

# MADERA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

## EXECUTIVE MINUTES

**Date:** Wednesday, February 19, 2003

**Time:** 3:00 P.M.

**Place:** Madera County Government Center,  
Board of Supervisor Chambers

**Members Present:** Vice Chair Gordon Skeels - Councilman, City of Madera  
Alfred Ginsburg - Councilman, City of Chowchilla  
M.J. Nabors – Councilman, City of Madera  
Gary Gilbert - Supervisor, Madera County  
Ronn Dominici – Supervisor, Madera County  
Alt. John Silva – Supervisor, Madera County

**Members Absent:** Chair Frank Bigelow - Supervisor, Madera County

**Policy Advisory Committee:** Above Members present and Caltrans Representatives:  
Paul Marquez

**MCTC Staff Present:** Patricia S. Taylor-Maley, Executive Director  
Derek Winning, Planner I  
Tricia Stone, Receptionist

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### I. Pledge of Allegiance

### II. Public Comment

This portion of the meeting is reserved for person(s) wishing to address the MCTC on items within their jurisdiction but not on this agenda.

There were no public comments.

### III. Meeting Minutes of January 22, 2003

Upon motion by Commissioner Dominici, seconded by Commissioner Gilbert, to approve the January 22, 2003 Executive Minutes as written. A vote was called and the motion carried.

### IV. Transportation Items

#### A. *Cascade Entertainment – Presentation on transportation needs*

The MCTC Policy Board at its January 22, 2003 meeting requested staff to contact Cascade Entertainment to invite its representative to the next Commission meeting (February 19, 2003) to discuss the casino's transportation needs (located on HWY 41 and Road 417).

The Picayune Rancheria of the Chukchansi Indians (Tribe) is currently building and intends to operate a Class III gaming facility pursuant to a compact by and between the State of California and the Tribe, approved by the Secretary of the Interior on Indian lands as provided for the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

The purpose of the operation of the gaming facility will be to promote tribal economic development, tribal-self-sufficiency and strong tribal government. Congress has found that Indian tribes have an exclusive right to regulate gaming on Indian lands if the gaming activity is not specifically prohibited by

federal law and is conducted within a state which does not, as a matter of criminal law and public policy, prohibit such gaming activity.

The Tribe has taken appropriate action to determine whether the project will have any significant adverse impacts on the off-reservation environment and has submitted an environmental impact report concerning the proposed project to the state clearing office in the Office of Planning and Research and to the County Board of Supervisors, for distribution to the public.

The Tribe has consulted with the Board of Supervisors to discuss mitigation of significant adverse off-reservation environmental impacts and has met and attended numerous community meetings and has provided an opportunity for comment by members of the public residing off-reservation within the vicinity of the gaming facility.

The Board on Supervisors at its August 28, 2001 meeting approved and entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians addressing off reservation impacts attributable to the casino project.

The Casino is scheduled to open in the Fall of 2003. According to 6.1 of the MOU, the Tribe agrees that they shall exercise their best efforts to hire residents of Madera County for jobs at the Casino and at least 50% (approximately 600) of the Casino workforce be County residents.

Russ Pratt, Cascade Entertainment, presented to the Policy Board information about the Casino opening in June 2003 and discussed opportunities to partner to service the transportation needs of its employees.

There was discussion and the Policy Board recommended that a subcommittee be formed to look into transportation alternatives and options to address transportation services to the Casino.

**Action:** Upon motion by Commissioner Dominici, seconded by Commissioner Silva to nominate Commissioner Gilbert and Commissioner Nabors as the subcommittee to review transportation alternatives and options to service the Casino employees. A vote was called and the motion carried.

## ***B. State Budget Crisis and its impact on Transportation Programs***

Staff provided a verbal update on the State budget crisis and its impact on Madera's transportation programs.

### Background:

The State of California has now determined there will be a "greater than \$34.8 billion" shortfall in the state budget. On December 6, the Governor announced a Mid Year Spending Proposal to try to make up for some of this shortfall. The \$10 billion reduction proposal includes \$1.8 billion in transportation cuts.

The transportation community has been scrambling to determine exactly what this means, both on a broad scale and on a project level. A workshop will be held on March 12, 2003 in Sacramento to discuss the cash flow assumptions and realities.

### ***Current Situation***

The current STIP fund estimate far overestimated the amount of money that is now coming in. At the current rate of allocation, the State Highway Account, which funds STIP projects, is projected to have a negative balance of \$173 million by June 2003. By June 2004, the fund will be short \$634 million.

The fund estimate shortfall, plus the budget cuts, means drastic action is necessary.

### ***The Governor's Proposal***

- Eliminates the Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) funding for FY 2002/03 and 2003/04

- Reduces anticipated contributions to the State Highway Account from the TCRP by \$147 million in FY 2003/04
- Eliminates the FY 2003/04, and remainder of FY 2002/03 allocation from the State Highway Account (via TCRP) for local streets and roads
- Reduces the State Transit Assistance (STA) funds

In the current fiscal year, the Governor's Proposal would leave the State Highway Account with a cash balance of a mere \$11 million. In FY 2003/04, the deficit would be \$569 million.

