



**INYO COUNTY
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

P.O. DRAWER Q
INDEPENDENCE, CA 93526
PHONE: (760) 878-0201
FAX: (760) 878-2001



Doug Wilson, Executive Director

MINUTES

INYO COUNTY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Inyo County Board of Supervisors' Chambers
224 N. Edwards Street, Independence, CA 93526**

April 17, 2013

9:00 a.m. Bob Kimball called the meeting to order.

ITEM NO. 1: Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Laura Smith – City of Bishop, Council Member
Matt Kingsley – County of Inyo, Board of Supervisors Member
Bob Kimball – City of Bishop, Member At-Large (Chair)
Rick Pucci – County of Inyo, Board of Supervisors Member
Jim Ellis – City of Bishop – Council Member

Others Present:

David Bloom, Caltrans
Cedrick Zemitis, Caltrans
Brad Mettam, Caltrans
John Helm, Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA)
Jill Batchelder, Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA)
Beth Himelhoch, IMAH
David Grah, City of Bishop Public Works
Courtney Smith, Inyo County
Denise Hayden, Inyo County
Jim Tatum, Inyo County

ITEM NO. 2: Public Comment – None

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM NO. 3: Approval of the February 20, 2013 Minutes: Moved by Laura Smith, seconded by Jim Ellis. Motion Carried 3–0-2. Rick Pucci and Matt Kingsley both abstained.

Approval of the March 20, 2013 Minutes: Moved by Matt Kingsley and seconded by Rick Pucci. Motion carried 5-0.

ITEM NO. 4: Conduct a Public Hearing to gather information on South County Unmet Transit Needs:

Commissioner Kimball: We are unable to fund and unmet needs at this time because no funds are currently allocated to local streets and roads but we do ask so that we keep the commission aware of the needs that might be out there.

Courtney Smith: There was Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) meeting held on February 22, 2013. This kicks off the yearly Unmet Transit Hearing process. It was brought up that the way the parking is laid out at the Northern Inyo Hospital Rural Health Clinic (RHC) prevents the ESTA bus drivers from being able to pull into the parking lot to drop off their passengers. There is not enough room for the bus to turn around so they currently have to drop off at the curb on Pioneer Lane.

No technical unmet transit needs were presented at this year's meeting.

There is a possibility in the next couple of years that the solar project at the south end of the County could substantially increase the taxable income received by Inyo County for several years. We are keeping an eye on that. It is currently off tract but if it comes back on it could possibly double the taxable income for the County and possibly double the Transportation Development Act Funds which are taken from a quarter percent of the County wide sales tax revenue.

Commissioner: How does the sales tax apply to an entity as a producer of electricity?

Courtney Smith: For the construction itself, the purchase of the construction gear needs to come from the County of origin. During the construction phase of approximately three years, this could cause a significant boost in the tax revenue...

Commissioner: ESTA in the past has been a big help in meeting some of these unmet needs by re-routing their schedules to accommodate those in need. The Inyo County Local Transportation Commission (LTC) appreciate that they are able to do that.

Jim Ellis: What is the problem with the parking with the RHC?

Courtney Smith: The buses are not able to turn around in the parking lot. They can only drive in when the lot is empty.

Jim Ellis: Question to Jill Batchelder; have you talked to Northern Inyo Hospital about this problem?

Jill Batchelder: Yes, she has been in contact with Pete Watercott to discuss the different options and Denise Hayden sits on the Northern Inyo Hospital Board of Directors and was able to offer some information. ESTA volunteered a bus to send over to assist RHC in measuring the needs for the bus to turn around.

Jim Ellis: Do the hospital employees park in this lot?

Denise Hayden: No, these parking spaces are being used by the patients of the clinics. Employees park behind the building and across the street at the hospital.

Jim Ellis: There just seems to be a lot of cars in that lot at all times. There are approximately 20 spots and they are full for the most part.

Denise Hayden: There are now 11 providers at the RHC and each one of them have a nurse (RN) or and LVN so they are able to see more patients than before. There is a possibility that the RHC is going to take over the Hospice building since Hospice moved in with the Pioneer Home Health Care office. RHC can not leave their current location without losing their “rural” status with regards to Medical/Medicare reimbursements. They are trying to figure out a way to connect the buildings. They have taken a Google aerial map to look at the possibility of moving the current mobile offices around RHC to be able to accommodate more parking and to enlarge the RHC. This would allow for the ESTA buses to be able to drive around behind the RHC for better access to drop off patients. Jill Batchelder has offered their buses and drivers to assist in any way that they can by bringing over buses to be able to measure with so that there they can plan for the required amount of space needed in the parking lots.

