



**INYO COUNTY  
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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Clint Quilter, Executive Director

**MINUTES**

**INYO COUNTY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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

**October 16, 2013**

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

**ITEM NO. 1** Roll Call

**Commissioners Present:**

Bob Kimball  
Doug Thompson  
Matt Kingsley  
Rick Pucci (arrived at item 5)  
Laura Smith

**Others Present:**

David Bloom, Caltrans  
Tom Hallenbeck, Caltrans  
Ryan Dermody, Caltrans  
Jill Batchelder, Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA)  
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 August 21, 2013.

Motion: moved by Laura Smith, seconded by Matt Kingsley, carried 4-0-2

**ITEM NO. 4:** Request Commission approve Resolution No. 2013-14, a resolution 1) authorizing the submittal of a Transit Security Grant application for Automated Security Gates and allocating \$7,759 to the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority and 2) authorize the Executive Director to complete related documents.

Courtney Smith stated that ESTA has not requested additional transit security funds since the security lighting and fencing project at the Bishop Airport. The reason for that is the uncertainty of their lease agreement at the Bishop Airport. The CAO and Deputy Director met with ESTA Staff, John Helm and came to an agreement on how to proceed with the Airport. ESTA will provide the County with an overall plan for their future improvements. In the meantime there are the Transit Security Grant funds from 2011/2012 that are unexpended and if we don't expend them we will lose them so ESTA chose a project with the existing gates at the parking area for the fleet and to install some automated gates. So the Commission is being asked to approve \$7,759 of the Transit Security Grant funds to ESTA to complete the security gates and to have the Executive Director complete any necessary documents.

Laura Smith asked if there had ever been a security problem at the Airport. Courtney explained that there had been a problem back when the gas prices first went up to \$4.00 and there was some syphoning from an ESTA vehicle. Laura Smith asked if there was any security at the Airport at night. The only security that is there is from the employees working during the day.

Courtney Smith said the grant funds are out there and the LTC is allocated about \$15,000 per year and we have only used half of these funds from the 2011/2012 allotment so we are still eligible to use the balance of these funds.

Bob Kimball asked if ESTA was looking for additional lands available for their operation. Courtney explained that they are looking to expand and finalize their current location at the Bishop Airport by adding a class room and also a covered area for light maintenance of their vehicles.

Motion to approve Resolution No. 2013-14 made by Matt Kingsley and seconded by Laura Smith. Motion carried 4-0-2

**ITEM NO. 5:** Request commission approve 1) a revised and consolidated three county MOU between Inyo County Local Transportation Commission (LTC), Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG), and the Mono County Local Transportation Commission, 2) authorize the execution of the MOU by the Chair and the Executive Director, and 3)

authorize the Executive Director to approve any minor technical amendments set forth by other parties to the MOU.

The past years, in the late 90's, there was a flurry of MOU's between Inyo, Mono, Kern Counties to be able to access 40% of the funds from the inter-regional pot. Since that time there have been some changes to the MOU projects that have not been shown in the MOUs. This MOU proposes to consolidate the two previous three-county MOUs and incorporate the following points. The North Mojave project and the High Point Curve projects are deleted as these projects have now been completed. The North Mojave project was funded with the MOU funding split and the High Point Curve project was funded through the Highway Safety Program. The Freeman Gulch Project has been split into three segments to reduce the impact of the project cost to the MOU partners. Kern wasn't able to do that project at once though they were able to split it into three sections. The MOU will also update the funding picture through an attachment that shows the funding contributed by each party to date. The two existing MOUs are added for reference. Additionally the Olancha/Cartago and Freeman Gulch projects were only shown in the initial MOU as being programmed through the environmental phase. Since then all parties have acted, including the State, to fund further components of those two projects. The MOU will show these two projects as having been completed through construction which shows the intent of the parties as based on their actions the last couple of STIP cycles. Since the High Point Curve correction has been dropped by Mono County, Mono has not really received a significant share of the funding. They did receive some funding as a preliminary component of the High Point Curve project. They are not really sure what they want to do for their next project. There is a possibility that they will do some work on State Route 120 which would not be eligible to receive the interregional funds but for Mono it might be enough to receive the funds from Kern and Inyo. Most recently Mono is looking at a themed look on SR 120 as the entrance into Yosemite but they have not selected this project. It is now noted in the MOU that the Mono County project is to be determined. Kern Council of Governments has reviewed and approved the MOU and it is being passed around for all to approve.

Tom Hallenbeck from Caltrans explained that this is the future way that funds will be received from the State. There is one more project to be done to make US 395 four-lane all the way through Inyo County and that is the Olancha/Cartago four lane project.

