

# Mono County Local Transportation Commission

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## MINUTES

April 11, 2016

(Adopted May 9, 2016)

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

**TOWN COMMISSIONERS:** Sandy Hogan, Shields Richardson, John Wentworth

**COUNTY STAFF:** Scott Burns, Jeff Walters, Wendy Sugimura, Paul Roten, CD Ritter

**TOWN STAFF:** Grady Dutton

**CALTRANS:** Brent Green, Ryan Dermody, Jacob Mathew, Greg Miller, Craig Holste, Florene Trainor

**ESTA:** John Helm, Jill Batchelder

**GUESTS:** Laurel Martin, Deb Diaz, Beth Himmelhoch, Rick Franz, Jill Batchelder, John Helm & Molly DesBaillets (Social Services Transportation Advisory Council)

1. **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chair Shields Richardson called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. at the Town/County Conference Room, Minaret Village Mall, Mammoth Lakes, and attendees recited the pledge of allegiance.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Gary Nelson, Mono City, reported deteriorating County roads in area. Cars go to road edge, where cracks are wide. Talked to County, response was to send crack-seal crew. One stretch after last time is 4' x 30'. Kept calling, told roads were rated, communities in queue. Where's Mono City in queue? Told no money, so no queue. Mono City under radar in a lot of areas. Kids deserve better road to walk/bike on. Requested LTC consideration. ESTA buses have auto chains but were not in use when chains were required.

### 3. MINUTES

**MOTION:** Adopt minutes of March 14, 2016, as amended: Item 4, line 2: Mike Schlafmann, USFS staffer now in Pacific Northwest, ~~wants~~ has provided opportunity to post on websites transit connections to access public lands. (*Fesko/Johnston. Ayes: 5. Abstain due to absence: Hogan.*)

4. **PUBLIC HEARING: Unmet Transit Needs.** Wendy Sugimura introduced annual public hearing attended by SSTAC (Social Services Transportation Advisory Council) members. Updated table of public input with potential solutions through outreach. ESTA attended RPACS and community meetings, Planning Commission for County and Town. Hearing seeks additional public input. When see same concerns year after year, maybe no funding available.

**OPEN PUBLIC HEARING.** John Helm distributed chart of ESTA services. New is June Lake fixed-route summer service 9-5 daily funded by LTC, based on input from previous meetings. Expand long-range service to five days/week, Saturdays. Combined Town/LTC funding for contract routes.

Advertising non-emergency medical transportation program? Helm stated intent to consider outreach/advertising, double-check posting sites. Antelope Valley wanted advertising in The Scoop. Stump noted only senior center is in Walker, but seniors live elsewhere. Maybe Benton post office for other seniors.

Molly DesBaillets suggested sending advertising with senior meal program, and Megan Fox suggested fliers with home-delivered meals in Walker.

It was noted that no Bishop/Mammoth weekend service is available.

DesBaillets stated some families have only one car, and DAR (Dial-A-Ride) services end before Thursday evening meetings lasting till 7:30 or 8. Helm cited cost of \$50-\$60/hr.

Deb Diaz offered to share with ESTA a website database with locations of disabled persons. Fire and police are granted access.

Mammoth DAR for disabled? Helm stated 24-hr advance notice is needed if unable to use fixed route.

Thursday? Helm will add DAR hours. DesBaillets stated regular poses challenge to get out babies/gear. Sugimura will incorporate added input for resolution in May.

Stump thought if extra three-hour service were needed, LTC could find \$150/wk. Sugimura suggested providing options on addressing the need.

Stump thought transportation issues prevented services from being rendered.

