



INYO COUNTY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION



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Michael Errante, Executive Director

MINUTES

INYO COUNTY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Inyo County Board Chambers, 224 N. Edwards St., Independence

All members of the public are encouraged to participate in the discussion of any items on the Agenda. Questions and comments will be accepted via e-mail to: jkokx@invocounty.us. Any member of the public may also make comments during the scheduled "Public Comment" period on this agenda concerning any subject related to the Inyo County Local Transportation

Commission. PUBLIC NOTICE: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Transportation Commission Secretary at (760) 878-0201. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the Inyo County Local Transportation Commission to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting (28CFR 35. 102-35. ADA Title II).

April 19, 2023

9:02 a.m. Open Meeting

1. Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Stephen Muchovej
Celeste Berg
Scott Marcellin
Jennifer Roeser

Others Present:

Phil Moores ESTA
Nora Gamino City of Bishop Public Works Director
Kristina Amaya Inyo County Public Works
Justine Kokx Inyo County Public Works/LTC
Ashley Helms Inyo County Public Works
Neil Peacock Caltrans
Catharine Crayne Caltrans
Lana Morris Caltrans
Mike Errante Public Works Director
Deston Dishion: City Administrator
Maggie Ritter Caltrans
Neil Peacock Caltrans
Bob Strub: Member of the Public

2. Public Comment

Bob Strub approached the podium: Bob expressed gratitude to see progression on accessing grants to help improve the conditions of the roads in Lone Pine. He added that the roads in Lone Pine are in serious need of improvement and he imagines the replacement rate is one every 50 years on the conservative side.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Consent Agenda

- a. Staff of the Local Transportation Commission - Request approval of the minutes of the meeting of February 15, 2023.
2. Request Commission 1) approve via Minute Order the Overall Work Program for the Inyo County LTC for FY 2023-2024, 2) authorize the Executive Director to sign related documents and 3) allow staff to make minor technical changes if required.

***Motion to approve the February 15, 2023, minutes was made by Commissioner Roeser and seconded by Commissioner Marcellin. The Commission requested minor changes to the OWP to be presented at next month's meeting. All in favor.**

3. Request Commission receive a Staff Report and a copy of the meeting notes of the Social Services Transit Advisory Council (SSTAC) and conduct a **Public Hearing** to gather input on unmet transit needs.

No public comment was received during the discussion or the public hearing.

Justine provided an overview of the Unmet Transit Needs annual process and a summary of the SSTAC meeting held on February 2023. Every year the Local Transportation Commission is required to conduct the annual unmet transit needs process, which includes a public hearing. This involves meeting with the sources Social Services Transit Advisory Council, which includes Operators in the area, including ESTA, as well as transit providers such as ESAAA and IMAH. Three transit riders were in attendance who met SSTAC criteria of 60+ in age, disabled and/or of limited means. Jenny Parks from IMAH and Phil Moores of ESTA as well as several representatives with Caltrans were in attendance. A summary of the unmet needs items were discussed included adding a transit stop at the Buttermilk Road turnoff, adding a “Mammoth Express” route between Bishop and Mammoth on the weekends, better schedule between Lone Pine and Bishop for commuters, weekend service along 395, and once or twice-a week later departure to Benton from Bishop. The prior year Unmet Transit Needs list was reviewed towards the end of the meeting. The final unmet needs list will be brought to the Commission during the May meeting for final approval.

