

# Mono County Local Transportation Commission

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## MINUTES

March 11, 2013  
(Adopted April 8, 2013)

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**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:** Tim Fesko, Larry Johnston, Fred Stump

**TOWN COMMISSIONERS:** Jo Bacon, Sandy Hogan, Rick Wood (alternate), **ABSENT:** Matthew Lehman.

**COUNTY STAFF:** Scott Burns, Gerry Le Francois, Garrett Higerd, Mary Booher (video), Heather deBethizy, C.D. Ritter

**TOWN STAFF:** Peter Bernasconi, Jessica Morriss

**CALTRANS:** Forest Becket

**ESTA:** John Helm, Jill Batchelder

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1. **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chair Larry Johnston called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. at the Town/County Conference Room, Minaret Village Mall, Mammoth Lakes, and Commissioner Bacon led the pledge of allegiance.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR:** Commissioner Bacon was nominated for vice-chair. (Ayes: 6-0.)

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

1) December 10, 2012, *continued from Feb. 11* (no January meeting)

**MOTION:** Adopt minutes of Dec. 10, 2012, as submitted. (Bacon/Hogan. Ayes: 3. Abstain: Fesko, Stump, Wood.)

2) February 11, 2013

**MOTION:** Adopt minutes of Feb. 11, 2013, as submitted. (Fesko/Stump. Ayes: 3. Abstain: Bacon, Hogan, Wood.)

5. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:** **Bacon:** Town Council approved MAP-21 letter. **Hogan:** Mobility Commission dissolved, but former members will serve in advisory role. **Johnston:** LADWP has suggested Caltrans may be responsible for Keeler dunes emissive. Great Basin will look at that.

6. **ADMINISTRATION**

A. **2013-14 Overall Work Program (OWP):** Mary Booher mentioned that it takes more time to respond to Sacramento comments. Work elements are not fully developed. Any major changes from 2012 to 2013? *RTIP update in December. No new funds for grant applications. Town added additional work elements.*

Jessica Morriss outlined eight new work elements: 1) **Mobility:** Unsure of scope of work. Can't do CEQA with LTC funds. Scott Burns stated CEQA can be done if incorporated into Rural Transportation Program (RTP), which will include the Town. Peter Bernasconi stated General Plan appendix details State requirements of Circulation Element. 2) **Parking:** Key transportation issue. Town-wide parking benefit district is proposed. Main Street is under way now. Done by consultant? *Most [elements] are supported by consultants, as Town doesn't have adequate staff. Hire intern dedicated to LTC work program.*

Commissioner Johnston contested the term "likely" in parking completion time frame. *Start times may be later, into next fiscal year.* Programs never seem completed, just continued year to year. Maybe "likely" contributes to perpetually not done on time, which is not good public policy. Show cutoff date and milestones to reach; if can't reach, return to LTC. Commissioner Bacon disagreed, stating estimated completion dates and

timeline are shown, and other phases precede it. Johnston thought “likely” allows continued maybes, especially if dependent on previous things. Commissioner Fesko noted other items don’t have “likely” and saw it as splitting hairs. Commissioner Hogan, as former planner and decision maker, stated sometimes can’t hold to a schedule that’s dependent on projects completed, consultants available. Johnston countered that when he said something would get done, it did. This is exactly why people complain about government. Commissioner Stump cautioned against a perpetual slide to “what ifs.” LTC and staff noted concern, and Morriss offered to present a comprehensive update later.

Morriss continued with the other new work elements: 3) Sidewalk master plan: Prioritize snow management for pedestrian facilities. 4) Streetscape standards. 5) Air quality: Town staff already performs daily monitoring during winter and information goes into air quality management plan. 6) Speed survey study: Data collection on all town streets to back up posted speed limits. Educate public on why speed limits are set the way they are. Hogan suggested finding how other cities have overcome issue of speed limits. Stump added limits are bound by state law as well. Morriss saw the study as ideal for an intern. 7) Asset management plan: Ranges from trash cans to streets, pavement, bike lanes, etc. 8) Caltrans/Town maintenance agreement.

Booher noted that ESTA also added a short-range transit plan. 700-13-0: Project study reports will come out later in LTC priorities on this agenda. Discuss monthly so comfortable and familiar with approval when ready. Final version will have amounts assigned to projects. Adopt in May because won’t have financials earlier. Forest Becket thought May would be ideal.

