

UpState RailConnect Committee

Dedicated to Completion of the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study

Meeting Announcement

January 15, 2014

2:00 PM

Tehama County Administrative Building

Tuscan Room, First Floor

727 Oak Street

Red Bluff, CA

AGENDA

- 1. Introductions**
- 2. Public Comment**
- 3. Review of Agenda**
- 4. Approval of minutes from October 30, 2013 meeting (action anticipated)**
- 5. Presentation on the North State Super Region (action anticipated)**
- 6. Discussion on Feasibility Study funding progress (action anticipated)**
- 7. Discussion on Legislative Outreach (action anticipated)**
- 8. Reports**
 - a. Staff**
 - b. Humboldt/Eureka representatives**
 - c. Trinity representatives**
 - d. Tehama Representatives**
 - e. UpState California Economic Development Council representatives**
 - f. Northern California Tribal Chairmen's Association representatives**
- 9. Task Assignments/Items for Next Agenda**
- 10. Next Meeting/Adjourn**

For information regarding this meeting, please contact the *Upstate RailConnect Committee* at landbridgealliance@gmail.com

Or see

www.ci.eureka.ca.gov/depts/council/rail_study.asp

UpState RailConnect Committee ***Dedicated to Completion of the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study***

October 30, 2013
Minutes (Subject to Approval)

Trinity County Public Utilities District Conference Room
26 Ponderosa Street, Weaverville CA

1. Introductions

Chair Madsen called the meeting to order at 10:06 AM. The following Committee Members were present: City of Eureka Councilmembers Lance Madsen and Marian Brady; Tehama County CAO Bill Goodwin; Tehama County Supervisor Steve Chamblin; Northern California Tribal Chairmen's Association representative Nick Angeloff; Trinity County Supervisor John Fenley; and Humboldt County representative David Tyson.

Committee Members Absent: City of Eureka Councilmember Mike Newman; County of Trinity Supervisor Debra Chapman and CAO Wendy Tyler; Upstate California Economic Development Council Board President Brynda Stranix; and Humboldt County Supervisor Rex Bohn.

Staff: David Hull

Guests: None.

2. Public Comment – None

3. Review of Agenda

Motion by Fenley, Seconded by Tyson to approve the October 30, 2013 agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of minutes from September 11, 2013 meeting

Tyson moved for approval of the September 11, 2013 minutes; Seconded by Fenley. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Feasibility Study Funding Progress

Grants: David Hull reported that the RailConnect Committee's application for the CalTrans Community Based Transportation Planning Grant (CBTP) was denied with CalTrans citing extreme statewide competition. Upon research it was determined that no CBTP application from CalTrans District 1 was funded. David noted that while the CalTrans grant application was being processed, several other funding opportunities were placed on hold. Now that the CalTran's grant is out of the way, pursuit of those opportunities can now resume.

Legislative Follow up: David Hull noted that he, Chair Madsen and Humboldt County RailConnect representative David Tyson met with Congressman Jared Huffman's North coast representative John Driscoll. The purpose of the meeting was to inform Mr. Driscoll of the status, progress and support for the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility study so he could pass along the info to the Congressman. It was reported that other legislative visits and updates are being scheduled.

Identification of RailConnect Committee member staff to participate in funding research and acquisition: With the rejection of the CalTrans grant, David Hull led a discussion regarding a proposal to better utilize the talents and contacts of all RailConnect Committee members to assist in funding the feasibility study. It was agreed that each agency would provide David with the contact information for a member of their staff for David to coordinate feasibility study funding. Although there were concerns over dedicating staff resources to this task and stretching limited staff time, it was agreed that the agency staff's role would be more of simply being aware of potential funding opportunities and forwarding them to David for further processing. It was felt that this was an appropriate and minimal use of agency staff resources.

Private Sources: David Hull reported that Land Bridge Alliance (LBA) east and west continue to pursue funding and funding pledges. As with the public sources, now that the CalTrans grant application has been rejected, LBA can now restore its efforts to acquire private funding for the feasibility study. There was a discussion regarding a proposal for the LBA to have a booth at the upcoming Northern California Economic Forecast Conference this January in Oroville, CA. It was described that this will be the 14th annual conference that attracts approximately 500 northern California economic development professionals. At last years' conference, there were a number of questions regarding the east-west rail concept and a great discussion at one of the panels. The RailConnect Committee members encouraged LBA to have a booth at the 2014 conference.