Motion to approve a revised and consolidated three county MOU made by Doug Thompson and seconded by Laura Smith. Motion carried 5-0-1

**ITEM NO. 6:** Request commission approve 1) the submittal of the 2014 RTIP to the California Transportation Commission (CTC), 2) authorize the submittal of an alternative RTIP in the event that the Olancha-Cartago four-lane project construction component is not programmed in this cycle, and 3) authorize the Executive Director to sign documents related to the submittal of the RTIP and to make any technical changes to the RTIP in response to input from City, County and/or State staff.

The RTIP is basically specifies cost amount by project components by fiscal years. It covers a five year cycle which is updated every two years. This cycle goes from fiscal year 2014/2015 through 2018/2019. New funds are generally only available the last two years of the funding cycle. The LTC has until December 15<sup>th</sup> to approve the RTIP. Staff is bringing it forward a little bit early this year so that the others MOU partners can see that the Inyo LTC has acted with respect to Olancha/Cartago project. The following basic principles were used to develop the 2014 RTIP, one is to program funds towards MOU projects, namely Olancha/Cartago; two is to complete local street and road programs in prior STIP cycles, including TE projects. In this instance, just in case Olancha/Cartago falls out of the STIP cycle we have an alternative RTIP scenario that LTC staff is proposing to present later to the CTC only in the event that it was clear the Olancha/Cartago would be falling out of this cycle. The likelihood of that happening is very small because of CTC staff's commitment to program Olancha/Cartago as well as the MOU partner's intent to program the project. We have set aside \$9.8 million from previous cycles for the construction component of Olancha/Cartago. In this STIP cycle, the LTC is getting approximately \$8.3 million in new shares. At this point it does not look like we will be able to program additional funds to Freeman Gulch. The state has been moving with an expedited schedule with segment two. There would be some cost savings in constructing Segments 1 and 2 at the same time, but the funds just aren't there for the partners at this time. There is a slight possibility because of the over expenditure of the Kern and Inyo RTIP's in this cycle that Olancha/Cartago will fall out. We are asking that the Commission approve an alternative scenario in this event.

In the first and most likely scenario, the LTC will program the construction component of Olancha/Cartago. LTC staff is also proposing to program the construction components of existing TE projects. With the existing TE projects, the County, the City and Caltrans have reached a little bit of a funding quandary since these projects will not be eligible to receive TE funds as part of the STIP. Map 21 Alternative Transportation Program funds will be allocated in the future on a competitive basis. The STIP guidelines read that local agencies may continue to fund existing TE projects that are eligible for Map 21 using State Highway Account or RIP funds. At first we thought that the TE projects were not going to be funded because of the negative share balance created by the funding of the construction component for Olancha-Cartago. In discussing this with State programming staff, there is an understanding that existing TE projects need to be completed. The LTC can program the completion of TE projects in this STIP cycle despite Inyo LTC's negative share balance. As a result of this re-evaluation of the STIP guidelines, staff is proposing to complete these projects as part of the 2014 STIP cycle using RIP funds.

Specifically LTC staff is proposing to complete the West Line Street sidewalk project where it is actually a State project that was funded with LTC-controlled TE funds. Construction will be programmed in 2014/2015 using RIP funds. There is also the Sunland Drive bicycle lanes project that was originally programmed with TE funds and we are looking to program \$670,000 of RIP funds for construction in 2014/2015. This project is being programmed concurrently with the South Bishop resurfacing project. Both South Bishop and Sunland Bike Lanes are currently programmed in 2012/2013. The

two projects have an 18 month time extension from the CTC because of unanticipated complications in the environmental phase. With the current programming, the TE funds will not be available and that is why the programming is being moved out to 2014/2015 with RIP funds. The next project is the Ed Powers bike lane project that is also being moved from TE to RIP funds in the amount of \$463,000. The last project is the City of Bishop Seibu to School bike path where the City appears to be able to move forward on that project after some initial challenges. The City worked cooperated with the Bishop Paiute Tribe, the Bishop schools, and neighborhood residents to come up with a feasible option. The preliminary components were programmed with TE funds. RIP funds in the amount of \$480,000 are being programmed in 2016/2017 to complete this project.

There is also a slight reduction in Planning, Programming, and Monitoring funds for LTC related future STIP preparation planning related activities. With Olancha-Cartago and the completion of the existing TE projects, the proposed programming would result in a negative share balance of approximately \$21.748 million dollars. The hope is that once Olancha/Cartago is in the Design phase, that Caltrans will be able to identify some other funds. The sooner the project is completed, the more likely it will be that the LTC will be able to obtain additional funds to complete Freeman Gulch and some local projects.