**B. MAP-21:** Gerry Le Francois identified MAP-21 as a standing agenda item. Program structure shows old SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) opposite MAP-21. Chart was created by Rural Counties Task Force. Surface Transportation Program is \$437 million, with Mono’s cut \$230,000. Could be \$670,000 under STIP process. Haven’t heard of any proposed legislation. Graphic on p. 91 shows that urbanites recreate in red zones, national parks, forests. Commissioner Fesko found Mono’s -95% disturbing. Population-based formulas are popular with urbanites. Fesko mentioned wear and tear on 395, resurfaced several times. Le Francois indicated no lobbying by staff. Fesko is an alternate on the task force, so can lobby.

**C. LTC 2013 priorities:** Commissioner Johnston asked for more input and discussion later. New items: 1) Signage to Mammoth: Forest Becket noted town is not on 395, such as Adelanto-Bishop (primary destinations along route). Caltrans could request District 8 sign coordinator to add Mammoth as destination, but not mileage. Commissioner Fesko thought it a reasonable request to consider when updating signs. 2) Deer fence: Scott Burns noted Transportation Enhancement (TE) project was proposed, but LTC could pick it up. Becket indicated no more access to TE funds. 3) Lower Rock Creek: Commissioner Stump thought subdivisions would increase traffic. Connect Tom’s Place with Lower Rock Creek. Commissioner Bacon suggested coordinating with USFS improvements on Upper Rock Creek. Burns wanted to determine priorities among a list of projects; categorize items as maintenance, new, or non-highway. Reorder priorities of master list in same order as Johnston’s list.

**D. Interregional MOUs:** Brad Mettam compiled a list, noting \$248 million spent on improving access to Eastern Sierra. Original structure was 40% local, 40% interregional, 10% Inyo, 10% Mono. The Interregional Improvement Program (IIP) is statewide competitive fund for projects, and it is unlikely Caltrans could have competed for funds by itself. Leveraging funds allowed projects to be expedited. Summary attachment to MOUs is a long narrative of how things changed over time. Add attachments as things evolve to simplify keeping up with moving target. Commissioner Johnston noted Mono leveraged a lot of road funds (\$250,000) in joint effort. What is *not* shown is that local projects were not questioned by California Transportation Commission (CTC). Addendums avoid re-examining projects. Commissioner Hogan indicated map shows how roads lead to us. {MOUs} show what rural counties can do together. Forest Becket noted other agencies are doing that as well. CTC sets priorities to guide projects to fund. It used to say no local projects at all. Caltrans sets up priorities in State Highway Operation & Protection Program (SHOPP), now saying no major rehabilitations, as SHOPP is not funding those. Think of safety: data are driven by actual collisions.

Alternate Commissioner Wood, who was on LTC when MOU idea originated, was astonished by results of sending Mono’s money elsewhere. Commissioner Stump thought letter needs follow-up to reference numbers blending on MAP-21. Simplify data into chart or paragraph to show why we’re doing this. Becket suggested discussing further; out of sight, out of mind is good for Eastern Sierra. Somebody might push back against \$250,000. Johnston wanted to keep pressure on. Becket wanted to stick with narrative, highlight whatever we have. Johnston suggested monthly letters with new twist for lane miles, not population, with a bullet format of what was sent before. Fesko suggested including RCRC map. Becket wanted CTC to look at what Mono’s done

trying to complete corridor for movement of people, goods and services. Population basis would bring that to a screaming halt. Johnston pointed out that US 395 is fourth major north/south corridor.

**E. Scenic Byway:** Heather deBethizy indicated a grant to write a corridor management plan. Kicked into high gear, hired consultant, and identified marketing and projects as most important parts. First round of RPAC outreach generated no negative feedback once people realized no new regulations would ensue. Second round later this year will request more feedback. Information Technology (IT) has collected data on parking inventory of areas along 395 corridor: June Lake, Bridgeport, Lee Vining. Walkable Communities documents were scanned for potential policies. Trail planning on Eastern Sierra Regional Trail includes Mono/Yosemite, an economic development project. Trail meeting last week had good turnout. Once Mono approves plan, send in as application to Federal Highway Administration.

Why was June Lake on SR 158 included but not Mammoth Lakes on SR 203? *Mammoth has collected its own data. Take idea to Town Planning Commission? No drop-off line on national designation, but California has specific lines drawn. Federal goes only where state designation exists. Antelope Valley (AV) did not want inclusion in CA designation. AV is not included in any projects, is skeptical of CA designation. Fesko noted designation stops at communities. Wished starts/stops didn't exist, but gaps are small. If Walker and Coleville wanted to connect to SR 89, argument would be better, but no desire exists for CA designation. Could revisit communities. Part of grant is to update CA. Look at intrusions along highway. CA has lots of regulations.* Commissioner Fesko noted that communities opted out of CA due to distrust – didn't want looks dictated. Walker, an economic hub, has potential through federal designation. Business owners need to step up and want to do something for their community regardless of what they're promised. He noted Bridgeport stepped up, got involved with staff and Caltrans. Walker area doesn't have that at this point. Commissioner Johnston didn't want AV to miss marketing opportunities.

