



INYO COUNTY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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Clint Quilter, Executive Director

MINUTES

INYO COUNTY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Bishop City Council Chambers
377 W. Line Street
Bishop, CA 93514**

August 16, 2017

9:02 a.m. Pat Gardner called the meeting to order.

ITEM NO. 1 Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Bob Kimball

Doug Thompson

Rick Pucci (excused himself at 9:48 a.m. at the end of item #7)

Dan Totheroh

Pat Gardner

Others present:

Brent Greene, Caltrans

Mark Heckman, Caltrans

Jill Batchelder, ESTA

Dave Grah, City of Bishop

Tim Noyes, California Highway Patrol

Dan Anderson, Cambridge Systematics

Peter Bernasconi, Bishop Paiute Tribe

Joan Stathem, ESTA rider

Denise Hayden, Secretary

Courtney Smith, Staff

ITEM NO. 2 Public Comment

None

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM NO. 3 Secretary of the Local Transportation Commission – Requests approval of the minutes of the meeting of June 21, 2017.

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Rick Pucci and seconded by Commissioner Bob Kimball. Motion passed 4-1 with Commissioner Dan Tothoroh abstaining.

ITEM NO. 4 Request Commission approve a letter in support of the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority FTA Section 5339(b) competitive grant application to construct their operations and administrative headquarters at the Bishop Airport.

Courtney Smith noted that yesterday the Inyo County Board of Supervisors passed a similar letter in support for ESTA proposed operational & administrative headquarters at the Bishop Airport. The letter of support details that the proposed headquarters is consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan. The proposed headquarters will be next to the recently completed parking facility. This is a very competitive grant program. Last time, only about 21.5% of grant application were successful. An important qualifying factor is that the applicant is able to meet the match requirement. LTC staff sent a letter to ESTA detailing PTMISEA and State Transit Assistance funds that are eligible to be used as state matching funds for the grant. The goal was to prove that ESTA has the 20% matching funds for the grant on hand. Jill Batchelder added that the ESTA Board approved the use of these funds for 20% match.

Motion to approve a letter in support of ESTA was made by Commissioner Rick Pucci and seconded by Commissioner Dan Tothoroh. Motion passed 5-0

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM NO. 5 A workshop on the Eastern Sierra Freight Study by Cambridge Systematics.

Mark Heckman introduced Dan Anderson with Cambridge Systematics who is working on the freight study in the Eastern Sierra Corridor. Mark noted that a goods movement study was done in 2006 and there have been a lot of changes since then. Caltrans has heard from a lot of entities about the concerns of freight moving through our area. In 2015, District 9 applied for a grant to study these freight issues within the district. In 2016/2017, District 9 put together the scope of work and selected a contractor (Cambridge Systematics) to do a three year study. This study will be completed March 2019. The study includes US 395; US 6; SR 14; and SR 58.

The study vision is to promote freight infrastructure and policies that support the local economy and quality of life, while preserving the natural heritage of the Eastern Sierra. The

main focus is on freight and what the impact will be on the local community as well as the economic benefits of freight movement in the Eastern Sierra. An Eastern Sierra Working Group will meet quarterly. This stakeholder group consists of Inyo County LTC, Mono County LTC, Nevada DOT, Kern Council of Governments, San Bernardino County Transportation Authority, Caltrans District 8, and Caltrans District 9.

Issues studied inside the corridor include: the economic activity centers generating truck trips, tourism, retail, agricultural, and mining operations. The study will also look outside the corridor at truck-related facilities that impact the Eastern Sierra including the Central Valley, World Logistics Center in Southern California, and the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center. Additional identification of issues include: truck traffic on highways which also serve as Main Street, need for additional truck parking due to highway closures, trucks parked in undesirable locations (residential areas), and also the possible economic boost that would result from new/expanded truck stops.

Brent Green added to this presentation by stating that we need this information for future project selection with two lane roads and narrow shoulders. Cambridge has also done a lot of work in Reno so that is valuable to us as well. The California Transportation Commission has placed an emphasis on funding projects that are located in trade corridors and move freight. We want to get as much freight funding as possible and this report will be beneficial for this purpose.