### **SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?**

#### **1) There is a lot still up in the air.**

While the Governor has made this proposal, the legislature has not had time to respond, let alone act.

Caltrans and the CTC are scrambling to try and analyze the proposals and get a handle on the impacts of various options. The MCTC staff will be deeply involved in these discussions, but it is likely no solid action will be taken in the next few months.

### **STATE BUDGET CRISIS**

Faced with all these unknowns, the CTC has taken the following actions to keep things at status quo until we come to agreement on how to deal with the shortfall:

- Action on STIP allocations for FY 2002/03 have been tabled until February
- No advances on STIP allocations from later years will be granted until further notice
- Delegated allocations for Caltrans have been suspended for 6 months
- The CTC will hold a special workshop on January 17 to begin working out an equitable system of dealing with these budget issues

#### **2) Everyone is going to take a hit.**

The first and most immediate impact is the elimination of the additional funds for local streets and roads that came through the Governor's Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP). This will impact every jurisdiction proportionately. Jurisdictions received their first quarter payment in 2002/03, but the remaining payments for this FY will not be forthcoming.

Since the TCRP also put some additional funds into the STIP, our county shares will also be affected.

Those counties with TCRP project earmarks will take by far the biggest hit.

#### **3) STIP Impacts will likely occur with the 2004 cycle**

While this will be further discussed at the CTC workshop and subsequent meetings, the early speculation is that the downward adjustments to the fund estimate will be implemented with the 2004 STIP cycle, set to be released this summer. We can expect a situation similar to 1994, with zero additional programming capacity. It is also possible it will be a rerun of 1996, where projects had to be eliminated from the STIP. The tricky part of the 2004 STIP cycle will be how the TCRP projects are dealt with. Under the Governor's budget proposal, that funding is eliminated, so those projects are no longer funded. TCRP project sponsors, many of whom have already started work on those projects, will be under tremendous pressure to find room in the STIP. If so, that should be done within that county's existing county share. Rural counties should be vigilant to ensure that TCRP projects moved into the STIP will not have any negative effect on the distribution of county shares. This will include monitoring of the actions of the legislature, who may exert their interests in individual TCRP projects as part of the budget debate.

**4) Sales Tax Thresholds**

One spin on the current situation is that, as the legislature grapples with these budget deficits, they may be far more likely to allow counties to generate their own funding by lowering the threshold for transportation sales tax approval from its current 2/3, to a more reasonable 50% or 55% majority. Senator Burton and Assemblyman Longville have both indicated willingness to reintroduce this legislative proposal in the current session. Assemblyman Dutra introduced ACA 7 on January 14, 2003. Staff will continue to keep you posted, as more information is available.

*Action:* Information and Discussion Only.

**C. ACA 7 (Assembly Constitutional Amendment)**

Assembly Member Dutra introduced ACA (Assembly Constitutional Amendment) No. 7 on January 14, 2003. This measure would authorize a county, a city and county, and a regional transportation agency, to impose an additional sales and use tax for a period of 20 to 30 years at the rate of 0.5% exclusively for transportation purposes within the jurisdiction of the county, city and county, or regional transportation agency if the additional tax is approved by 55% of the voters of the jurisdiction voting on the proposition to impose the tax.

ACA 7 bill text was included in the package.

*Action:* Information and Discussion Only.

**D. Final Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MCTC and Caltrans – Comprehensive Transportation Planning**

Included in the package was a copy of the Final Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MCTC and Caltrans for Comprehensive Transportation Planning. The MOU is written in accordance with Title 23 of the United States Code (USC) Section 134 and Section 450.104 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) recognized under Title 3, Division 3, Chapter 2, Article II, section 29032 of the Government Code.

The MOU outlines the comprehensive transportation planning process, roles and responsibilities for MCTC acting as the MPO and RTPA for Madera County and Caltrans.

*Action:* Upon motion by Commissioner Nabors, seconded by Commissioner Dominici to authorize the Commission Chair and Executive Director to execute the MOU and transmit to Caltrans for signature. A vote was called and the motion passed.

**E. Initiation of FY 2003/04 Unmet Transit Needs Process**

The State Transportation Development Act (TDA) requires that the MCTC Policy Board determine that public transportation needs within Madera County will be reasonably met in FY 2003/04 prior to approving claims of Local Transportation Funds (LTF) for streets and roads. The MCTC's Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) is responsible for evaluating unmet transit needs. Each year the SSTAC begins the process of soliciting comments from the public by sending letters to agencies and individuals interested in providing feedback on their public transportation needs within Madera County. The request for comments letters were mailed on February 11, 2003. A copy of this letter was included in the package.

MCTC's Unmet Transit Needs public hearing is scheduled as follows:

- PUBLIC HEARING - Wednesday, April 23, 2003 at 3:00pm

Board of Supervisor's Chambers - 209 West Yosemite Ave - Madera, CA

Via Video Conferencing

- Oakhurst Community College – 40241 Hwy 41, Room 10 – Oakhurst, CA
- Chowchilla Branch Library – 621 W Robertson Blvd, Galloway Room – Chowchilla, CA

Free demand-response transportation will be provided by Laidlaw Transit to each location. A Spanish language interpreter will also be available for those who wish to testify in Spanish. A public notice will be printed in the local newspapers and flyers will be distributed throughout the community publicizing the meeting.