**F. Tuolumne River Plan:** Heather deBethizy stated that National Park Service (NPS) prepared a plan analyzing approaches to managing visitor experience within wild-and-scenic corridor. She summarized NPS's preferred Alternative IV. Staff reviewed the plan and wrote comments. Most General Plan policies were transportation-related. DeBethizy reviewed main objectives and Mono's response.

Commissioner Johnston, who attended the recent NPS presentation, commented that roadside parking ought to be eliminated in Tuolumne Meadows, but not beyond; day-use horseback riding is a traditional national park use; and gas station closure doesn't make a lot of sense. No gas for tourists but for NPS? Fix tank if it leaks. Dispersed gas stations would be better. Inconsistencies were driven by lawsuit. Wild/Scenic status in national park is more stringent on day-use activities. Commissioner Fesko thought that anyone going to Yosemite impairs resources to some extent. The gas station had a lot of history, and nothing shows harm.

Scott Burns indicated that two plans are out, with Merced River Plan deadline a month later, and requested extension of Tuolumne past March 18. Commissioner Hogan mentioned bikes. Maybe a letter from LTC? Commissioner Stump thought removing horseback in Tuolumne would create an access issue for some people. Much of the park is available only to hikers, so some sections need alternatives. Include horse and bike rentals.

Johnston thought maintaining wilderness experience seemed inappropriate in Tuolumne Plan, as it's a river plan. *How many times encounter person or horse on trail impacts wilderness experience.* Commissioner Fesko suggested "reducing impairment," not unimpaired. Minimize impact.

**MOTION:** Authorize Chair's signature on letter regarding Tuolumne River Plan. (Ayes: 6-0.)

**G. Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC):** Wendy Sugimura noted State law requires three-year terms, mostly reappointments from same agencies, maybe different people. Make sure those perspectives are represented. It's hard to get people out to public meetings, so try to get information from agencies. MMSA designee? *Appointed last year, never attended.* Transportation role has been reduced with ESTA involvement, but MMSA still does some transit. Sugimura distributed an updated roster.

**MOTION:** Authorize appointment of SSTAC members. (Fesko/Stump. Ayes: 6-0.)

## 7. TRANSIT

**A. Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA):** Jill Batchelder requested approval of Coordination Plan specifically for commuter routes. Vanpool operates at different times than commuter routes. Helm said mileage compensation for transporting people out of area for medical needs is generally from highway trust fund, so likely not impacted by sequester.

**MOTION:** Approve Federal Transit Administration Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commuter and Section 5317, New Freedom Coordinated Plan Certification, and authorize executive director to sign the Coordinated Plan Certifications. (*Bacon/Hogan. Ayes: 6-0.*)

**B. ESTA update:** Helm received e-mail on options for medical transport to Reno area. ESTA is looking at minor modification of Bridgeport-Carson City route one day/week primarily for shopping and medical. Vast majority of riders surveyed OK'ed shorter trip to Gardnerville's new Walmart, but with advance notice could continue on to Carson City. Bus takes passengers around as needed. Other connections with outside services? *Douglas County Transit, unaware of connections. 395 routes go on through, no stops. Combine with airport runs? Reno route has one stop each at Gardnerville and Carson City; could be done but not nearly as convenient. Inter-city route policy allows one-way fare. Ridership? Typically four to six. Carson City fare would be reduced from \$16 to \$10.60 for Gardnerville, so likely would attract more riders.* Commissioner Fesko encouraged letting people know. Enhanced use of technology in Mammoth Lakes includes "next bus" for smart phone models only on Red Line; seeking funding to add trolleys at night and summer and eventually Mammoth Express and 395-Reno.

**C. Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS):** Scott Burns announced meeting next Monday. Summer hiker buses will leave from Mammoth at 6 a.m. Ran out of time last year to market summer buses, and will market heavily this year. Tuolumne River Plan acknowledges YARTS, but is not tied to it.

**8. CALTRANS**

**A. Activities in Mono County:** Forest Becket anticipated final paving at High Point. Commissioner Fesko noted south wall had one piece of concrete, north wall work was done, and no accidents even though curve is worst it's ever been.

**9. INFORMATIONAL: MAP-21 letter to legislators**

**10. UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS:** 1) LTC priorities; 2) update on Town OWP items; 3) OWP status report with redline, adoptable in May; 4) MAP-21 updates; 5) another letter with map; 6) Tuolumne Plan draft letter related to transportation; 7) unmet needs hearing

**11. ADJOURN** at 11:25 a.m. to April 8, 2013

*Prepared by C.D. Ritter, LTC secretary*