Dan Anderson showed his Power Point presentation to the Commissioners and then opened a brief question and answer period to the Commissioners and public that was in attendance.

ITEM NO. 6 An introduction to the 2018 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Courtney Smith noted that the Commissioners are being asked to:

1. Receive an introduction to the 2018 STIP
2. Provide direction on priorities for the development of the 2018 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).

The RTIP or STIP, at its core, specified project cost amounts by project components and the fiscal year in which funds are available for a project. The STIP is updated every two years and covers a five-year funding period. The 2018 STIP will cover the five years between FY 2018-2019 through FY 2022-2023.

The LTC will consider approval of the RTIP at a meeting later this fall and submit the RTIP to the CTC by December 15, 2017. The CTC is scheduled to approve each county's RTIP on March 22, 2018, at which point the Inyo RTIP becomes part of the STIP.

2018 STIP Funding Considerations

The 2018 STIP Fund Estimate indicated that there is \$1.319 million base share available to the Inyo County LTC through FY 2019-2020 and then \$12.321 million available as a target share through FY 2022-2023. The maximum can be waived since Inyo County LTC is an area with less than a population of 100,000 people.

The purpose of the MOUs is to leverage state controlled IIP funding to be used in the US395/SR14 corridor. In 2013, the three MOU partners (Inyo, Mono, & Kern) entered into a consolidated MOU.

Caltrans District 9 has submitted their list of projects for ITIP funding. Caltrans District 9 staff has indicated that Olancho-Cartago is the number one priority of these three projects since the construction component was deprogrammed in the 2016 STIP. The draft 2018 ITIP will be released for public review and comment in October. Caltrans District 9 has proposed that the construction components of Olancho-Cartago, Freeman Gulch Segment 2, and Freeman Gulch Segment 3 be programmed in the 2018 STIP. If this were the case, the CTC would program a total of \$29.253 million for the Inyo LTC share alone. It is unclear at this point what the likelihood of Caltrans Programming and/or the CTC to choose to program these three projects.

The revised 2016 STIP heavily impacted all of the MOU projects in the STIP and retracted all Interregional funding from that fund cycle. The deprogramming of Olancho-Cartago moved the LTC reserve balance from approximately -\$20 million to a large positive number. In partnership with Mono County LTC, the LTC moved a substantial amount of funding so that the Freeman Gulch Segment 1 construction component could move forward.

The LTC programmed the construction component of the Olancho-Cartago four-lane project as part of its 2014 RTIP. This project was defunded in the 2016 STIP based on a shortfall of funding. Caltrans District 9 proposes to program the construction component in the 2018 RTIP/STIP. The total construction cost is \$92.95 million.

The reason this project does not include the customary 40%, 40%, 10%, & 10% split is because of the funding for Freeman Gulch Segment 1 in the 2016 STIP. With the Olancho-Cartago project, the Inyo County LTC is paying less than its share because of its overpayment to Freeman Gulch Segment 1 in the 2016 STIP. The extra funding would come from the IIP and possibly from Kern COG.

Inyo County and the City of Bishop have had no new local STIP projects since the 2006 STIP augmentation (both agencies had new projects – however they each had to deprogram another project to bring forward the new project). The County South Lake Road Federal Lands Access Program grant match was not programmed in the 2016 STIP cycle. It should be noted that a project initiation document is required to be submitted with any new project proposed for programming. It is recommended that each agency be prepared to bring forth the preliminary components of a new project in this STIP cycle, though it is unclear if these projects will be funded given the needs of the MOU projects on the State Highway system.

There will be a slight reduction in Planning, Programming, and Monitoring (PPM) funds due to the reduction in total cost of the STIP during the last cycle. The funds will be split evenly over the five year period.

It is recommended that the ICLTC move forward with the following priorities in the development of the 2018 RTIP.

- 1) Program, or setting aside RIP funds, for MOU projects on the State Highway System (The program strategies will be dependent on the Capacity of the Caltrans Programming Office and MOU partners to bring these projects forward); and
- 2) Program local projects that leverage federal funding; and
- 3) Program the preliminary components for new local projects.