Open the hearing for the Unmet Transit Needs.

Beth Himelhoch: Thanks ESTA for being there for all of Inyo Mono Association for the Handicapped (IMAH)’s needs at all times. ESTA has been very responsive to the needs of IMAH.

Close public hearing for the Unmet Transit Needs.

Motion to accept the testimony of the Unmet Transit Needs. Moved by Laura Smith and seconded by Rich Pucci. Motion carried 5-0

ITEM NO. 5: Request Commission approves Resolution 2013-04 allocating \$15,998 in (Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA) funds to the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA) for a Bishop Facilities Improvement project.

Courtney Smith: ESTA had cost savings for their pressure washer and support vehicles projects that were previously allocated by your commission. There is now almost \$16,000 remaining between the two projects. We will need to reallocate these funds to close out the existing projects. ESTA is looking at some improvements at their headquarters at the Bishop Airport.

Bob Kimball is somewhat confused about ESTA's lease with the County and the Department of Water and Power (DWP) with regards to the property at the airport.

Courtney Smith: The County is discussing with DWP what activities ESTA will be able to conduct at the Airport Lease. The Airport lease is very specific that the activities need to be airport related. ESTA's presence at the airport has been accepted to date. All parties involved knew that ESTA provided a major part of the funds for the new airport terminal. They all know that ESTA has been around providing transportation to the airport. DWP approved the plans for the parking lot improvements. ESTA provided a letter to DWP to secure their ability to use the airport. DWP came back and said that the County is going to have to amend the lease. The last time that we amended the lease it took 10 years. We are going to try to revisit this matter with DWP so that ESTA will know how to proceed. The PTMISA grant funds are released over a 10 year period ending in 2015/2016. We need to resolve this at some point so that ESTA will know where to put in their improvements. They need some parking for their vehicles, an area for the maintenance of their vehicles, a covered area, and more office room. Hopefully we will be able to settle this so that ESTA will know how to proceed whether they need to look elsewhere for the space or if they can stay at the airport. There is some sense for keeping it at the airport.

Bob Kimball: Finding this type of property is going to be difficult if they (ESTA) will need to relocate. He doesn't know if there is property available. DWP might have some property available. The airport seems like the logical spot.

Matt Kingsley: How has ESTA's contribution to the terminal building been handled at the airport?

Courtney Smith: When the County first started looking at the improvements for ESTA at the airport using Prop. 1B funds, it was discovered that ESTA, and their predecessor Inyo-Mono Transit, had no formal agreement in place with the County. The County and ESTA entered into a lease agreement. The funds that were used for improvements were formulated and calculated over time and have been applied towards their rent. Those funds ran out last year and ESTA started paying rent on a monthly basis.

Jim Ellis: ESTA has put a lot of funds into the airport. Can funds from Prop 1B be moved to a new location if they need to move?

Courtney Smith: with the PTMISEA there was a purchase of some buses and then after that through the STIP, ESTA has a good stream of bus replacements coming in. Funds that we are working with today are from 2009/2010. The state is slow in releasing the funds because of bond sales - which is okay because we have been slow in using the funds. We are getting back logged where the large part of the funds we will be requesting will be at the end of the PTMISEA Prop 1B program cycle.

Jim Ellis: If ESTA has to leave the airport, do the funds have to stay there or can they be moved?

Courtney Smith: Some grants have a long life agreement. ESTA is not requesting the funds until they know where their headquarters will be.

Jim Ellis: Will their parking structure be able to move with them to the new location?

Courtney Smith: That is something we can look into, probably not. The fencing, lighting, and paving will not be practical to move. Other things such as a mobile pressure washer can be moved.

Motion to approve Resolution 2013-04 made by Matt Kingsley and seconded by Rick Pucci.

Motion carried 5-0

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM NO. 6: An introduction to the 2014 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and a review of interregional Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) on the State Highway system.

Courtney Smith gave an overview of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) process. The Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) is a list of proposed transportation projects submitted to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) by the Inyo County LTC for state funding. The RTIP has a 5-year timeframe and is updated every two years by the CTC. The RTIP includes projects identified by the Inyo County LTC that are submitted to the CTC to be a part of the STIP. The Inyo County LTC works cooperatively with the Caltrans District 9 Office and regional planning partners to identify capital projects for inclusion in the RTIP. The RTIP is the largest source of capital funding for transportation improvement projects in Inyo County.

