

UpState RailConnect Committee

Dedicated to Completion of the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study

April 2, 2014 Minutes (Subject to Approval)

**Trinity County Public Utilities District Conference Room
26 Ponderosa Street,
Weaverville CA
10:30 AM**

1. Introductions

Supervisor Fenley called the meeting to order at 10:53 AM. The following Committee Members were present: City of Eureka Councilmember Marian Brady; Humboldt County representative David Tyson; Tehama County Supervisor Steve Chamblin; County of Trinity Supervisor John Fenley and CAO Wendy Tyler; Northern California Tribal Chairmen's Association representative Nick Angeloff.

Committee Members Absent: City of Eureka Councilmember Lance Madsen; County of Trinity Supervisors Debra Chapman; Tehama County CAO Bill Goodwin; Upstate California Economic Development Council Board President Brynda Stranix; Upstate California Economic Development Council representative Marc Nemanic; and Humboldt County Supervisor Rex Bohn.

Staff: David Hull

Guests: Larry Glass; Debbie Provolt; Monte Provolt; Bob Martin

- 2. Public Comment** – Bob Martin, representing the Humboldt-Tehama Railroad Development Corporation, asked if he could make a presentation on a project he is working on. Acting-Chair Fenley noted as Mr. Martin was not on the agenda, he could have five minutes under public comment and invited Mr. Martin to come back to the UpState RailConnect Committee meeting in May to make a full presentation. Mr. Martin stated that he has partnered with Ken Davlin and Larry Mallon to form the Humboldt-Tehama Railroad Development Corporation. This corporation's proposed purpose is to build an east-west railroad connecting Humboldt Bay with the Sacramento Valley. He stated that he has a potential funding source and would provide more details during his presentation at the May 2014 UpState RailConnect Committee meeting.

David Tyson noted that he is aware of at least two other current proposals similar to Mr. Martin's. Tyson reminded the RailConnect Committee of the recent history of this rail concept where the community has been waiting about 10 years for the private sector to take this on project with little or no activity. The lack of activity is what has prompted the public sector first through the City of Eureka, then the RailConnect Committee to start on a public feasibility study aimed at providing a package of information that is available to public decision-makers and private investors interested in pursuing the construction of such a rail line. Tyson added that the RailConnect Committee has discussed the Committee's role with private proposals such as Mr. Martin's on several occasions and concluded that while the RailConnect Committee supports the private efforts, the RailConnect Committee will continue to pursue the public feasibility study.

3. Review of Agenda

By consensus, the proposed agenda for the April 2, 2014 meeting was approved.

4. Approval of minutes from January 15, 2014 meeting

Marian Brady moved for approval of the January 15, 2014 minutes; Seconded by Chamblin. Motion carried with John Fenley and Wendy Tyler abstaining as they were not at the January 15, 2014 meeting.

5. Feasibility Study Funding Progress

David Hull stated that the following potential funding sources have been pursued:

USDA Rural Communities – Can only provide maximum of \$50,000 and need assurance for remainder of project funding (~\$250K). Possibly 2015

EDA – in research

CalTrans Partnership Grant – possibly 2015

CalTrans CBTP Grant – Applied 2013 – not funded - no CBTP program in 2014

HCAOG – Request in progress

Headwaters – gap funding best

TIGER (Discretionary Transportation Planning Grant) – Trinity County Department of Transportation considering application – Due April 28, 2014

Nick Angeloff made a motion that the UpState RailConnect Committee support a TIGER VI Planning grant application from the Trinity County Department of Transportation to fund the feasibility study. David Tyson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Development of a 2014 Task List and Strategy for the RailConnect Committee

David Hull started this discussion by reviewing the Upstate RailConnect Committee's accomplishments to-date. These included:

- *UpState RailConnect Committee formed October 16, 2012 and funded through \$25,000 CDBG grant (City of Eureka is applicant)*
- *More than 50 letters of support from a vast portion of Northern California*
- *Made more than 30 presentations to civic groups, agency representatives and elected officials throughout Northern California.*
- *Applied for Community Based Transportation Planning grant in 2013*
- *Submitted comments to the State Rail plan in 2013*
- *Included as an "Action" item in the North State Super Region's NorCal Economics for Transportation Report*
- *Supported formation of the non-profit Land Bridge Alliance*
- *Produced and distributed two newsletters*
- *Adopted a Scope of Work and a draft RFP.*

Hull then reiterated the RailConnect Committee's purpose :

UpState RailConnect Committee Role is to:

- a) Conduct public outreach and develop the scope of work for the feasibility study*
- b) Obtain funding for the feasibility study*
- c) Retain a consultant to complete the feasibility study*
- d) Oversee consultant activities*
- e) If feasible, the Committee will use feasibility study results to identify capital and investors*

Hull then proposed the following 2014 Task List as a place to start the discussion at this meeting:

With organizations formed; vast public support obtained; initial outreach efforts concluded; and a Scope of Work defined, in 2014, the UpState RailConnect Committee will focus its efforts on:

- 1. Obtaining \$300,000 to complete the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study.*
- 2. Continuing to make presentations and gather support for the study.*
- 3. If funded, the UpState RailConnect Committee will oversee the production of the final RFP, consultant advertising, consultant selection and consultant oversight.*

Steve Chamblin suggested that item #2 should be item #3 on the proposed list. David Tyson clarified that he is still asked to make presentations on the coast, so believed it is still a priority for 2014. Hull reminded all that each county has control over whether or not presentations are made in their county as they know best their constituents needs.

Motion by Angeloff, seconded by Chamblin to adopt the 2014 UpState RailConnect Committee Task List as presented and with the addition of changing the order of #2 and #3 and changing all numbers to bullet points. The 2014 task list now reads:

In 2014, the UpState RailConnect Committee will focus its efforts on:

- *Obtaining \$300,000 to complete the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study.*
- *If funded, the UpState RailConnect Committee will oversee the production of the final RFP, consultant advertising, consultant selection and consultant oversight.*
- *Continuing to make presentations and gather support for the study.*

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Future RailConnect Committee Staffing and Funding Plan

David Hull reported that the CDBG grant that the City of Eureka previously obtained, has now been exhausted. This \$25,000 grant had been used throughout 2013 to provide staffing costs to the RailConnect Committee (produce minutes and agendas, arrange meetings, obtain meeting supplies and travel); research grant and funding programs to fund the feasibility study; produce letters, meeting materials and handouts; and conduct presentations on the RailConnect Committee process and feasibility study. With this funding now exhausted, the discussion centered on future funding for committee purposes.

Representatives of both Trinity and Tehama Counties noted that they do not have any funds to expend on this purpose. David Tyson noted that the Land Bridge Alliance (LBA) may be able to fund some committee expense reimbursement and that he would bring it up at the next LBA meeting. It was concluded that this item should be tabled until LBA can meet and discuss this issue.

8. Legislative Outreach Status in the Sacramento Valley

David Hull reported that he, Nick Angeloff and LBA member Pete Oringer staffed a Land Bridge Alliance-sponsored booth at the Northern California Economic Forecast Conference in Oroville, CA on January 16, 2014. Hundreds of people attended and passed by the booth. There was great deal of interest and all of the comments were positive about conducting a feasibility study. At this Conference, discussions were held with USDA representative regarding study funding and encouragement to meet with Rep. Doug La Malfa and State Senator Jim Nielson.

In addition, Hull reported that he has continued to meet with Senator Barbara Boxer's representatives regarding feasibility study funding.

After discussion, it was concluded that RailConnect Committee members from the Sacramento Valley should set up meetings with their state and federal representatives.

9. Reports

David Hull reported that he had meetings or presentations at the following since the last RailConnect Committee meeting:

- *Jan 16 – Northern California Economic Forecast Conference*
- *Feb 18 – Met with Senator Boxer’s Staff regarding Federal grant opportunities*
- *March 19 – Met with various Caltrans representatives*
- *March 27 – made presentation to HCAOG Board*

In addition Hull reported that at the HCAOG Board meeting of March 27, he made the following “asks” :

1. *Take action to write a letter supporting the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study*
2. *Take action to support future grant applications for the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study*
3. *Consider HCAOG funding for the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study*
4. *Take action to request broader engagement in the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study by the North State Super Region*
5. *Edit the draft Regional Transportation Plan to include the status of the Alternative Rail Route Feasibility Study process.*

Marian Brady reported that she understood that HCAOG Board had referred this item to the next HCAOG Technical Advisory Committee meeting for further consideration. She also noted that she had met many candidates at the Redwood Empire quarterly meeting that were very interested in getting more information on the feasibility study. She reported that she is still working on various port and harbor issues with both the Humboldt Bay Harbor Working Group and the new multi-agency harbor group.

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

- a. 2014 RailConnect Committee Task and Strategy
- b. Humboldt-Tehama Railroad Development Corp presentation
- c. Future RailConnect Committee staffing and planning

11. Next Meeting: It was decided that the next meeting would be held at 11:00 AM, May 7, 2014 in Weaverville, CA.

12. Meeting adjourned: Meeting was adjourned at 12:15 PM

Approved:

Lance Madsen, Chair