Brent Green gave Courtney Smith praise for the report. Last year there was no money and this year this is money through SB 1. SB 1 was primarily designed to repair/maintain roads. If you look at STIP itself now, there are not a lot of STIP projects going on right now. Caltrans headquarters has let District 9 know that they are very supportive of these MOU projects. The CTC town hall meeting in Mammoth is a great opportunity for the LTC to promote these projects. The Inyo County LTC stepped up massively and without their help Freeman Gulch would not be happening right now. The state respects this commitment to the MOU projects. Brent encouraged all of the Commissioners to attend the Mammoth Lakes town hall CTC meeting.

Doug Thompson added that he wasn't sure about the LTC funding so much of the Freeman Gulch project but it looks like it will turn out okay. He agrees the truck study will help to make it all a four lane project. We can't look at Mono and Inyo Counties as being separate; we are all now one unit. Hopefully this year we can move these projects forward.

Dave Grah also added that the City does not have the revenue streams available to accomplish these projects and so he appreciates the LTC and all of the work that they have done to move forward City of Bishop road projects.

ITEM NO. 7 Request Commission review and comment on a PowerPoint presentation highlighting regional transportation issues to be presented to the September California Transportation Commission Town Hall meeting in Mammoth Lakes.

Courtney Smith showed the PowerPoint presentation that may be presented to the CTC in Mammoth Lakes at the September town hall meeting. Slides in the presentation show the recreational opportunities in Inyo County, set some background on the limited amount of private land in the County, and highlighted area transportation issues.

Courtney asked which of the Commissioners plan to attend the CTC town hall meeting. Pat Gardner is planning on attending the CTC meeting as well as Doug Thompson.

Brent Green commented that the CTC does these meetings twice a year to reach out to rural communities. They need to educate themselves on the rural issues. The Commission will be in the audience during this presentation on September 13th and 14th. It is not necessarily a public meeting but you will be speaking to the CTC commission. The day before the Mono LTC will be doing a dry run of their presentation to the CTC. Brent Encouraged Courtney to attend Mono County's LTC to get a feel for what they are going to present. SB 1 might be

challenged at the election in 2018. At some point during the presentation, we need to acknowledge the support that they have given our area. They are being barraged by SB 1 and they just want to make sure that the money being provided will be used properly.

Doug Thompson stated that the El Camino Sierra is a good concept but he also added that the Three Flags concept is important as well because it connects the United States, Canada and Mexico.

***ITEM NO. 2: Public Comment (reopened)**

Commissioner Pat Gardner acknowledged Joan Statham as she arrived at the meeting (she was late due to the schedule of the ESTA bus) and missed the opening public comment portion of the meeting. Pat asked Joan if she would like to speak. Joan Statham stated that she had no public comments today.

Bob Kimball asked if this meeting should be adjourned at this time and continued at the September 13th meeting. Courtney said that we can close this meeting after the completion of the agenda. Staff will be in touch with each of the LTC Commissioners prior to the CTC meeting on September 13th and 14th and will notice the CTC meeting if necessary.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

ITEM NO. 8 ESTA Report

Jill Batchelder thanked the Commission for their letter of support for their grant application for a new facility.

The quarterly report for April – June 2017 shows 18,856 passenger trips through Inyo County. ESTA brought in over \$98,000.00 in farebox revenues with an average of 3.56 passengers per hour. All of the ridership stats are up over the previous year. Some of the rural routes are not reaching the ridership standards. One of the lowest is the Lone Pine Express. Hikers are not coming out like they normally do. Bishop Creek Shuttle has been a little disappointing. This was not a good year to start this because of the big snowpack and slowly opening high country. They have had up to about 30 riders on the biggest day and that was bolstered by a youth group camp. Otherwise there have been approximately 3 riders per day up and back.

The US 395 routes have gone to 5 days a week starting in July. The ridership is good for the two new days that they started.

Dan Tothoroh mentioned that he thought that would be a difficult crowd (the hikers) to try to attract. Jill explained the different advertising avenues that they are using.