Phil further explained that he will request ESTA board approval to implement weekend service between Bishop and Reno, which is currently listed as an unmet need. He also mentioned that he

plans to discontinue Bishop Creek shuttle service. After 5 or 6 years of very poor ridership and at a time when equipment and expenses are at a premium, he doesn't think it's worth it to continue the shuttle. The average number of riders is 2.2 people per hour, and it's never gotten better despite efforts. Phil thinks that the Forest Service should take the lead on this shuttle project following the Red's Meadow model. Commissioner Muchovej asked if there are unmet needs still that are unreasonable to meet, does that mean that we can use transit funding on local streets and roads? The answer is no, as long as there are unmet needs, transit funding must remain available for transit.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Active Transportation Program (ATP) Grant Project "Brain Storming":

Justine provided a brief overview of the upcoming ATP grant deadlines. During October the CTC will begin developing new guidelines for the ATP grant program. In March 2024 they will open the application period, ending in June. It is a highly competitive grant program. The staff report includes a list of ATP projects from the 2015 ATP Update. Any that did not benefit a disadvantaged community (DAC) was removed. Commissioner Muchovej posed a question about how the City of Bishop can make an argument that a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project on the west side of Bishop benefits a DAC when according to the latest census, West Bishop is no longer considered a disadvantaged community? It seems that many of the projects listed could be argued as a "safe route to school" that benefit East Bishop, which is definitely a DAC by income. Justine added that Cycle 6 ATP allowed agencies to create their own definition of a disadvantaged community using each communities' unique characteristics. Applicants are not limited to the three main categories such as low income, Free or Reduced School Lunches or Healthy Places Index. The Active Transportation grant program is a little more flexible and you could argue that the west side improvements would directly benefit the east side. Neil Peacock added that there are many ways to go about this. For example, using the equity index mapping indicator tool for the ATP application. Lana Morris chimed in; she is the ATP coordinator at Caltrans claims that Safe Routes to School and ATP can operate under the same ATP umbrella. If you can check the disadvantaged community box, as well as the SRTS, you get more points. She added that last year, the City of Bishop submitted an amazing application, but only scored a 65 because it didn't show that it benefitted a DAC. The cutoff score was 78. Any project that benefitted a tribe was bumped up and Lana thinks that if we work with one of the Tribes, we will have a more competitive application. One project that stands out on the list is Barlow Lane. Also, the applications completed by a consultant tend to score higher. The more boxes you can check, the more points. Justine added that community engagement is very important. We want to get started early to make sure that you get the community involved and ensure that the community's ideas are reflected in the project.

Commissioners proceeded to prioritize and rank projects on the list. Projects with the highest number of disadvantaged characteristics should rank higher. For the City, they expressed support for Academy sidewalk (DAC & SRTS), Home Street connection (DAC & SRTS, Tribe), Pine Street sidewalk (SRTS), also, Lagoon Street (current SRTS project) and improving Clarke Street should be added to the priority list (DAC, SRTS and Tribe).

Priority County projects included See Vee Lane, add a sidewalk to the bus stop off 395 (DAC, SRTS, Tribe), Barlow – add sidewalks to Diaz or Sierra (SRTS, DAC, Tribe), Big Pine Tribe’s Bartell to Blake project (SRTS, DAC, Tribe), Big Pine Veterans’ Path (DAC, SRTS?), Tecopa - Old Spanish Trail, Tecopa Hot Springs, Furnace Creek, bicycle lanes (severe DAC).

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

5. HSIP Cycle 11 Staff report and success letter

Justine provided a quick overview of the winning HSIP grant application to install a high friction surface treatment, a flashing beacon and chevron curve signage along approximately 1.2 miles of Old Spanish Trail Rd. over Emigrant Pass. Grant award is \$209,000. The relatively small grant award prompted a question by Commissioner Muchovej. With construction costs changing at such a rapid pace, is there confidence that the project will be completed with the requested funds? Justine replied that the consultant built in a 15% contingency, and the Road Department Deputy Director concurred with the amount. Commissioner Roeser added that the Community of Tecopa during the SE County Board meeting expressed appreciation for the project. They do want more signage, however.

