

Mono County Local Transportation Commission

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MINUTES

November 9, 2015
(Adopted December 14, 2015)

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: Tim Fesko (via video), Larry Johnston, Fred Stump

TOWN COMMISSIONERS: Sandy Hogan, Shields Richardson, Dan Holler for John Wentworth

COUNTY STAFF: Scott Burns, Jeff Walters, Garrett Higerd, Gerry Le Francois, CD Ritter

TOWN STAFF: Grady Dutton

CALTRANS: Ryan Dermody, Jacob Mathew, Greg Miller, Craig Holste

ESTA: John Helm & Jill Batchelder

GUESTS: Jo Bacon, former LTC commissioner; Danna Stroud, Sierra Nevada Conservancy

1. **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chair Fred Stump called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. at the Town/County Conference Room, Minaret Village Mall, Mammoth Lakes, and attendees recited the pledge of allegiance.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Danna Stroud of Sierra Nevada Conservancy, at Commissioner Wentworth's request, reported conversations at a conference in Jackson Hole, WY, on connecting urban communities with wilderness. Public transit could bring urban residents into this area. Opportunity exists to partner with The Wilderness Society on transportation planning for roads and bikes to connect to wilderness. Proposal for SR 120 scenic byway from Groveland to Lee Vining is coming up in 2016, with Chico State students working on it. Dick Whittington of YARTS noted Greyhound interface from San Diego to Eastern Sierra. Airlines **proposal in progress is to** sell tickets that include pass-through opportunities.

2. MINUTES:

MOTION: Approve minutes of September 14, 2015 (*no October meeting*) as submitted.
(Hogan/Richardson. Ayes: 5. Abstain due to absence: Holler.)

3. ADMINISTRATION

A. **Resolution of Appreciation:** Commissioner Sandy Hogan read aloud a signed resolution of appreciation to Jo Bacon, former LTC commissioner, followed by a standing ovation and brief comments from Bacon.

MOTION: Present resolution of appreciation to Jo Bacon, former LTC commissioner.
(Richardson/Stump. Ayes: 5. Abstain due to absence: Holler.)

B. **Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP):** Gerry Le Francois cited status quo proposal. Key points: ESTA sent preliminary vehicle request for 2016 onward, reserve of \$1.9 million, \$620,000 ESTA vehicles. State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to LTC in December along with Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

Dutton will discuss with State upper Main Street sidewalks.

CTC hearing Nov. 4? Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) hearing week prior, maybe 15 minutes, no comments. Unsure how south state hearing went.

Dermody didn't attend; maybe best not to write anything as discussed earlier, fly under radar.

4. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS: Richardson:** Electric cars seen on 395. Article on new airline Surf Air from Santa Barbara, Monterey, Los Angeles, San Diego looking for place to come, nice add-on to Alaska Air flights. Scheduled flights but could buy in on turbo prop eight-passenger. Surf to ski?! **Hogan:** None. **Johnston:** Visited other end of Hwy 6 in Provincetown, MA, with sign: Bishop 3,000 mi. **Holler:** Excited to be moving snow. **Fesko:** Thanked Caltrans (CT) for North County work, repainting, etc. Move Antelope Valley overlay to Nevada from 2017 to 2016? Little Walker River project was moved up. Dermody: Will move up if can; State Highway Operation & Protection Program (SHOPP) project. Fesko: Torrential rains created potholes. **Stump:** Thanked CT for work on US 6 after intense Oct. 18 thunderstorm flooded Chalfant community, CT working on culverts, draining ditches. House passed long-term highway bill, as did Senate, but combined with something else. House took seven years to get to this point. Co-sponsored by representatives of both parties.

5. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

A. **US 6 flooding and drainage issues:** Ryan Dermody introduced Craig Holste and Greg Miller. Unusual storm events in May and June, with flooding. Few weeks ago Tehachapi's one in 1,000-yr storm with 3.5" in 45 minutes brought debris and mud out of canyons. Flooding in Death Valley, 15-20 min storm in Chalfant, 2" rain. Showed map with water flow across or alongside US 6. Intense storms cause mud flow that fills up channels and culverts. Clean culverts, grade along shoulders. Crews out daily since Oct. 18. Richardson noted water crossed a mile north of Chalfant.

