



County of El Dorado

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Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Library Department recommending the Board consider the following:
1) Receive a presentation from the Museum Administrator on the El Dorado Western Railroad, a County Museum Program; and
2) Direct staff to proceed with plans to operate full size equipment and to continue with track repairs and maintenance, equipment restoration and crew training to Federal Railroad Administration certification standards on Segment 2 of the Sacramento Placerville Transportation Corridor (Refer 03/18/14, item 22, File 14-0308).

Sponsors:

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Attachments: 1. A - EDWRailroad Presentation 6-17-14, 2. Public Comment Rcvd 6-17-14 BOS 6-17-14, 3. Public Comment Rcvd 6-16-14 BOS 6-17-14

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
6/17/2014	1	Board of Supervisors	Approved	Pass

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2) Direct staff to proceed with plans to operate full size equipment and to continue with track repairs and maintenance, equipment restoration and crew training to Federal Railroad Administration certification standards on Segment 2 of the Sacramento Placerville Transportation Corridor (Refer 03/18/14, item 22, File 14-0308).

Fiscal Impact/Change to Net County Cost

None.

The El Dorado Western Railroad is the County Historical Museum Living History Railroad Program that began regular operations on June 26, 2011. In the last year, the Western Railroad carried over 2,200 passengers on track inspection cars with 35 volunteers donating over 7,200 hours of service. Museum volunteers and Commissioners began planning for this program almost 20 years ago. Museum staff, as part of the General Services Department until 2008 and now part of the Library Department, is working with the Parks Division on various maintenance and planning projects in the Sacramento Placerville Transportation Corridor (SPTC).

On August 25, 2009, the Board of Supervisors approved the County Museum's conceptual plan for the El Dorado County Historical Railroad Park in the town of El Dorado (File ID 09-1051). The Board of Supervisors approved the Segment Plan on March 28, 2011, which establishes "joint multi use trail for all trail uses, historical railroad and excursion train" on Segment 2, described as just west of Missouri Flat Road to just east of Mother Lode Drive in Shingle Springs (File ID 10-1169).

The El Dorado Western Railroad, which is operated and maintained by Museum staff and volunteers, has from the start been supported by the El Dorado Western Railway Foundation, a 501 (c)3 nonprofit corporation. A Memorandum of Understanding between the County Museum and the El Dorado Western Railway Foundation has been drafted and is now being reviewed by County Counsel and Risk Management.

At the March 18, 2014, Board of Supervisors Meeting, the Parks Manager, Vickie Sanders updated the Board on SPTC Corridor projects (File ID 14-0308). The El Dorado Western Railroad program was included in that report with the recommendation that staff come back to the Board with a more detailed explanation about the projects and plans for the railroad and the track in Segment 2 of the SPTC.

Reason for Recommendation

Currently, the El Dorado Western Railroad provides rides on track inspection cars. It began this way in order to get the program started, build support, create an income stream to support the improvements to the track and to work on developing the full size train program. Visitors come to the town of El Dorado and to Shingle Springs for an authentic “railroad experience,” giving us the opportunity to preserve and interpret El Dorado County's rich railroading history.

The next equipment to be brought into regular scheduled operation will be the restored 1944 Plymouth Locomotive, which along with a storage unit, are funded by the Cultural and Community Development Grant Program and by the Merchants of El Dorado. We plan to have the restored locomotive pull the Southern Pacific Caboose #1094, it was donated by an El Dorado County resident, and the 40 foot Flat Car on loan from the Folsom El Dorado Sacramento Historical Railroad Association (FEDSHRA), which will be modified to safely carry passengers.

All railroad operations, including the El Dorado Western Railroad, are regulated by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). This includes regulating the equipment, the track, and crew training. California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regulates the public and private road crossings and the trail crossings. Volunteers have been repairing and maintaining the track since El Dorado Western Railroad operations began. The repair is being conducted under the direction of Peter Schulze, El Dorado Western Railroad's FRA certified Road Master, using specific standards accepted and enforced by the FRA, which includes all parts of the track such as ties, ballast, rail, switches and signage. FRA and CPUC regulations are designed to make sure safety is the priority for trail users, road crossing users, train passengers and volunteers. Volunteer crew members are tested regularly, rolling stock is maintained and inspected regularly, and the track is inspected regularly while meeting minimum FRA standards as defined in CFR 213. Public and private road crossings and all trail crossings are regulated by the CPUC and must have the required signage.

The entire 7.9 miles of Segment 2 will eventually be in complete compliance with FRA standards. Starting in the town of El Dorado where the Plymouth locomotive is being restored, and working west, the first section of track in Segment 2 will be brought up to FRA standards and certified by a qualified track inspector in 2014. El Dorado Western Railroad volunteers are replacing ties, tightening bolts, checking the gauge, clearing drainage culverts, replacing signage and clearing brush. So far, the cost of these repairs is covered by donations from generous supporters and by ticket sales.

Certifying these 2.2 miles will allow us to test the locomotive on certified track, and it will allow us to launch the crew training program. In addition, it is a very scenic section of track and it will be a draw for visitors and returning riders when we are ready to carry passengers. Some Capital Improvement

Projects being identified at this time are to replace historical sidings and switches and to replace or repair Grade Crossing Signals at Mother Lode Drive and El Dorado Road. CIP planning, including identifying projected costs and means for funding them are also planned for 2014.

To be FRA compliant, the Trail must be separated from the track by at least 10 feet, except at specific crossings regulated by the CPUC with required signage. Railroad bridges will be maintained by the El Dorado Western Railroad for railroad use. FRA compliant track does not allow for shared use.

The El Dorado Western Railroad fully supports trail development along with the railroad, and is working with other corridor users and the Parks Division to find alternative solutions for trail bridges, additional trail signage in Segment 2 and trail improvements and track maintenance in Segment 1, which will enhance the trail but not diminish future rail use.

Clerk of the Board Follow Up Actions

Contact

Mary Cory, Museum Administrator

Concurrences

Parks Division, County Counsel and Risk Management