In the event that Olancha/Cartago falls out, staff is requesting to have the ability to pursue a second programming scenario. In the second scenario, at least half of the share balance for this year would be set aside for Olancha-Cartago. The other half would go towards local projects. Specifically, the funds would go to 1) the construction component of phase two of the Warren Street project in Bishop and 2) to the Lone Pine Town Rehabilitation project that the Board of Supervisor's have ranked most highly of County projects. Again, this scenario is unlikely, but it is wise to be prepared for all possibilities. This scenario would not be brought forward until it is clear that CTC staff is not recommending to program the construction component of Olancha-Cartago.

Tom Hallenbeck said that the Eastern Sierra has Caltrans' attention and that they really like our MOU-funded projects. Caltrans has been concentrating on the main corridors in the State such as the North/South routes such as US 101, I-5, SR 99, and the US 395/SR 14 corridor. We are almost there. The RTIP submittal will complete the four-laning of US 395 in Inyo County and down to the SR 14 junction. The work that Caltrans and the MOU partners have been doing will then move to the completion of the Freeman Gulch project, now split into three segments. The environmental document has been completed on all three sections. The first segment is in design right now and right-of-way procurement and construction have been funded. The second segment has been funded through design and right way acquisition, so the partners will be looking for construction funding next. The third segment will complete the four-laning of the US 395 corridor from Lee Vining to I-15.

CTC staff and Caltrans staff were hopeful that they could get the construction funding for the second segment in the 2014 STIP but there is not enough money to go around. Kern County has lots of demands in the Bakersfield area so we are competing against that. It is prudent to let the process continue on Freeman Gulch. Right now, everyone

wants to concentrate on Olancha/Cartago. Tom is confident that the second alternative RTIP submittal won't be necessary but it is prudent to put it out there. He also supports funding TE projects in the RTIP. It's hard to deliver big projects with the small funds that the Inyo LTC receives and the CTC recognizes the commitment the Inyo LTC and its funding partners to deliver State projects.

Matt Kingsley inquired what commitments the County will have on the State Highway after Olancha-Cartago is funded. Courtney replied that the only current MOU project is for the funding of the last two segment of Freeman Gulch in Kern County. Hopefully, there will be some funds available for local streets and roads once the LTC gets a positive share balance. Matt Kingsley asked if there was an opportunity to complete the Lone Pine Town Rehabilitation project at the same time as the Whitney Portal Road reconstruction project to save mobilization costs. Courtney replied that with the \$21 million dollar negative share balance that the LTC is not in a position where the projects can be combined. It is a good idea, but isn't feasible at this time.

Rick Pucci said that he believes it is important to move forward projects as quickly as possible. Caltrans is to be complemented for amount of work they have done in Inyo County. There is a lot of competition statewide and getting US 395 to have four lanes throughout Inyo County is an impressive accomplishment.

Motion to approve the submittal of the 2014 RTIP to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) as presented in the staff report and as stated above by Doug Thompson and seconded by Rick Pucci. Carried 5-0-1

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

None

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**ITEM NO. 7:** ESTA Report, Operating Statistics for July to September 2013

Jill Batchelder –FY 2012-2013 First Quarter Operations Report

Quarterly operations report for Inyo County for July through September. During this time period we were shy 17,000 rides in the Inyo County area and our passengers per hour rate was 3.66 which is down slightly from the previous year. Farebox recovery was just shy of 25%. The farebox was calculated using the preliminary route costs that were presented at the September LTC meeting. Overall our ridership is down 7%, the bulk of that is Bishop Dial-A-Ride. We are still trying to figure out what is causing the decrease in the ridership of the Bishop DAR. We had a few passengers that were traveling two to four times a day who are not travelling quite as often as well as a few that are no longer travelling at all. We are taking steps to cut hours to meet service needs out on the

roads. ESTA staff is attending local meetings and fairs to make sure that ESTA's name and services get out into the community. We are making attempts to bring ridership back up. It appears the Lone Pine to Bishop route is lower on ridership. We have recalculated a bit on how we are tallying our riders based on where the grant funding comes from. In previous years there were more trips between Bishop and Mammoth and the way that it was tallied has changed. Basically there is the same number of trips though you need to look at the Mammoth Express and the Lone Pine to Bishop and the 395 routes as a whole. When you look at them all together there was an increase of 160 riders during the 3 month time period. On the Tecopa route, the longtime driver has been ill so there have been a few trips missed due to his illness and the lack of a backup driver. This driver has left the job due to his illness and ESTA has rehired another driver and he will be starting this next week so that route will get back in line with the usual 19 trips per month for that area.

Bob Kimball asked if ESTA has attempted to consolidate the Tecopa to Pahrump service. Jill replied that this is a lifeline service that is usually very slow in summer. Ridership picks up in winter. The route probably can't be reduced more than it is – one trip every two weeks.

Matt Kingsley said this route can't be consolidated further and this route provides an important lifeline service that should be continued through the ups and downs in ridership.

Jill Batchelder noted that the Senior Center has been in touch with ESTA multiple times. To assist locals, the senior center has provided some service.