Johnston cited giant V diversion to divert water around Keeler. Apply here? No drainage easements, cooperate with BLM. Holste will look at it. Water still crosses or runs along US 6. In 2002, could handle 25-year storm. Raise highway profile with viaduct or bridges to handle mud flows. Hydraulics engineer could include in thought process. Stump met with Holste last week. BLM's Dale Johnson and Steve Nelson made commitment to cooperate, look at BLM land that produces erosion channels and consider something to slow flow. BLM learned of issue at Collaborative Planning Team meeting Oct. 29. USFS offered to help.

Higerd noted Mono and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have last five years identified and remapped flooding in Tri-Valley, new maps into effect in 2012, showed fan is a long-known special flood-hazard area. Entire Tri-Valley has continuous alluvial fans all way along from east and west, middle riverine channel flows south. Milner fan is special flood hazard area, risk > 1% chance flood. FEMA maps show standard depth, fans unpredictable. Base flood elevations exist. Public process prior to 2012, lots of communication with Tri-Valley residents, rash of contact after July and October floods. Problem with all solutions is cost. Bottom land where water wants to flow is hard to go around, stop. Design gets expensive really fast.

Have building codes changed? Higerd said no, but flood maps didn't apply before. SFRs in Chalfant were built on slab, right on ground. Elevated homes not inundated in last two events.

Is Mono looking at building requirements there? Higerd replied yes. Development may not implement drainage requirements. Stump noted water flows into subdivision. Burns recalled Mize integrated flood study into subdivision plan.

6. TRANSIT

A. **Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA):** Jill Batchelder presented quarterly operating statistics and passed out visitation analysis. Trolley and Reds Meadow routes were up. Meeting or exceeding all except smaller routes. Overall, robust summer. Changed evening Mammoth Express a month ago to 5:15 p.m., adjusted Reno departure 20 minutes earlier. During delay incidents, brought in supplemental bus. Added a couple of passengers; not robust at this time.

Pickup at McDonald's accommodated by routes in town? John Helm said all go within a block of McDonald's. Danna Stroud encouraged participation in connectivity between urban and Eastern Sierra. Helm noted Greyhound has connection with YARTS. Was in Denver last week about Greyhound connections with ESTA. Certifications required by FHWA not recognized for ESTA. Greyhound thought it could work around to partner and get insurance recognized. People can ticket through to destination. Red Line starts Nov. 20. Currently, trolley takes riders to Village to connect with a Mountain bus.

B. **Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS):** Scott Burns reported Mono's ridership off 9%, possibly due to Mariposa Grove rehab, free hiker buses, and fires. Early discussion with

Alaska Air, maybe package with YARTS. Improving electronic ticketing, new vendors. Fresno numbers not great in its first year. Oakhurst is generating most riders, despite opposition to YARTS.

7. CALTRANS

A. State Highway Operation & Protection Program (SHOPP) projects: Dermody mentioned Sheep Ranch shoulders, Inyo/Mono rumble strips and signs, and Little Walker shoulders. Scrambling to fit into certain years where funding exists. Fesko asked about shoulders at Devils Gate. Dermody noted EIR on project, time for comment at public meetings.

North Sherwin project? Dermody noted no longer rehab, so doesn't qualify. Instead, shoulder widening. Pilot projects with long lead, awaiting reply. Original project gone. Sometimes widening leads to other projects. Penalized for good roads. Widen center median? Unlikely. Funding levels changed.

Anything in new highway funding for things in right of way? Dermody mentioned environmental streamlining. CT has to do CEQA and NEPA, with different rules. Conflicting outcomes.

Wildlife projects? Dermody cited feasibility study report in June (meetings with CDFW not yet happened), then shop for funding. Wildlife corridors starting to rise, may have funding pot to go after.

B. Draft SR 89 Transportation Concept Report: Ryan Dermody introduced Jacob Mathew, who compiled report. Comments due by Dec. 1.

Fesko looked at strategies in report. Closed circuit good idea. SR 89 originally was to be year-round highway. When closed, it blocks Markleeville residents. Discuss with Alpine supervisors, re-examine year-round concept, take to Caltrans.

Antelope Valley RPAC? Fesko cited no quorum for December, no January meeting. Do email for input. Contact Le Francois.

Johnston stated SR 89 is noted prominently for cycling. Space in some places for climbing lanes. When redo guardrail, widen a foot or so for pedals and handlebars. Stripe so roadway center is not at center of pavement. Added 4' shoulders to Rock Creek and Convict Lake. Feasible, not costly. Cyclists use to train for Death Ride. Nice to have place for cyclists when meeting RVs. Even half of SR 89 would be huge. Downhill not as important. Mono has successfully done it.