Ultimate decision is up to LTC, which could modify table. Johnston asked if ESTA would make recommendation – many cooks in kitchen. Helm stated whether LTC or ESTA board, if unmet need were reasonable to meet, can't imagine ESTA board not support. Sugimura confirmed compliance with state law. If insufficient funding, prioritize recommendations to meet highest needs. **CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING.**

**5. COMMISSIONER REPORTS: Stump:** Commenting on Caltrans' release of US 6 TCR (Transportation Concept Report) as individual, not BOS or LTC. Omissions: 1) Nevada development impact on truck traffic; 2) potential passing lanes (three not four); and 3) flexibility on speed limit reduction through Chalfant. Need to better inform public of how highway funding crisis has handcuffed State, Mono, and Town projects. **Wentworth:** USFS is providing framework for gateway communities finding ways on public lands. Town laid out sustainable recreation on Reds Meadow, looked holistically, set up working group. Web applications need to tie ESTA into recreation opportunities. **Johnston:** Conway Summit scenic overlook has stickers littering guardrail. (Green will comment next meeting). LTC responsibility to take action on funding (former LTC did not want to raise taxes), do things locally to push things along. Governor proposed \$3 billion additional funding, yet not enough to do much. Since 1994 no adjusting tax rate for roads despite cost increases. No basic infrastructure improvements approved by federal government. **Hogan:** Pilot road charge program moving slowly, needs rural input. YARTS Authority Advisory Committee met last week. **Fesko:** Conway Summit billboard at kiosk tagged. Thanked Helm for good information at Antelope Valley RPAC. Pedestrian usage on SR 182; Bridgeport Indian Colony trail needs to be more prominent. **Richardson:** Staff press release about funding: there is none. Got California Bike Pedestrian Plan information from Caltrans.

## 6. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

**A. Resolution R16-09:** Wendy Sugimura reported annual allocation grant funded security fencing at industrial park, solar bus lights in town. This grant would fund on-board security system for nighttime trolleys. Helm stated images captured on hard-disk drive are available to download for storage and viewing. Intent: Not a privacy issue. Bus interior videotaped.

Tagging, storing? ESTA is looking at options, lowest administrative cost. Easy to download system. Insurance savings? Helm indicated not really, just reduced exposure..

**MOTION:** Adopt Resolution R16-09 approving FY 2015-16 Cal-OES Transit Security Grant Program project (Hogan/Fesko. Ayes: 6-0.)

**B. 2016 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP):** Scott Burns stated Le Francois and Courtney Smith of Inyo presented Mono's Regional Transportation Improvement Program at March 17 CTC (California Transportation Commission) meeting. Staff recommendations should be released soon, and CTC will take action May 18-19. Bus replacement on hold, may be deleted. Freeman Gulch construction pushed to 2019-20. Dutton stated Main Street sidewalk is still on, but may have to phase project. Airport rehab pushed back to 2019-20. Preventive maintenance pushed out one fiscal year, maybe more if revenue does not come in. Olancho/Cartago mitigation delayed to 2018-19 (Green indicated no construction funding, but bring to that point). Inyo's proposed map for South Lake was deleted.

Green stated Gerry Le Francois communicated well at CTC. It was evident that larger urban areas with major funding are not taking as big a hit, tend to have better success rate in matching funds. Population base is small in rural areas. Many counties had no plan to make fair-share cut; Mono was recognized for having a plan. Funding timing is based on cash flow not programming.

--- Break: 10:10 - 10:15 ---

## 7. TRANSIT

### A. Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA)

1. **Resolution R16-05:** Program federal fiscal year 2016 Section 5311 Program of Projects (POP) with ESTA as subrecipient of \$75,862 in federal funds & authorize LTC executive director to sign certifications & assurances for operating assistance for general public transit services in Mono County – Jill Batchelder cited current grant season. Funding to overall operation down slightly from last year.

**MOTION:** Adopt R16-05 programming federal fiscal year 2016 Section 5311 Program of Projects (POP) with ESTA as subrecipient of \$75,862 in federal funds & authorize LTC executive director to sign certifications & assurances for operating assistance for general public transit services in Mono County (*Stump/Hogan. Ayes: 6-0.*)

2. **Resolution R16-06:** Federal Transit Administration Section 5311(f) operating assistance for expanded 395 interregional bus route.