STIP funds originate from the State Highway Account. The State Highway Account is divided where 25% goes to projects identified by Caltrans as part of the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program while the other 75% goes to projects identified by the Regional Transportation Planning Agencies and approved by the CTC. This funding is further subdivided with 60% going to the south half of the state and 40% going to the north half of the state (Inyo County LTC is considered to be in the south half). The STIP share is then calculated based on the Counties population (75%) and state highway mileage (25%). Other types of funds incorporated in the STIP include the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) and funding from bond measures.

This year's STIP will cover the five-year period from FY 2014-2015 to FY 2018-2019. Typically, new capacity or funding is mainly available in the latter years of the five-year cycle (2017-18 and 2018-19). The programming identified in the 2012 STIP is attached for the Commission's reference. Below is the standard timeline for the consideration of the STIP.

New funds identified in the STIP go into the later years of the funding cycle. The STIP fund estimate is released sometime in June or July. The fund estimate gives us an idea of the funds that will be available. The CTC adopts a fund estimate in August, Caltrans District 9 identifies State highway needs in September, Inyo County LTC submits the program of projects, the RTIP, in December and the State adopts the STIP in February 2014.

Brad Mettam spoke of corridor development and the MOUs: In 1998, SB 45 was passed that gave 75% of the control of the STIP to Regional Transportation Planning Agencies like the LTC. The other 25%, the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) is controlled by

the State. Inyo County LTC, Mono County LTC, Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG) and San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) have been working together to be able to leverage ITIP funds and have entered into MOUs that include a funding split of 40-40-10-10 where the County that hosts the project pays 40%, the others two Counties pay 10%, and the remaining 40% is derived from the state-controlled ITIP.

The Inyo County LTC receives on average about \$8 million per STIP cycle. This is not enough to fund major four-lane projects. The use of the ITIP funds has let the partner agencies to do more projects much more quickly than they could afford otherwise. The MOUs have enabled Caltrans to complete the Black Rock and Manzanar/Independence in Inyo County much more quickly than Inyo could have done by itself. The projects that are remaining are the Olancho-Cartago four lane project and the Freeman Gulch four lane project in Kern. The cost of the Freeman Gulch project has been split into three separate projects because of the high cost. The Inyokern four lane project on SR 14 is on hold because Kern has other needs.

The construction component of the Olancho-Cartago project is a large burden for the Inyo County LTC. When the construction component is programmed in the 2016 STIP cycle, it will put the Inyo County LTC in debt for four STIP funding cycles or eight years. The State allows over-funding if your project is ready. The project is currently in the environmental phase and funds are programmed to the project components through right-of-way acquisition. The goal is to get the project ready for construction. Based on past experience, there should be other sources available to deliver the project. Hopefully a funding opportunity such as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, a TIGER grant, or even unobligated federal funds available at the end of the State fiscal year. The Inyo County LTC will be in line for these extra funds once the project is ready for construction.

Statewide, there are 10 routes that are identified as focus routes. US 395 is one of these focus routes. In the last STIP cycle, ITIP funds were used on only five of the routes. The Inyo County would not be able to compete for these funds without the MOUs. To make the US 395/SR 14 corridor consistent, it needs 4 lanes with a median. Any smaller facilities (two lanes) result in head-on collisions because of the slower trucks versus the faster passenger cars trying to pass. The four-laning of the corridor helps businesses up and down the Eastern Sierra.

ITEM NO. 7: Receive an update from Caltrans on SANBAGs plans to improve US 395 between I-15 and SR 58

The Eastern California Transportation Planning Partnership (ECTPP) was formed to monitor and keep the MOU projects on track. As part of the 2002 STIP cycle, SANBAG, Kern COG, Inyo County LTC, and Mono County LTC entered into a MOU to fund the US 395 improvements between I-15 and SR-58. The formula for this MOU was different. SANBAG and the ITIP each contributed \$4 million and the other three entities contributed \$2 million for a total of \$14 million. A major part of the project was corridor preservation to realign US 395 in the southern end of the Victor Valley. Caltrans Districts 6, 8 and 9 are all involved in this project. Traffic in this area has grown rapidly. The three cities of Adelanto, Victorville, and Hesperia could not agree on the new alignment and the project struggled.