In a general funding discussion, Bill Goodwin noted that he may have an upcoming opportunity to meet with one of Senator Barbara Boxer's staff and that may be a time to present an update on the RailConnect Committee's work. He agreed to check on this

possibility. Bill also agreed to work on getting information to his counterparts in Butte, Shasta, Glenn and Colusa counties.

Supervisor Fenley agreed that he would work with his Transportation Department and continue to work with the Trinity Recreation Association for support.

David Tyson agreed to speak with Supervisor Bohn about a contact within Humboldt County Public Works to be assigned to assist as necessary.

6. Discussion on Draft Scope of Work and RFQ

David Hull presented a draft feasibility study scope of work and Request for Qualifications (RFQ) that included the changes made at the September 11, 2013 RailConnect Committee meeting. David went through the drafts by section.

Councilmember Marian Brady made a motion to approve the draft RFQ as final. Supervisor Fenley seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

The approved Scope of Work is as follows:

Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study

Scope of Work

(As Adopted by the UpState RailConnect Committee 10-30-2013)

Task 1: Literature Review

Review pertinent information and studies from public and private sources relevant to examining the feasibility of an alternative rail route connecting Humboldt Bay's harbor to the national rail network in the Sacramento Valley.

Task 2: Identify Potential Routes

Determine location of a minimum of three routes. For this study a "route" is defined as a geographic depiction of an area between a connection on the Northwestern Pacific rail line in the Humboldt Bay region and a connection to a mainline Class 1 railroad in the Sacramento Valley. The "area" is defined as a swath with dimensions ranging from 100' to 1,000' in width between the points on the Northwestern Pacific rail line and the connection in the Sacramento valley. The proposed "swaths" can vary in size within any given route provided they stay within the defined range.

- The three routes will be chosen based upon the following criteria:*
- Minimum number of tunnels and bridges*
- Minimum number of environmental impacts – environmental impacts shall be assessed at a minimum within an area 1/8 of a mile from either side of the route "swath"*
- Grade shall meet industry standards*
- Track geometry to be aligned for most efficient operations*

- *Minimum disruption to communities along the route*

Task 3: Land Ownerships

List ownership of land within the proposed rail routes and within 1/8 of a mile on either side of the rail routes. Task 3 is to include Assessor's Parcel Number, acreage of parcel, legal owner of parcel, legal owner's contact information, date of last sale of the property, purchase price of last sale of the property, assessed valuation of the property, and zoning including any overlay designations.

The Consultant shall also endeavor to ascertain willingness of each landowner to sell the property for rail purposes or if property is currently for sale. Consultant shall also identify any existing uses or encumbrances on the property.

Task 4: Economic Benefit to the Entire Rail Corridor

Task 4.1 Assessment of Market Potential

Describe potential shipping trends over the next 25 years and 50 years by industry and commodity category (SIC code) that might benefit or be attracted to a connection to Humboldt Bay's deepwater harbor.

Task 4.2 Assessment of Direct, Indirect and Induced Beneficiaries

Examine the potential for job creation, property value increase, construction jobs, dollar multipliers and other beneficiaries throughout a region extending from Humboldt Bay to the Nevada border and extending from Medford, OR south to Oroville, CA.

Task 4.3 Assessment of Impacts to Ports

Consultant will examine the trade, economic and political impacts to the ports of Portland, OR; Astoria, OR; Coos Bay, OR; Sacramento, CA; Stockton, CA; Oakland, CA and Richmond, CA. Consultant shall also include the review of existing contracts and analysis of opportunities for each port.

Task 5: Governance

Develop a matrix of pros and cons for an alternative rail line to be owned by a public entity; owned by a private entity; and owned by a public/private entity. Also to be included is a similar analysis of railroad operation.

Task 6: Conceptual Engineering

Identification of any proposed tunnels and bridges and their lengths and construction materials; identification of geologic conditions along proposed rail routes; cross-section of typical rail section; weights of rail; identification of any public and private road crossings; proposed speed of trains; description of any access and construction issues; location of any highway and port connectors including structural connections with NWPRR and Union Pacific; location of proposed sidings; description of track grades.

Task 7: Homeland Security

Assess benefits of an alternative rail route for meeting or improving national and state security needs. In order to assess these benefits, the Consultant shall contact offices of California Emergency Management Services; US Department of Homeland Security; US Department of Customs and Border Security; US Maritime Administration; US Coast Guard and US Department of Defense. Include contact information for agency contacts.