Jill Batchelder grouped together 5311(f) connections on wider network: 1) continued funding of current services; 2) expanded services funding into competitive realm; and 3) another vehicle to reduce mileage of all vehicles. Continued funding is non-competitive. Expanded phase into separate application maximizes use of toll credits, minimizes risks.

Fesko asked if still get expanded service if not get bus. Batchelder replied, yes, but not as ideal. Fesko suggested watching ridership, possible diluting on current days. Batchelder noted ESTA could maintain base service, make tweaks to expansion without jeopardizing base service.

Stump noted late data from Caltrans adjusted maximum toll credit from \$292,109 to \$110,763. Change R16-06 amount.

Batchelder noted separate funding sources for operating and expansion.

**MOTION:** Adopt R16-06 authorizing executive director to sign certification & assurances for Federal Transit Administration Section 5311(f) operating assistance for expanded 395 interregional bus route as amended with additional wording under Now, therefore, be it resolved & ordered: Authorizes the Mono County LTC executive director to sign all required certifications and assurances. (*Stump/Wentworth. Ayes: 6-0.*)

3. **Resolution R16-07:** Federal Transit Administration Section 5311(f) capital funding for purchase of bus for expanded 395 inter-regional bus route.

**MOTION:** Adopt Resolution R16-07 authorizing LTC executive director to sign the certification and assurances for the Federal Transit Administration Section 5311(f) capital funding for the purchase of a bus for the Expanded 395 inter-regional bus route. (*Fesko/Hogan. Ayes: 6-0.*)

4. **Resolution R16-08:** Section 5311(f) continued funding for operating assistance for the 395 inter-regional bus route

**MOTION:** Adopt Resolution R16-08 authorizing executive director to sign the certifications and assurances for the Federal Transit Administration Section 5311(f) continued funding for operating assistance for the 395 inter-regional bus route (*Johnston/Wentworth. Ayes: 6-0.*)

**B. Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS):** Scott Burns verified Mono's \$35,000 contribution. AAC (Authority Advisory Committee) function is monitored by staff – Sandy Hogan, Jeff Simpson, and Danna Stroud (now chair). SR 41 service shows huge growth. Hogan affirmed being vocal, as East Side is easily forgotten. Reminded AAC that Caltrans District 9 is Eastern Sierra, not Nevada. Service only three months plus/year, so Fresno, Merced, Mariposa regard Mono's contribution as minimal. Mono needs to be there, speak up. Supervisors Alpers and Corless talked about what would be beneficial for East Side. Advertise connectivity of Bridgeport on up to Nevada. Mono has potential for YARTS to subcontract with ESTA for summer hiker service. YARTS started earlier than ESTA, but could benefit from ESTA's progress. YARTS has no employees, is not yet its own transit system. Lots of moving parts in YARTS depend on federal dollars. Real expansion opportunities. Connection now only for scheduling. Maybe hire East Side drivers instead of paying condo stay for YARTS.

## 8. CALTRANS

**A. Mountain Pass opening process:** Brent Green presented PowerPoint featuring pictures. Tioga Pass connects Yosemite Valley to 395. Monitor Pass opened April 5, closed later. Bodie open this week. June Lake Loop and SR 120 E opened March 17. Similarities of routes, but not apples-to-apples comparison. Tioga at 9,945' elevation is highest route, with avalanche zones, rockfall areas, steep grades, sheer cliffs, large boulders, narrow roadway, and sheer drop-offs. Caltrans does not act alone, has partners affected by pass opening/closing: CHP, Mono SAR, USFS/Inyo (10 seasonal campgrounds), NPS, and Mono County. SR 120 is commuter route with no winter access or housing communities. Caltrans classifies scope/scale/severity based on complexity, A to E (most severe). E = closed winter, open spring, but no fixed opening date (desirable by fishing opener, but maybe not).