In the past several years, LA Metro has begun to actively pursue the High Desert Corridor between SR 14 in Lancaster/Palmdale and I-15 in the Victor Valley. SANBAG has now changed

their priority where they want to make US 395 a divided expressway that reaches the High Desert Corridor and then accesses I-15 by traveling easterly on the High Desert Corridor. The High Desert Corridor west of US 395 may be a toll road, though they are not planning to make the link between US 395 and I-15 part of the toll route. In the meantime, SANBAG is working on improving each of the signalized intersections along the existing alignment of US 395 in the Victor Valley.

On State Route 58, Kern COG is proceeding with a plan to four-lane the remaining stretches. The environmental document has a preferred alternative where the intersection of SR 58 and US 395 will move about a mile to the north.

Rick Pucci – He is amazed at what Caltrans has accomplished with the State highway since we are such a small area.

Laura Smith: - Appreciates the safety factor Caltrans has added to the highway. Having worked in the medical field and seeing the results of the accidents from the two lane highway, a four lane really helps.

Jim Ellis: Seeing actual improvements on the highway versus just resurfacing is a huge improvement.

Bob Kimball: Has Caltrans done a traffic count this year in Bishop?

Brad Mettam: In 2007, it was 17,000 vehicles daily in downtown Bishop. This has gone down a bit. Most vehicles are local (10,000). August is our peak month. There is a northbound peak over a wide period on Fridays and a focused peak for southbound traffic on Sundays (or Mondays of Holiday weekends) in the middle of the day.

Laura Smith: Are there seasonal changes in truck traffic?

Brad Mettam: During bad weather they cue up in Bishop and work with their companies to get re-routed to avoid the bad roads. Truckers typically get paid per route mileage, so they need to get permission before changing their route to US 6.

Laura Smith: Are there day versus night differences in truck traffic?

Brad Mettam: It's pretty close. The main thing that happens is the total percentage of trucks increases at night due to lower car numbers.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

ITEM NO. 8: ESTA Report, John Helm

The ESTA Board of Directors was presented with the good news that there will be a one-time pick up of funds from the 5311 allocation. Over the years these funds were not used. This would result in a one-time increase of \$50,000.

The Bishop Paiute Tribe was successful for the second year with a tribal grant program and \$140,000.00 for a year will go towards subsidizing transit to and from the reservation. ESTA was able to work out an agreement with the Tribe where the Tribe will be able to pay for Dial-A-Ride services as well as to purchase some bus passes for Tribal member and for Tribal members with special transportation needs.

The Bright Source program could bring in additional sales tax revenue that could help fund ESTA as well. Local Transportation Fund revenue has increase \$50,000 this year. State Transportation Assistance Revenue was down about \$40,000.00 for next year. Overall ESTA is doing well and did not have to go to Inyo or Mono Counties for a short term loan as they have had to do until this year. ESTA will be able to continue their existing services at their current level.

The new scheduling and dispatch software project is moving forward. They are working to get the project up and running. This should make their service more efficient and provide better up to date information to their passengers.

Bob Kimball: Are you still monitoring the routes that are questionable like Tecopa and Benton?

John Helm: We report to our board each month about the productivity of each route. We have made changes in the Tecopa route where we only go every two weeks instead of once a week. The ridership does change in the winter months when the population of Tecopa increases. ESTA discontinued the service to Charleston View because of no ridership. The route right now goes between Pahrump and Tecopa for shopping and medical appointments. This is a basic lifeline service. There was a route that went from Tecopa to Victorville but there were issues with low ridership and that route was discontinued several years ago.

Matt Kingsley: He is very concerned about losing the route in Tecopa. This is a lifeline for many people. These people use this route on a regular basis and he would hate to see it be taken away. Have you tried changing the times for the service?

John Helm: There are no plans to change the service at this time. There are regular riders. We have surveyed the riders to see what time works best.

Jim Ellis: Can the riders use a credit card on the bus?

John Helm: Yes, they must call the office to process the card. The level of usage of credit cards does not warrant the expense involved in processing credit cards on board each bus.

ITEM NO. 9: Tribal Report – No one present. /Brad Mettam did note that Bruce Kline from the tribe has retired so LTC staff should reach out more to them to encourage the Bishop Paiute Tribe to participate.

ITEM NO. 10: Caltrans Report, Cedrick Zemitis

Current projects:

Towne Pass Rockfall project should be done in May. This project will realign the roadway to avoid rock fall. Construction began 1/2/13 and should end soon. Project is on schedule.

Northbound Bartlett CAPM maintenance project is almost done with the design phase and will go into construction in summer of 2014. This project will perform a cold in-place capital preventative maintenance recycling of the existing pavement from 0.7 miles south of Cottonwood Road to 0.4 miles south of Lubkin Canyon Road.