Task 8: Additional Uses of the Rail Right of Way

Identify additional potential uses of the proposed new routes including but not limited to, passenger service, water pipeline, redundant fiber optic line, other utilities and trail. Develop a ranking of potential additional uses by estimated cost; estimated income; contacts; and any special conditions including any potential restrictions on the rail corridor.

Task 9: Estimated Permitting Needs

Identify all local, State and Federal permits necessary to plan, acquire, construct and operate an alternative rail line over the proposed rail routes. Include permit contact information, blank permit forms and a flow chart of the order of permit applications. In addition, this task should also include all California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance measures including the need for any special studies based upon the proposed rail routes.

Task 10: Identify Environmental Issues and Mitigations

Identify all known environmental issues of concern along the proposed rail routes. The issues of concern may include, but are not limited to, sensitive habitat areas, endangered species, areas of special biological significance, geologic hazards, contaminated sites and residential areas. For any contemplated environmental impact along the proposed routes, propose acceptable mitigation measures with demonstrated agency concurrence.

Task 11: Identify Known Cultural Resources

Identify all known cultural resources along the proposed rail routes through a complete record search/letter of inquiry at the appropriate State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Tribal Historic Preservation Office(s) (THPO) information clearinghouse(s). The issues of concern may include, but are not limited to pre-historic and/or historic archaeological sites, areas of cultural/spiritual significance, and traditional cultural properties. For any contemplated cultural resource impact along the proposed routes, propose acceptable mitigation measures with demonstrated agency/tribal concurrence history.

Task 12: Estimated Development Costs and Timelines

Estimate the development cost and timelines for the proposed routes. Development costs in his context shall include planning, land acquisition/ROW; permitting, CEQA/NEPA compliance, construction management and construction costs broken out as individual components and costs. Similarly, a timeline should be proposed for each cost component.

Task 13: Public Outreach

Conduct three sets of public outreach meetings in each of the following areas: Humboldt County, Trinity County and Tehama County. These meetings are to be coordinated with the multi-agency UpState RailConnect Committee. The non-profit organization, Land Bridge Alliance, will make meeting arrangements, provide refreshments and meeting supplies. The three meetings will include 1) pre-feasibility public input meeting; 2) Draft report presentation and public input session; and 3) presentation of the final report. Consultant will provide report after the first meeting identifying significant concerns and support.

Task 14: Final Report

The final report will be structured so as to include at a minimum an Executive Summary; Methods and Results for Tasks 1-11; Feasibility Study Conclusion; Recommendations on next steps; and References/contact information. The Final report will also include an appendix that makes a comparison of the proposed alternative routes using readily available existing information on the north-south rail line. The Executive Summary and Conclusions will include a matrix summarizing a comparison of proposed route alternatives across the results of Tasks 1-11.

7. Future Meeting Discussion

Committee members discussed the opportunity to hold the next RailConnect Committee meeting prior to the January 16, 2014 Northern California Economic Forecast Conference. Therefore it was decided that the next meeting will be held at 2PM January 15, 2014 at the Tehama County Administration building in Red Bluff.

8. Reports

David Hull reported that in November, the UpState RailConnect Committee will celebrate its one-year anniversary. David recounted that during the past 12 months a great deal of progress has been made toward the alternative rail route concept. These successes include:

- More than 50 letters of support from a vast portion of Northern California
- At least three private east-west rail efforts have evolved from the RailConnect Committee's efforts
- More than 30 presentations have been made to civic groups, agency representatives and potential feasibility study funding organizations
- The Non-profit, Land Bridge Alliance was formed to educate and provide private funding for the feasibility study
- There is now a grant funding application template for use in acquiring grant funding
- There is an approved Scope of Work and RFQ for the feasibility study
- Two newsletters have been produced and distributed widely

It was noted that the first year was very successful in building a broad and stable coalition of support and foundation for the project. It was suggested that with that foundation in place, the primary focus for 2014 is to get the funding in place for the feasibility study.

It was also noted that Alison O'Sullivan the General Manager of the Upstate California Economic Development Council has resigned and thus efforts are underway to have Upstate California EDC to appoint another member to the RailConnect Committee.

9. Task Assignments/Items for the Next Agenda: The Committee agreed the following items should be discussed at the next meeting:

- a. Funding progress
- b. Role of Super Region
- c. Staff assignments
- d. Sacramento Valley county meeting results
- e. Legislative outreach progress

10. Next Meeting: It was decided that the next meeting will be held in Tehama County on January 15, 2014 in Red Bluff, CA.

11. Meeting adjourned: 12:27 PM

Approved:

Lance Madsen, Chair