



**INYO COUNTY  
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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Clint Quilter, Executive Director

**MINUTES**

**INYO COUNTY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**Boulder Creek Resort  
2550 S. Highway 395, Lone Pine, CA 93545**

**July 17, 2013**

**9:02 a.m.** Bob Kimball called the meeting to order.

**ITEM NO. 1** Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Bob Kimball  
Doug Thompson  
Matt Kingsley  
Rick Pucci  
Keith Glidewell

Others Present:

David Bloom, Caltrans  
Tom Hallenbeck, Caltrans  
Ron Chegwidden, Caltrans  
Cedrick Zemitis, Caltrans  
Jill Batchelder, Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA)  
Troy & Susan Patton, Cartago Residents  
Carol Roster, Cartago Residents  
Courtney Smith, Inyo County  
Denise Hayden, Inyo County

**ITEM NO. 2:** Public Comment

None

## **ACTION ITEMS**

**ITEM NO. 3:** Secretary of the Local Transportation Commission – Request approval of the minutes of the meeting of June 19, 2013.

Motion: moved by Matt Kingsley, seconded by Doug Thompson, carried 4-0  
Rick Pucci abstained.

**ITEM NO. 4:** Request Commission approve a Notice of Intent letter to program the Olancho-Cartago Four-Lane project construction component as part of the Inyo County LTC 2014 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).

Courtney Smith stated that Caltrans has brought forward a proposal to program the construction component of the Olancho-Cartago 4-lane project as a part of the 2014 RTIP/State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) cycle. The goal of this item is to confirm the intent of the LTC to fund this project and to share that information with the funding partners at an upcoming meeting of the Eastern California Transportation Planning Partnership on July 26, 2013. Staff understands that individual Commission members have expressed concern with the preferred alternative identified by Caltrans. The LTC entered into a three party MOU to fund the Olancho-Cartago 4-lane project in 1999. The funding is split with the Inyo County LTC contributing 40% , Mono County LTC and Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG) each contributing 10%, and the State Interregional Improvement Program contributing 40%. Each of the partner agencies will consider approval of their RTIP in late November or early December. Each agency needs to know what projects will be brought forward for planning purposes.

The programming of Olancho-Cartago will have a big impact on all of the MOU parties. CTC staff released a revised fund estimate that shows more funding being available than was initially shown. For the Mono County LTC, their 10% share will require approximately \$12 million. Mono County has an un-programmed share balance of \$8.44 million. Combined with the \$6.2 million they will receive this cycle, they will be able to fund their share without borrowing from future years. Kern COG will also need to add \$12 million. Kern COG is slated to receive \$28.4 million. The remaining 40% of the project funding will come from the CTC controlled Interregional Improvement Program (IIP). There is estimated to be \$292 million available statewide. The Olancho-Cartago construction cost will require the use of approximately 16% of the state total.

The selection of the preferred alternative is ultimately the choice of Caltrans. Caltrans is conducting the environmental review of the project and received comments from the interested public on the project. The best opportunity to comment on the project was during the comment period for the draft environmental document.

Staff understands that individual Commission members have expressed concern with the preferred alternative identified by Caltrans. The primary role of the LTC is to

program funds for the project. The LTC could choose to not submit the proposed letter of intent and give other direction to staff. The LTC has worked for years to locate funding for this project. This is the last remaining section of two-lane highway along US 395 in Inyo County. A delay in funding the project now may create some uncertainty for the partner agencies. All of the MOU funding partners have been notified of the proposal to program the construction component of Olancho-Cartago. Until the LTC tackles the expense of the Olancho-Cartago project, it will be limited in its ability to program other projects.

Tom Hallenbeck: Caltrans is ready to fund this project two years earlier than planned which is amazing given the state of economy. This is a testament to the vision of the LTC to approve the MOU to fund this project. The State has recognized the importance of this project.

Matt Kingsley asked for clarification on the leveraging of State funds. Tom Hallenbeck replied that 40% of the project cost will come from interregional funds. The STIP is split where 75% of the funds are set aside for programming by Regional Transportation Planning Agencies like the LTC and 25% of the funds are placed in a competitive interregional pot.

Matt Kingsley asked what the current status is for the environmental document. Tom Hallenbeck replied that the 2010 draft environmental document was released for public review and numerous comments were received. Caltrans is doing additional studies to comply with State and Federal law before releasing the final environmental document. Caltrans is responding to every comment received on the draft. The final document will be final in January of 2014. Cost estimates for this project have been refined and are now lower than earlier estimates. BLM is opening up property for the contractor to be able to use a local aggregate source for raw materials and asphalt. Programming the project will bring the project forward to a point where Caltrans will seek other funding for the project to reduce the burden on the Inyo County LTC and partnering agencies. Once the project is shovel ready, Caltrans will apply for grant programs such as TIGER grants and through one time opportunities for funding such as the State needing to meet its goals to obligate federal funds.

Bob Kimball asked about the connection of the preferred alternative to SR 190 and also if a relinquishment agreement was in place. Tom Hallenbeck replied that the southern part of the current US 395 alignment will become SR 190. The relinquishment agreement will be entered into with the County. An agreement will be entered into that insures the roadway will be in a state of good repair.

