA Board of Directors at their meeting to follow. There is much work to be done in the meantime, but it is currently envisioned that the new RWMA leadership will be in place around April 2022 and that Yuba-Sutter Transit's 34-year staff relationship with the RWMA will be reduced to a month-to-month agreement only for basic administrative services beginning July 1, 2022. The County Administrators for all six jurisdictions as well as the HR Directors for both counties are assisting and advising in this process. Staff will provide updates as this process continues.

Off-Agenda Items

Local School District Transportation Programs

Martin stated that despite a recent newspaper article, Yuba-Sutter Transit is not working on an agreement with any of the local school districts for special transportation services. Yuba-Sutter Transit is, however, working with both major districts and the county offices of education for the purchase of monthly bus passes and reimbursement for individual cash fares on our regularly scheduled service. These are being done on a school-by-school basis primarily for at-risk students.

Director Fuhrer asked about the cost for school bus service versus the cost of public transportation. Martin answered that he did not know the cost structure for school bus service. Many of the students that are currently using public transit are doing so because they do not qualify for school bus services because they are either attending a charter school or a school other than the one closest to their home. Director Fuhrer asked how difficult it would be to take over the school bus service. Martin answered that while Yuba-Sutter Transit cannot transport students unless the service is open to the public and does not stop on school property, such service is provided elsewhere under these conditions. Staff is familiar with such service that has long been operated by Sacramento Regional Transit District for Sacramento Unified School District middle and high school students. Martin added that there has been some discussion about adding supplemental service to Yuba-Sutter Transit routes if the school districts would provide funding to cover the additional cost of the service, but to-date only some schools have chosen to pay either the cash fare or provide monthly passes for their students on the regularly scheduled service.

Sustainable Transit for a Healthy Planet Challenge

Martin stated that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is encouraging transit agencies nationwide to sign on to this challenge by pledging to develop a climate action plan with measurable greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals and strategies, such as converting fleets to zero-emission buses and making facilities more energy efficient. Because Yuba-Sutter Transit is planning to design and construct a new zero-emission bus transit facility and has committed to a 100 percent zero-emission fleet by 2035 if adequate funding is available,

staff believes that signing this non-binding pledge would be another tangible indicator of our commitment to GHG reductions specifically for the purpose of enhancing any pending and future facility and bus grant applications. The requisite plan, which is due by April 15, 2022, can be developed in-house using the FTA provided template. Staff is now seeking the Board's consensus opinion as to whether Yuba-Sutter Transit signing the pledge and participating in the challenge.

Director Shaw asked if the pledge would need to come back before the board for ratification as an official action. Martin stated that it only requires his signature. Director Shaw asked if a declaration from the board or a press release would be helpful as grant applications are being submitted. Martin stated that there would be a press release about the pledge.

Director Blaser asked about the schedule for installing charging stations at the new facility. Martin stated that the concept is to phase the installations as the fleet of zero-emission buses grows over time. Funding from the Housing Authority grant application would add more to the initial phase due to the funds being available, so the actual schedule will depend on both need and funding. Director Blaser asked about PG&E's ability to supply power to the facility. Martin answered that staff has been in contact with PG&E regarding their Fleet Ready Program that currently helps to bring power to the property and pay for charging stations. Available site power was a component of the site selection process, and this site was comparable to any other property. Director Blaser asked about the status of the elderberry trees and Martin responded that they are still there. Director Micheli asked if they could be transplanted. Martin responded that transplanting is possible, but that a mitigation plan will be required, and the ultimate result will depend on final facility design.

Sikh Parade Service

Director Shaw asked if Yuba-Sutter Transit will be providing transportation for the Sikh Festival. Martin stated that Yuba-Sutter Transit has again be providing an off-site parking shuttle service on November 7th.

V. Correspondence/Information

None.

VI. Other Business

None.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:28 p.m.

**THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2021 AT 4:00 PM
IN THE YUBA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CHAMBERS.**