



INYO COUNTY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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Clint Quilter
Executive Director

TO: Inyo County Local Transportation Commission

FROM: Courtney Smith, Transportation Planner

DATE: June 21, 2017

SUBJECT: Unmet Transit Needs Findings - Recommendations

Recommended Action

Your Commission is being asked to a) adopt Unmet Transit Needs Findings as presented by staff and b) approve Resolution No. 2017-8 regarding unmet transit needs.

2017/2018 Unmet Transit Needs Hearing Context

The Inyo County Local Transportation Commission will not allocate TDA funds to local streets and roads in the 2017/2018 year. All TDA funds will be allocated to public transit and TDA eligible set-asides (for TDA administration, 2% to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and 5% for community transit services). TDA revenues have increased slowly over the last five years. For Eastern Sierra Transit to provide a new service, they may need to cut or reduce an existing service. In many ways, the evaluation of unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet is an exercise in logic and may no longer be the most relevant result from the unmet transit needs hearing process.

Despite the fact that none of the identified transit needs meet the definition of both an “unmet transit need” and “reasonable to meet,” this is a valuable process in that it lets the Commission, Eastern Sierra Transit, and the public know the strengths and weaknesses of the transit system. The dialogue at the SSTAC meeting and unmet transit needs hearing provides valuable information to transit entities of changing needs in the area. Eastern Sierra Transit has been effective at tweaking their services to meet area transit needs and identifying new sources of funding to provide other services.

Unmet Transit Needs Findings

I have reviewed the information presented at the March 9, 2017 Social Services Transit Advisory Council meeting and the April 19, 2017 and May 17, 2017 Unmet Transit Needs Hearings. Finally, in order to evaluate the items presented, I have reviewed the definitions of “Unmet Transit Need” and “Reasonable to Meet.” The definitions for the mentioned items were adopted by the ICLTC in 1995 and amended in 2007 and are as follows:

An Unmet Transit Need exists if an individual or individuals of any age or physical condition are unable to transport themselves from one location to another. An Unmet

Transit Need is, at a minimum, those public transportation or specialized transportation services that are identified in the Regional Transportation Plan and that have not been implemented or funded.

A documented Unmet Transit Need is reasonable to meet if:

A service can be provided which meets a minimum farebox ratio of 10% of operating costs; and

- a) It is transit service for essential intra-county purposes which are defined as medical or dental services, shopping, employment, personal business, or social service appointments; or,
- b) It is a transit service for essential inter-county purposes which are defined as medical or dental services or social service appointments not available in this county or the out-of-county destination is the closest location where the services are available to the origin of the trip; and,

The origin and/or destination of the trip is within two miles of the established area of operation or cohesive community.

Below is a synopsis of comments received and an evaluation of whether these comments meet the definition of *unmet transit need* and *reasonable to meet*.

Testimony Presented at the Social Services Transit Advisory Council Meeting March 9, 2017 Bishop, California			
Name	Need	Unmet Transit Need that is Reasonable to Meet	Next Step
Beth Himelhoch	There is a need for bus service between Lone Pine and Bishop and also the Bishop area Dial-A-Ride on weekends	This is more of a scheduling issue and not technically an unmet transit need.	The primary focus of area transit is to provide access to basic services. There is a possibility that farebox could be met, especially during the summer when numerous PCT hikers seek transit. ESTA is encouraged to look for grant funding to provide this service.

**Testimony Presented at the Unmet Transit Needs Hearing
April 19, 2017
Lone Pine, California**

Name	Need	Unmet Transit Need that is Reasonable to Meet Analysis	Next Step
No members of the public spoke during the April 19, 2017 Unmet Transit Needs hearing.			

**Testimony Presented at the Unmet Transit Needs Hearing
May 17, 2017
Bishop, California**

Name	Need	Unmet Transit Need that is Reasonable to Meet Analysis	Next Step
No members of the public spoke during the May 17, 2017 Unmet Transit Needs hearing.			

The SSTAC meeting and Unmet Transit Needs hearings were held in accordance with the Transportation Development Act and the Inyo County LTC Organization and Procedures Manual.

Findings

The following findings are made in the attached resolution based on the analysis above:

1. A meeting of the SSTAC was held on March 9, 2017.
2. Duly noticed Unmet Transit Needs Hearings were held on April 19, 2017 in Lone Pine and on May 17, 2017 in Bishop.
3. There are **no** new transit needs that satisfy the definition of an *unmet transit need* and *reasonable to meet*.

Attachments:

- April 2017 LTC minutes from Unmet Transit Needs Hearing
- May 2017 LTC draft minutes from Unmet Transit Needs Hearing
- SSTAC March 9, 2017 meeting notes
- Draft ICLTC Resolution No. 2017-08

April 19, 2017 LTC Meeting Minutes Regarding Unmet Transit Needs

ITEM NO. 4 Request Commission: 1) receive a copy of the meeting notes of the Social Services Transit Advisory Council and 2) conduct a public hearing to gather input on unmet transit needs.

On March 9, 2017 staff held the annual Social Services Transit Advisory Council (SSTAC) meeting kickoff for the annual Transportation Development allocation process. The meeting notes from this meeting that was held at the Caltrans Mt. Tom conference room are included in the packet. There was a relatively low turnout at this meeting so staff will do some additional outreach and also review the SSTAC member list before next year's meeting.

At the SSTAC meeting, there was stated a need for additional weekend transportation throughout the valley. Eastern Sierra Transit and Inyo-Mono Agency for the Handicapped discussed some of their plans and projects that they are working on.

The unmet transit needs hearing was opened by Commissioner Doug Thompson. Courtney Smith explained what an unmet transit need is. He further explained the LTC has not allocated funds for local streets and roads for at least a dozen years. All of the TDA funds are being allocated for transit-related activities. If a new unmet transit need were identified, ESTA may have to reduce another one of their services. This is an opportunity to find out about the health of the transit system. ESTA has done a good job at providing new services by tweaking their existing services.

Doug Thompson made a comment that ESTA has listened carefully to the comments that were made previously and had made changes to meet these needs. Doug noted ESTA has helped address some of the needs raised recently by the Northern Inyo Hospital and the veteran's service.

Jill Batchelder said that the Non-Emergency Medical Transportation program has been funded again and the new grant funds should be able to fund the program for another two years. There are approximately 80 people in this program now. This has been a very positive program for those in the outlying areas where regular transportation is not available. Jill also spoke to the representatives at Northern Inyo Hospital about the van that ESTA had donated to the hospital and they have made many local trips for those just having had surgery and various procedures at the hospital when the ESTA bus is not available or after hours. Their van is mainly for local needs but is has gone to Chalfant, Benton, Tonopah and other outlying areas. Bob Kimball asked if there were any problems with insurance issues on the ESTA Non-Emergency Medical Transportation program. Jill explained that the way ESTA has set up this program is that the patient provides their own driver and then the patient is reimbursed and not the driver so the driver does not become an employee of ESTA.

Doug Thompson closed the unmet transit needs hearing.

May 17, 2017 LTC Meeting Minutes Regarding Unmet Transit Needs

ITEM NO. 4 Request Commission conduct a public hearing to gather input on unmet transit needs.

Courtney noted that the meeting of the Social Services Transit Advisory Council was held on March 9th and the notes of this meeting are being presented today for your review. Courtney continued to explain the definition of an unmet transit need. He then asked Pat Gardner to open the public hearing.

There was no one in the audience or Commission wishing to speak on the unmet transit needs hearing. Motion to close the hearing was made by Commissioner Laura Smith and seconded by Commissioner Dan Totheroh. Motion carried 6-0