Doug Thompson said that the majority of the hikers went to Oregon and are now returning to our area to the south. Those that went to Oregon left out of Kennedy Meadows and bypassed the Owens Valley towns.

Reds Meadows will be tapering back down with school starting.

Doug Thompson mentioned that the LA times did articles on the camping and hiking in the Eastern Sierra and then the following week did an article on all of the flooding. Inyo County needs to do more to advertise our area. We just don't market ourselves very well and it costs us in the long run.

Pat Gardner mentioned that Bishop Chamber has stepped up to advertise but they were not funded like Mono County was.

ITEM NO. 9 Tribal Report

Peter Bernasconi reported that Bishop Reservation staff met last week with County staff about the Pa Me Lane road rehabilitation project. Pa Me was left out of the last big Bishop Reservation project. Bishop Reservation staff is pursuing funding to purchase vouchers for for the kids and elders to ride the ESTA bus.

The Bishop Tribe is working on a Travel Transportation Safety Plan. Improvements that have been identified so far include street lights at intersections and improving roadside walkways so that there is a place to walk. The Bishop Tribe is working with the County Road Department.

CHP has been giving tickets on Brockman Lane and Diaz Lane and it has been very effective. Google maps now routes you through Brockman Lane for a quicker route north and south through the Bishop area. Hopefully CHP's efforts will help reduce speeds on these roads.

ITEM NO. 10 Caltrans Report

Brent Green noted that the Bishop ADA project is set to begin in the Fall. District 9 staff will be coming back to the commission with a report on what to anticipate from this project. We will know a lot more on construction specifics than has previously been presented.

ITEM NO. 11 City of Bishop Report

Dave Grah said the City of Bishop is continuing to work on projects that have been funded through the LTC including the Seibu to School path and the Spruce-Yaney-Hanby sidewalk project. The City is looking forward to SB 1 funding which will allow for some much needed work on the City streets. City of Bishop staff is working with LADWP on some right of way and park lease issues.

ITEM NO. 12 Executive Director's Report

Courtney Smith started by detailing how Assembly Bill (AB) 1113 requires each transportation planning agency to report to the State Controller's Office transit operators under its jurisdiction that are eligible to claim local transportation funds under either Article 4 of Article 8 of the TDA for the purposes of the State Transit Assistance program, during fiscal year 2015-16. ESTA is the only transit entity in Inyo County that meets this qualification. Clint signed the Certification on behalf of the LTC and the letter was forwarded to the State Controller's Office.

Courtney then gave a quick County project update. For the West Bishop Resurfacing STIP project, the CTC allocated construction funds in March. Construction was delayed because of high water table. The County is working with the contractor to start construction in early September. For the South Lake Federal Lands Access Program grant, the FHWA is in the Design phase. The County still needs to identify matching funds before the project can go to construction. For the Dehy Park Improvement Project, Saltbrush was planted for mitigation and a Notice of Completion was filed last week. The South County Striping & Rumble strips project is in the design phase. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2018. County staff is investigating issues related to narrow road width.

Post construction monitoring and mitigation is ongoing for the Sabrina Road at Bishop Creek Bridge project. On the Bell Access Road ridge, the Board approved a "No Build" alternative for the project due to the estimated level and cost of cultural and biological studies and mitigations required for this project. Staff will de-obligate the project from the Federal Highway Bridge Program. The two LA aqueduct bridge projects near Olancha are in the environmental phase. The County is working to develop a scope for a Bridge Preventive Maintenance Program.

For the Whitney Portal Rockslide and the Horseshoe Meadows Road erosion damage, the emergency opening projects are complete and the County is in the design phase for permanent restoration of both roadways. For the North Round Valley Road bridge failure project, staff has submitted fund requests (Damage Assessment Forms (DAF) to OES and Caltrans. Staff is in process of finalizing DAF paperwork for the Owens Valley Road erosion project. Finally, for the Mazourka Canyon Road saturation roadbed failure, staff is requesting funding from California Department of Emergency Services (OES).

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

No comments were made by the Commission members.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at: 10:19 a.m.

Attest:

Clint Quilter
Executive Director

By: Denise Hayden, Secretary