6. Vacant ICLTC Commissioner

Vice Chair Thompson resigned as Commissioner in March 2023. The process for replacement requires a 10-day advertisement for a request for letters of interest directed to the Assistant Clerk of the Inyo County Board of Supervisors. One letter of interest has been received so far. Staff will bring the letters of interest to the Board of Supervisors in May/June for Board appointment. Mr. Thompson’s keen understanding of transportation policies, his entrepreneurial spirit always focusing on the needs of the County and wry sense of humor will be greatly missed.

7. City of Bishop Report

Nora Gamino provided the City of Bishop report. Work is continuing work on the East Line Street bridge replacement project which is a STIP funded project. The City is going through the environmental process right now. They are going to have an open house to increase public awareness and engagement on May 17th at 9:00 a.m. in City Hall. They will host a session for the public to hear about what the design alternatives are, and what the detour route might look like. As the Commission knows, it's the primary access point not only to the airport but also to a neighborhood in the community. So, detours are going to be very important. They'll also be conducting engagement with the public about incorporating art in that project to make it something that is welcoming, inviting, and it's kind of a gateway into the city because folks are coming in from the airport. We want them to know they're entering the city of Bishop. They will be sending out a flyer; that'll be an evening meeting. Another priority the City is working on is the Whitney Alley project. They have a grant from the California Natural Resource Agency to redesign green infrastructure improvements in Whitney Alley, and they are currently working on schematic designs for that, and we'll be hosting a couple of workshops probably sometime in June to talk about the different design options for that project. Now with that, they recognize that there is not enough money in that grant to actually put that project on the ground. It is severely underfunded. The project aligns perfectly with Clean California grant program goals. They're

preparing a grant application to Clean California to supplement that prop 68 funding and use those two together to put a project on the ground. That's really what the community needs in that area. Finally, the City is advertising for on-call engineering services RFQ right now. The idea is to get a couple of engineering firms on board under contract to easily tap into them to get some of the designs done. There is a severe backlog of street maintenance needs, and sidewalk maintenance. They need to have some capacity to tap into. The RFQ's are due on May 3.

Commissioner Muchovej asked if several other communities such as Johnston, the community near cemetery, and WMRC were going to be included in the mailing to gather public input about the East Line Street bridge and detour. Nora replied yes, she will work with GIS analyst for those parcel addresses.

Phil Moores asked Nora about the status of installing an EV charger at the City Park. He had had discussions with Deston Dishion previously and wanted to join in that effort. Nora replied that she will follow up with staff and talk with Phil offline.

8. ESTA Report

Phil Moores provided the ESTA report. He began by expressing sincere thanks to Commissioner Roeser for coming up to Aspendell to visit her constituents during the storms. He next shared a chart showing Dial-A-Ride ridership by route comparing years that included pre-Covid 2019 through 2023. The data revealed a huge rebound of transit services in Inyo County, 17% to 21% over pre-Covid. Overall ridership is down 22% but Inyo is doing so well. Reno route also doing well. Bishop ESTA building will begin design phase out of pocket. He may ask LTC for reserves, but it is worth the risk to move forward. Hoping for a resolution to the DWP Inyo lease issue. Commissioner Roeser shared that there has been significant progress. Commissioner Marcellin praised Phil & ESTA for managing to bounce back while the rest of the states and country are trying to figure out how to keep the transit system funded through FY23-24. Phil appreciated that sentiment and will extend those thoughts to his staff. He added that Karla Whisler, the Lone Pine Driver won employee of the quarter for her role in bringing that service back to where it is today.