Olancha/Cartago Four Lane: The environmental studies should be done January 2014. Mid to late fall 2014 we should have some draft reports that can be sent to LTC for review. This project is the last four lane project in Inyo County. The preferred alignment has been chosen. Design and right-of-way should be complete in 2016. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2017.

Inyo-Mono Bridge Transition Rail is in the environmental stage right now. This project will upgrade the barrier approach rail in 26 locations throughout Inyo and Mono Counties. Environmental should be complete November 2013 with construction to begin in 2016.

Haiwee Clear Recovery Zone – This project is in the environmental stage. This project will widen the outside shoulder to 10 feet, flatten side slopes, install rumble strip, and remove boulders from the clear recovery zone. Environmental complete May 2013, construction in 2015.

168 Sidewalks – This project proposes to construct sidewalks from Barlow Lane to 0.2 miles west of Pioneer Lane on the north side of State Route 168. In the environmental stage right now, construction should begin in 2015.

Pearls Dip Curve Realignment – this is on State Route 190, this project proposes to realign and make drainage improvements near Townes Pass about 5.4 miles west of Wild Rose Road.

See Vee Lane signals – In the environmental stage right now. This project proposes signaling US 395 and SR168 at the north and south intersections with See Vee Lane.

Towne Pass Curve Corrections – Feasibility Study has been complete. This project would straighten curves to the east of Towne Pass summit. This is a very sharp curve that has a high rate of accidents. Project is not programmed yet.

Shoshone CAPM – This is a pavement rehabilitation project on SR 127. This is currently in the feasibility study progress.

Amargosa Culverts – In the feasibility study stage. This project will replace/upgrade culverts. This will prevent flooding of the road during heavy rain periods on SR 127 and SR 178.

Bishop ADA Compliance – Feasibility study is complete, though the project is not funded yet. This project would make numerous ADA upgrade along US 395 and SR 168 in Bishop. Many sidewalks are too narrow or have poles in the way. This project will fix these problem areas.

Laura Smith – Will bikes be on the street on the SR 168 project?

Yes on the street, no on the sidewalks.

Matt Kingsley – If a project is in the environmental state does that mean they have received funding?

Yes, once headquarters decide, typically all the components of a project will be programmed in different at one time with the components spread out in different years.

Jim Ellis – Shared his concerns with the traffic at Pioneer Lane by the hospital. Brad Mettam interjected that Caltrans is investigating this part of West Line Street and will try and define a project to ease congestion.

ITEM NO. 11: City of Bishop Report, David Grah

Enjoyed the drive to Independence with the new four lanes. The Warren Street project looking for STIP funds for 2014. We are wrapping up the preliminary design for the project.

Wye Road intersection re-alignment project – they are getting ready to close escrow on it this week. Once escrow closes they will start relocating utilities which will take about six months. Once this is done, then construction will begin. Funds for this project came from K-mart and for the most part, from Caltrans District 9.

The Sneden Street project is in the Design phase. The City is working on the Seibu to School and Pine to Park Path transportation enhancement projects. Digital 395 – going well in Bishop – no problems. They will be pulling fiber in a couple of weeks.

ITEM NO. 12: Executive Director’s Report

Courtney Smith: The Public Works Department is taking a resolution to the board on May 7th to accept the detours put in place for various parades.

ITEM NO. 13: Report from all members of the Inyo County LTC

Rick Pucci – what is the status of the See Vee Lane extension project? Courtney Smith reported that the project is in the environmental phase. The project proposes to link in with the subdivisions and Mobilehome Park to the north. An important part of the environmental analysis will be the identification of and preliminary evaluation of alternative routes. The County will be working to pursue funding for the remaining project components when the environmental is complete and the project scope is better defined. The Caltrans project signaling the See Vee Lane intersection is a separate project that is being coordinated with the County project.

Jim Ellis: Had a meeting with Caltrans learned a lot about their perspectives and challenges.

Laura Smith – Fisher people are coming to town. Be patient, kind and friendly.

Matt Kingsley – He met with some of the representatives of the organizations in the different communities who are having trouble with the implementation of new requirements by Caltrans for their annual parades. An idea he would like to see forwarded is to have a “kit” that Caltrans could put together to be rented to the community organizations for a nominal fee of \$1.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

The next LTC meeting is going to be held on May 15, 2013, in the Bishop City Council Chambers at Bishop City Hall at 9:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Bob Kimball adjourned the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

Attest:

Doug Wilson
Executive Director

By Denise Hayden, Administrative Secretary