**Action:** Information and Discussion Only.

***F. MCC Ridership Demographics – Transit Performance Standards***

The MCTC Policy Board at its January 22, 2003 meeting requested staff to report on the ridership demographics of the Madera County Connection (MCC). Board members also requested a report on established goals and performance standards for operating transit systems.

**MCC Ridership Demographics – Children 0-5**

The following table summarizes the data from County of Madera quarterly reports to First 5 Madera County (formerly Madera County Children and Families Commission) the principle fund source for the MCC transit service:

**Madera County Connection (MCC) Ridership Demographics**

July – Dec 2002	2,428	total
	2,209	adults
	219	children 0-5

For the six-month period between July 2002 and December 2002 children 0-5 years of age comprised 9% of the total ridership on MCC. Children ages 0-5 years ride MCC free of charge in the company of an adult.

**Transit Goals and Performance Standards**

The Madera County Connection (MCC) is a County of Madera transit service that is funded primarily by a grant from First 5 Madera County. However, in FY 2002/03 MCC was funded in part by the County of Madera share of Local Transportation Funds (LTF) in the amount of \$65,000 for the existing service and \$35,000 for the demonstration service to La Vina. The MCTC administers the Local Transportation Fund and must approve the LTF claims of the local agencies.

The Madera County Short-Range Transit Development Plan 2002 (SRTDP) outlines the goals and performance standards for the County's various transit systems. These objectives and performance standards are generally considered industry norms and should only be used as a guide in determining the performance of any one transit system.

**Goals and Objectives**

- Provide safe, reliable, high quality, and economical public transportation.
- Operate an efficient and effective system that maximizes service and minimizes cost impacts.

- Evaluate, monitor, and improve transit systems on an on-going basis.
- Undertake effective marketing, outreach, and public participation.
- Coordinate transit system development with community planning and development efforts and land use policy

Rural Inter-City Fixed-Route Performance Standards

	<u>Standard</u>	<u>MCC</u>
1. Minimum Service Frequency	8 - 10 trips/week	20 trips/week
2. Passengers per Revenue Vehicle Hour	> 5.0	1.4
3. Farebox Recovery Ratio	10%	3%

The County of Madera is currently working on its FY 2003-04 budget for this program that may include alternatives to reduce the cost of the system in an effort to meet the State Transportation Development Act (TDA) 10% farebox requirement.

*Action:* Information and Discussion Only.

**V. Administrative/Fiscal Items**

**A. Draft FY 2003-2004 Overall Work Program**

Included in the package was the 2003-04 MCTC Overall Work Program – Draft. This document is prepared annually pursuant to Caltrans guidelines and is required to be submitted to Caltrans, FHWA and FTA by February 19, 2003. The OWP discusses the MCTC, its organizational structure, regional planning issues, and presents work element descriptions and budgets. Following review, the OWP will be brought before the Commission for adoption at its May 2003 meeting.

The Intermodal Planning Group, the federal and state agency review group, is scheduled to meet March 19, 2003 to review the OWP.

*Action:* Authorize circulation of Draft 2003-04 MCTC Overall Work Program for agency review.

**B. 2003-04 Transportation Development Act (TDA): Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and State Transit Assistance (STA) Estimates**

**Local Transportation Fund (LTF):** Prior to February 1, of each year, the county auditor provides MCTC an estimate of monies to be available for apportionment and allocation during the ensuing fiscal year. The estimate for FY 2003-04 is **\$2,423,869** (increased \$40,049 from FY 2002/03). The estimate includes monies anticipated to be deposited in the fund during the ensuing fiscal year and the unrestricted balance anticipated to be available in the fund at the end of the current fiscal year. The unrestricted balance is the balance that is neither allocated, reserved, nor retained in the fund as an unallocated apportionment pursuant to Section 6655.1. The county auditor makes an estimate from such data including those which may be furnished by the State Board of Equalization. The county auditor will furnish a revised or updated estimate of funds available when requested by MCTC staff.

**State Transit Assistance (STA):**

Pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 99312.7, the State Controller is directed to send a preliminary estimate of STA Funds to each transportation planning agency. For fiscal year 2003-04, there is \$100,286,613 budgeted according to the most current information from the Department of Finance. STA allocation estimate for Madera County is **\$185,619** (increased \$4,366 from FY 2002/03).

MCTC will advise prospective LTF claimants of the estimated area apportionment's within Madera County. Applicants must file LTF and STA applications with MCTC by April 1, 2003.

**Action:** Information and Discussion Only.

**V. Miscellaneous**

*A. Items From Caltrans*

No items from Caltrans.

*B. Items From Staff*

No items from staff.

*C. Items From Commissioner*

Commissioner Silva inquired about the Road 26 pedestrian facilities project.

**VII. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Next meeting set for Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia S. Taylor-Maley, Executive Director  
Madera County Transportation Commission