Levels of awareness exist on when to open gates – it's more than snow. Analysis is done by crews who know actual conditions, boots on ground with > 100 collective years. People in offices are armchair quarterbacks. Caltrans opens road when safe to do so, not by calendar date, specific event, etc. Mother Nature makes areas prone to avalanche and/or rockfall. USGS article on Yosemite noted water repeatedly freezes/thaws. Earlier this year, a massive mud slide on SR 58 was one of biggest ever in District 9.

Factors affecting passes: **Rock scaling:** Removal of loose rocks from smaller/lower slopes prevents rockfall hazard; led to two fatalities. **Boulders:** Clearing boulders off road after snow is removed. Opened April 17 last year, but then gigantic boulder rolled onto road, closed road again. **Blasting:** Common practice for large boulders. **Maintenance:** Road repairs safer/quicker if road closed. Decisions depend on potential impacts, plus vastness and enormity of Tioga Pass. **Pass opening:** Involves partners, actions, weather, risks, costs, and resources. Decisions may not be popular, but Caltrans predicates opening on safety.

Green introduced Greg Miller, Craig Holste, and Florene Trainor. Miller stated SR 120 opened to Saddlebag, but rocks and snow left by weekend weather.

MMSA helping? Yes, Mono and MMSA.

Jeff Walters stated NPS (National Park Service) will start plowing April 18. Holste will update. Gene Smith is new NPS agent. Avalanche reported at Olmsted Point. Mono got avalanche training by Sue Burak. When BOS approves, Mono will plow. Green noted Caltrans typically gets to gate before NPS passes Olmsted.

When open bottom gate? Green stated Mono does not have to wait till open to public to get to gate.

Fesko suggested Green's presentation to BOS and information to public as well.

Hogan recalled long ago when task force met with NPS to document steps. Dermody confirmed Trans-Sierra Mobility Committee. Hogan saw it as an educational tool. Green stated NPS has video online.

Sonora Pass? Miller affirmed clearing past pack station, blower sent last week, guessed open mid-May. Stump wanted to keep advised about truck restriction. Caltrans will begin legal posting when road opens.

**B. Transportation Concept Report: SR 182:** Jacob Mathew described planning horizon of 20 years. SR 182 provides alternate route when US 395 is closed. Comments sought by April 22, but could be later.

Fesko mentioned connector with Bridgeport Indian Colony. Big trucks and bikes need wider shoulders sooner than 20-25 years. Mathew confirmed shoulder widening from Bridgeport to Nevada (12.6 mi).

Hogan reminded that public lands are administered but not owned by USFS or BLM – lands are owned by public. Caltrans administers its lands, but people of CA own.

Stump recalled history of accidents on SR 182, with problematic communication. Was that considered? Not unique to SR 182, urban areas have call boxes.

Coordinate with Nevada? Yes, pavement upkeep is same.

**C. Activities in Mono County:** Ryan Dermody mentioned release of US 6 Transportation Concept Report that he'll present to LTC in May. Supervisor Stump has forwarded it to constituents.

Bike & Pedestrian Plan is not specific projects, but policy and guidance for future manuals. Finish winter 2017. Presentation on East Side denied due to low population. [www.cabikepedplan.org](http://www.cabikepedplan.org) Good website, can comment. Overarching document. Building multi-modal plan for Mono first, and then Inyo.

Green mentioned framework where local entities can develop bike plans. Some funding not available unless communities have their own plan. Dermody indicated no longer needed, but good to have anyway.

9. **INFORMATIONAL:** No items.

10. **UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS:** 1) Oregon road charge; 2) pavement strategies; 3) LTC commissioner(s) to CTC meeting May 18-19 in Stockton; 4) unmet needs resolution; 5) OWP adoption; 6) TCR for US 6; and 7) notify public of transportation funding crisis.

11. **ADJOURN** at 11:38 a.m. to May 9, 2016 (Note: Commissioner Richardson will be absent).

*Prepared by CD Ritter, LTC secretary*