Matt Kingsley asked if the alignment has been finalized and if all current properties that are impacted by the bypass will have access to their properties. Tom Hallenbeck mentioned that there is currently some uncertainty as to which parcels will be impacted. Once the project goes further into the design stage, this information will be clarified.

Troy Patton, Cartago resident (former construction worker on the I-5 Freeway and the 91 Freeway projects) asked Caltrans where the four-lane highway is going to go. He was upset that Caltrans is asking for money yet the property owners can't be told where the project is going. He requested the Commission to not fund the project.

Susan Patton asked where the road comes back in on the north side of the bypass, will the existing highway become a frontage road? Tom Hallenbeck answered yes, through the honey warehouse. For residents of West Lake Street, how will they access the highway?

Caltrans indicated that there will only be one cross over in to the east side of the highway. Current highway will be a frontage road and the new four-lane will be on the west side of the current highway.

Carol Roster, Cartago resident asked how wide is the new highway going to be? Ron Chegwiddden indicated that, including the clear zones, it would be 350' wide. Access will be restored to parcels that now have access to the highway.

Susan Patton asked if people living on Mt. Whitney Street will have a turning refuge. Ron Chegwiddden replied that you can't have two crossovers too close to each other and that there probably will be a connection via Lake Street. Several properties north of Lake Street will have takings.

Susan Patton asked what a viable parcel is for a taking. Ron Chegwiddden replied this is a negotiation with the State and properties with unusable remainders will be compensated.

Tom Hallenbeck stated that Caltrans is unable to accept comments at this time because of the current project status. Matt Kingsley asked Caltrans what is the best way for the public to get questions answered. Tom replied that the best way is to contact the Project Manager, Cedrik Zemitis.

Caltrans will return to the LTC after January when the environmental report is complete. More questions can be answered at that time. There is going to be a final 30 or 45 day comment period for the public forthcoming

Each Commissioner spoke about where they were with the project. There was a general agreement that something needs to be done on this stretch of US 395. Matt Kingsley said confusion remains as to what properties will be affected by the new highway. He suggested that Caltrans should provide information needs to the property owners at the earliest possible time so that they are aware of how their property is involved.

Motion to approve the Letter of Intent made by Bob Kimball and seconded by Rick Pucci with the discussion that the property owners get the necessary information regarding how their property will be affected. Motion carried 5-0.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

#### **ITEM NO. 5: ESTA Report**

Jill Batchelder –FY 2012-2013 Operations Report

The Eastern Sierra Transit Authority provided 68,957 passenger trips in Inyo County during FY 2012/13. The passenger trips per hour are 3.7, which is down slightly from 3.9 that it was for the previous fiscal year.

The Eastern Sierra Transit received \$330,228.05 in passenger fares during FY 2012/13. The average passenger fare was \$4.79. Eastern Sierra Transit's unaudited aggregate cost per hour of service during this period was \$66.84. This translates to an overall farebox ratio of 26.52%. A more detailed farebox analysis will be presented at the next LTC meeting utilizing actual route costs.

ESTA experienced a 7% decline in ridership compared to the previous fiscal year. The majority of the decrease was in the Bishop Dial-A-Ride and Nite Rider routes. It is speculated that the fare increases are still having an impact on ridership, along with the loss of several passengers who rode frequently has contributed to the decline in ridership.

During FY 2012/13 Eastern Sierra Transit changed the process in which the passengers on the Mammoth Express, Lone Pine to Bishop and the 395 Routes were tallied to more accurately reflect the ridership to tie each route with grant funding sources. Because of this change the loss in ridership on the Mammoth Express is overly exaggerated. The overall loss between the four routes is 207 passengers.

The efficiency standard used by Eastern Sierra Transit is passenger per hour. The largest declines were seen by the Bishop Dial-A-Ride and Nite Rider routes, adjustments are continuously being made to be as efficient as possible. When the Bishop Dial-A-Ride and Nite Rider are excluded the overall efficiency had increased by 3%.

The summer hikers have increased these numbers by 190 trips. Mammoth Express and the Reno to Lancaster routes are also up.

#### **ITEM NO. 6: Tribal Report**

None

#### **ITEM NO. 7: Caltrans Report**

It is the height of the summer construction season. Please slow for the cone zone. Be aware of the construction on the highway and slow down. The High Point project, at

Topaz, has finally been moved to the permanent new alignment. One employee is still working and this project is coming to an end.

**ITEM NO. 8:** City of Bishop Report

None - Dave Grah was not able to attend today's meeting.

**ITEM NO. 9:** Executive Director's Report

Courtney Smith announced that the new Executive Director for the LTC, Clint Quilter will be in attendance at the August LTC meeting.

**ITEM NO. 10:** Reports from all members of the Inyo County LTC

City of Bishop is continuing to work on the Wye road expansion. Warren Street is moving forward.

Matt Kingsley – reemphasized the importance that the Olancha-Cartago four lane project needs to move forward.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

The next LTC meeting is going to be held on August 21, 2013 in the Bishop City Counsel Chambers.

Bob Kimball adjourned the meeting at 10:00 AM

Attest:

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Clint Quilter  
Executive Director

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By Denise Hayden, Secretary