Mathew stated SR 89 is 45 miles. Dermody indicated full-blown environmental studies needed.

Johnston stated Eastside Velo appreciates work on flat projects. Rumble strips included? Other states embed rumble in fog line.

Stump mentioned recently amended truck traffic on SR 108. Something similar for SR 89? Mathew stated it was not as much an issue.

C. Activities in Mono County: Ryan Dermody thanked Mono Supervisors for concerns with noticing of ordinance on truck prohibition. Not require 10-day notice, not ready for Sacramento. Maybe after winter.

Dermody recalled in 1996-97 District 9 was absorbed into central region to work out of Fresno. Issues with designs for Fresno existed, but not Mammoth or June. CT District 9 has been released from central, independent, now reports to Brent Green. Historically, Eastern Kern was part of District 9, so part of release includes three-year transition to District 9. New day for innovation, not solely traffic; maintenance, whatever. Maximize resources to get things done. Pilot project for California, pressure to make sure it works. USFS was there when announced, as well as maintenance staff.

Crestview rest area? Holste noted shortened closures, open during drought years. Even with El Nino, will do best to keep open throughout winter. Need to upgrade with heated sidewalks, roof that sheds snow.

Johnston thought it ironic that most important safety time to be open is snow season, refuge to escape till things clear. Better during worst of times. Only rest area in county. Holste stated it gets trucks off road to safe spot.

8. QUARTERLY REPORTS

A. Town of Mammoth Lakes: Grady Dutton noted bike path got \$147,000 grant, environmental stages first, archaeological more rigorous than anticipated (\$150,000 cost). Lake George connector bids open today, construction after snow melts. Main Street sidewalks next summer, hopefully. Airport fence and wildlife assessment: Met with Federal Aviation Administration, happy moving forward, design next fiscal year, construction year after. Caveat: Discretionary funds. Far fewer incidents within airport boundary, terminal even more important.

Minaret gap undercrossing? How decided not important? Johnston cited undercrossings elsewhere, safe way to handle. Dutton found out still on plan, but no funding. Agreed on importance.

How about Measure R or Measure U? Signage funding? Dutton has construction docs for most of that.

B. Mono County: Garrett Higerd noted busy construction season maybe broke all-time record of dollars spent on Mono roads: Rock Creek, Convict Lake, and June Lake close to \$20 million in last two years. All three near completion. Innovative projects with Inyo National Forest and Federal Highway Administration: uphill bike climbing lanes. Drainage problems corrected between June and Gull lakes. Worked with property owners, Caltrans to get major improvements. Installed 17 catchment basins with concrete ribbon gutters to capture "first flush." Oil slick after rain. Low groundwater due to drought. Permits with Lahontan and CDFW. Countywide road maintenance (fog seals, striping, crack seals) to keep roads in good shape starting environmental review (NEPA and CEQA) in 2016. Airport Road not programmed this fiscal year; federal project. Lots of smaller future projects.

C. Caltrans: Ryan Dermody covered most above. Hoping for funding to widen shoulders by Tom's Place.

9. **INFORMATIONAL**

A. Watch out for wildlife week: Information on examples throughout state.

Wildlife fatalities? Dermody: Analysis in June. Collecting data since '60s or '70s. Better data since 2010. Green Church fatalities higher than Sonora Junction area. CHP does not record unless major accident. Le Francois: District 9 section in RTP has map and data. Hogan: Overcrossings in Nevada and undercrossings in other Great Basin states. Look at innovative ideas.

B. Roundabouts increasingly popular: Meridian Minaret/Forest Trail roundabout proposed 20 years ago. Happening? Address intersection, evaluating curving grade coming down, amount of traffic. Right solution at that location? Tough spot no matter what. Look at specific intersections.

10. **UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS:** 1) RTP adoption, cert EIR; 2) RTIP adoption; 3) amendment to OWP budget; 4) Johnston: recognition for engineering on three costly projects, Higerd mainly; 5) Johnston: Long-term goal of using self-weathering steel guardrail on Mono roads to set Mono apart, discussion of cost issues. Higerd: New options such as bridge treatment at Convict Lake. See how withstands scratches, dents. Richardson: Core-10 steel is brown, self-rusts.

11. **ADJOURN** at 11:09 a.m. to December 14, 2015

Prepared by CD Ritter, LTC secretary