Doug Thompson asked if the medical transport grant that ESTA is receiving is eligible for use in the Tecopa area. Jill replied that this is a good question. ESTA is just receiving the grant funds and getting the program going.

**ITEM NO. 8:** Tribal Report

None

**ITEM NO. 9:** Caltrans Report

The Federal shutdown has not affected Caltrans directly. Since the National Parks have shut down, Caltrans has had to cancel some special event permits (such as a bike race) on the State Highway in Death Valley National Parks. He thanked Yosemite National Park for not shutting down the Tioga Pass Road through the Park. SR 120 is not a state highway when inside of Yosemite though it is on either end of the park. If the Federal shutdown does continue it will affect Caltrans as they need biological consultations from the Department of Fish and Wildlife on some of their projects and the Army Corps of

Engineers on others. They also need to coordinate their projects with BLM. This hasn't caused a tangible problem yet but Caltrans is getting concerned.

Caltrans has been doing fog seal projects on US 395 in Independence and elsewhere. They have been trying to do these projects at night so that there is less of an impact on the traffic. They have been doing some overlays in Mono County. In Inyo County they have installed some weather stations, one at Dunmovin because they get a lot of wind and that is an interesting spot for isolated snowfall. The weather station will allow Caltrans engineers to get an accurate weather report without having to send someone out there. They have installed closed circuit TV which will allow them to actually see the conditions.

Caltrans continues to work with Digital 395 with the State Highway right-of-way. That work is still continuing in Mono County. One of the things that Caltrans is doing is that they are going to try a brine solution on the highways before they plow instead of cinders. The brine will include salt to melt the ice. This makes the ice freeze at a lower temperature so that they can get the ice cleared off of the highway faster. They now have tanks of brine and spray bars on their sanding trucks so before the snow falls they will spray the highway which will prevent the snow from packing and the ice from forming and may reduce the distance and time period for chain controls. This has been tested on I-80 with great results so we are hoping to have the same results here. Caltrans will report back with the results on how this is working at the next meeting.

Other than that they have a small project in Mono County to learn how to replant some of the slopes up there at the high altitude in the dry environment of the desert. They have hired a specialist to help them to determine what is needed to make this successful.

**ITEM NO. 10:** City of Bishop Report

None

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

Courtney Smith - The Inyo County Planning Department has released a Notice of Preparation for an EIR for the combined use route program known collectively as the adventure trails system. Scoping meetings will be held that examine what type of environmental impacts should be studied in the EIR. These meetings are going to be held Thursday, the 24<sup>th</sup> of October at 6:00 PM in the Board of Supervisors room in Independence and also Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM at the Bishop City Council Chambers.

Clint Quilter – Attached is an update of the County's road projects. A couple of them deserve a mention since the last time we were all together. The County was successful in getting the FLAP grant for the Whitney Portal road reconstruction project, the grant itself is worth a little more than \$13 million dollars. It will be matched with toll credits in the amount of about \$1.7 million dollars. With no real money out of pocket, the County will get a new road from Tuttle Creek road to the Forest Service campground at



Whitney Portal. Lake Sabrina Bridge is complete and the one way traffic control is gone. The Independence road project should be wrapped up by the end of the week. The Governor did proclaim a disaster for the Gulley Washer flood event in late July so the County should get some funding with that. County staff has met with Caltrans and they have been very helpful in getting us on the right track in accessing the FHWA dollars in the best way possible so that we get the most bang for our buck and get the highest level of reimbursement. With regard to the non FHWA roads we have a meeting with the OES folks on October 21<sup>st</sup> and we will be going through basically the same process with them to make sure that we are all on the same page and that we don't miss out on any funding opportunities available to us. The County has also asked the Governor to extend his declaration to include the floods in August but we don't hold out a lot of hope for that. The worst flood damage his in this storm was to Mazourka Canyon Road and the Trona-Wildrose Road south of the mountains that got hit in July. We are hoping that they will include these roads in the proclamation. The County would also like to thank the Inyo National Forest for their assistance in getting Mazourka Canyon Road open to through traffic and also to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power for their work in re-opening Division Creek Road. The way they are using large boulders to serve as the new road base is impressive.

**ITEM NO. 10:** Reports from all members of the Inyo County LTC  
Laura Smith – A lot of people in our area enjoying the fall colors.

Doug Thompson – He agrees with Laura, a lot of people in our area. He thinks that the government shutdown has actually helped our area because people are unable to visit nearby national parks. Mammoth is the same way. They are here so they are enjoying places that they would not normally stop and see.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

None

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The next LTC meeting is going to be held on November 20, 2013 in the Bishop City Council Chambers.

Bob Kimball adjourned the meeting at 9:55 AM

Attest:

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Clint Quilter  
Executive Director

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By Denise Hayden, Secretary