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CALAVERAS COUNCIL
of GOVERNMENTS

TO: Council Members
FROM: Brittany Odermann, Transportation Planner
DATE: January 30, 2006
SUBJECT: SSTAC Expansion – New Members

BACKGROUND

The 2000-01 thru 2003-04 Calaveras Council of Governments (CCOG) Triennial Performance Audit recommended that the CCOG implement a Transit Productivity Committee that meets quarterly to review performance of public transportation services and make recommendations to the CCOG Board regarding efficiency and effectiveness improvements. It was suggested that members of the SSTAC could be included on this committee to ensure that user needs are addressed.

At the November meeting the Board directed Staff to come up with some potential committee scenarios and bring suggestions to the February CCOG meeting.

The SSTAC met in November and discussed the Transit Productivity Committee. SSTAC members asked CCOG Staff to bring examples of other counties format for evaluating transit productivity to their next meeting, February 9, for discussion.

DISCUSSION

The following discussion is based on responses received from Amador, El Dorado, Tuolumne and Nevada Counties.

None of these counties has a separate Transit Productivity Committee. Transit service is directed by a combination of the SSTAC, Technical Advisory Committees (TAC), Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC) and in one case, a Transit Commission. Tuolumne County has a system that most closely resembles Calaveras County. With oversight from the SSTAC, Tuolumne County TAC and CAC, their transit system is evaluated on an annual basis through the unmet transit needs process. The Transportation Council and County Board of Supervisors provide direction based on findings of the unmet transit needs process.

Nevada County Transit Services are overseen by a Transit Services Commission established as part of a joint powers agreement. The seven-member board provides policy direction and advises on daily operations of transit services. The following is an excerpt from a response received from Nevada County Transportation Commission's Transportation Planner:

“I believe a transit productivity committee would be a valuable asset to the Calaveras Council of Governments (CCOG). However, based on my experience working with the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) in Nevada County, I do not think they would have the

technical expertise required to calculate the different measures of productivity and assess specific productivity improvements and the associated financial implications. I would recommend a transit productivity committee that consisted of a transit planner from the CCOG, a representative of the County Public Works responsible for the oversight of the transit operations, and representative from the contractor providing the public transit services.”

El Dorado and Amador County Staff expressed concern regarding the role of SSTAC in evaluating transit productivity beyond transportation services that serve their specific clientele. Charles Field suggested possibly hiring a consultant to assist in the effort of evaluating the efficiency of the overall public transportation system by adding a review of overall efficiency to the SSTAC meeting.

CONCLUSION

Transit productivity is addressed in several different ways. The Unmet Transit Needs Process and renewed interest in the SSTAC are a great start to ensuring the transit system is effective and efficient. However, the SSTAC cannot undertake the function of a separate Transit Productivity Committee.

System efficiency and effectiveness can be examined through various means. The CCOG and Calaveras Transit services may benefit from the formation of a Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC). This committee could bridge the gap between service providers and the transit riding public by providing regular feedback to the CCOG and transit management. An Advisory Committee could strengthen communication between transit users and management in a less formal and more frequent process than is possible under the annual Unmet Transit Needs hearings and report.

RECOMMENDATION

That the CCOG solicit interested parties to sit on a CAC, to meet quarterly. The CAC will provide written and/or oral reports to the CCOG regarding recommendations. CCOG would provide staff support.