9. Caltrans Report

Neil appreciated Catharine Crayne and Lana Morris, a big thank you to the great team! He next introduced Maggie Ritter. Maggie is on a temporary rotation as Senior Transportation Planner. She introduced herself, she is also a Bishop native, and her father is an avid user of ESTA's transit services. She is happy to be here and has lots of NEPA and CEQA experience. Neil continued that they are finalizing the hiring of an Environmental Geologist for the PID program. They are also in the process of hiring an Environmental Construction Manager. Caltrans staff will be attending the Big Pine Tribe's ATP scoping meeting on the 21st. He also plugged Big Pine in the Towns to Trails effort as another avenue to integrate projects, always looking for synergies, projects may or may not be synchronized. The earlier the better to be able to synchronize projects. Working on creating a position to facilitate repatriation of archeological collections to tribes. It's an AB 275 requirement, requires specialized cultural skillset. Earth Day at Bishop Paiute reservation. Complete Streets estimates for Fish Springs submitted and Bishop Raised Median project construction is underway. Schober two-way turn lane set to advertise. Seeking bids for 168 bike & ped project in Bishop. Caltrans coordinates actively with cities and counties and NV regarding storm damage, it's a continual effort. Staffing up in transportation & electrical engineering staff. Annual Worker's Memorial event being held today,

heartfelt love to all the people on the Caltrans team that have been lost. The memorial dates back to 1914. Reminded everyone to be safe on the road. Thanks to Catharine for helping put these notes together. Commissioner Roeser asked to have Caltrans coordinate with Mule Days staff regarding the difficulties the raised median project will likely have on the mule trains in the annual parade, in regard to making the turn, pedestrian safety measures, etc.

10. Tribal Report

None

11. DVNP Report

None

12. USFS Report

None

13. Executive Director's Report

Mike Errante zoomed in from Shoshone. He pulled up the most recent project map highlighting major projects for Public Works. A lot of storm damage activity. Preparing for run-off as well. Lower Rock Creek is repaired up to the grade. Now going out to bid for pavement. Whitney Portal had a major rockslide, which has been repaired. Big Pine channel needed repairs in advance of the run-off. Road Crews are working with DWP and Caltrans to mitigate the anticipated damage from run-off. State Line Road FLAP grant in the works. Kicking off design now, construction in 2028. Also, will talk to Caltrans about taking that section over as a State Hwy. Lone Pine ADA sidewalks. Thanks to Lana for helping us out with this. Have been funded through the CTC. Going out to bid later this spring. Construction late summer early fall. Lone Pine town streets, 18 road miles. Construction is scheduled to be funded in 2027-28. North Round Valley Bridge had some pilings delays over the past year, but sustained no damage from the latest storms. Engineered to meet the demand. Anticipate opening the Bridge in May with a ribbon cutting ceremony. County is working with City on East Line Bridge. Looking forward to the open house on the 17th. HSIP grant in Tecopa, and Tecopa ATP opportunities forthcoming as well. Commissioner Muchovej brought up the Buttermilk Road. Any idea what the plans are for improving the road? Mike replied he is working with the USFS to determine the best type of material to use. Will know more in a few weeks. Commissioner Muchovej brought up the waterfall crossing Silver Canyon Road. Mike will reach out to Shannon. It is amazing how many of these roads have been damaged and flooded. Thanks for the info. Communities are the highest priority.

14. Reports from all members of the Inyo County LTC

Commissioner Muchovej simply reported that he has been running a lot lately on all of the dirt roads, and they are in really bad condition.

Commissioner Roeser reported that the Inyo BOS attended the CSAC conference last week. She set up a meeting with the state senator. Raised the issue of the Tri-County MOU. CSAC advocate agreed this is an issue that needs to be fixed.

Chair Berg requested to have special workshops about the RTIP and RTP & MOU.

Commissioner Marcellin added that the Commission needs to be focused on AB 7, if passed it will gut funding for roads highways, and corridors to benefit mass transit. Not good for rural counties. Keep an eye on that one.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned until 9 a.m., Wednesday May 17, 2023, Bishop City Chambers

UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS

- 2023 Unmet Transit Needs adoption
- Adopt FY2023-2024 Overall Work Program
- Apportion FY2023-2024 LTF and STA allocations
- RSTP Exchange allocation
- RTP, RTIP and ATP project prioritization
- MOU and negotiations Inyo County LTC, Mono County LTC, and Kern Cog