



**INYO COUNTY  
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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Doug Wilson, Executive Director

**SPECIAL MEETING  
MINUTES**

**INYO COUNTY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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

**December 7, 2011**

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

**ITEM NO. 1** Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Bob Kimball  
Laura Smith  
Doug Thompson  
Susan Cullen  
Marty Fortney  
Rick Pucci

Others Present:

Troy Patton, Cartago resident  
Susie Patton, Cartago resident  
Herman Meylemans, Ranch House Café Owner  
Claudine Meylemans, Ranch House Café Owner  
Scott Palamar, Cartago resident  
David Bloom, Caltrans  
Selma Calnan  
Cedrik Zemitis, Caltrans  
Mike McDermott, City of Bishop  
John Helm, Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA)  
Jill Batchelder, Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA)  
Courtney Smith, Inyo County  
Ryan Standridge, Inyo County

## **ITEM NO. 2 Public Comment**

Selma Calnan stated that she has been appointed to the Social Services Transit Advisory Council (SSTAC). She is an active participant with ACT 4 Bishop Neighborhoods to find solutions for affordable public transportation. They are preparing for the February SSTAC meeting by investigating if the unmet transit needs definitions can be changed.

Herman Meylemans a resident of Lone Pine and owner of Ranch House Café introduced himself. Mr. Meylemans is requesting the commission not support the Caltrans preferred alternative for the Olancha-Cartago four lane project. He believes the recommended alternative will result in a loss of jobs and tax income for Inyo County and that the environmental document is not adequate and Caltrans should be required to complete an EIR/EIS. The preferred alternative is not discussed in the environmental document. The statement that the proposed bypass will have no impact to Olancha is false. The Ranch House Café will go out of business if the bypass is constructed.

Bob Kimball asked Cedrik for an update on the status of the environmental document.

Cedrik replied that an Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/ Environmental Assessment was completed and circulated for public review. Caltrans is now completing Phase 2 archeological studies on the preferred route. Upon completion of the studies, and once the final alignment of the preferred alternative is chosen, the environmental document will be finalized. The final document is at least one year out. The final document will address all public comments, and include additionally required studies.

Bob asked if there will be any special public comment meetings.

Cedrik explained there will be no public hearings on the environmental document before the document is finalized. The public comment period on the draft document ended in October 2011. He referred to the environmental document that specifically states that alternatives may be combined to minimize impacts and to maximize benefits.

Cedrik went on to say that Caltrans is looking at access and circulation options at both ends of the bypass and is considering holding public meetings specific to this topic.

Doug Thompson expressed his concern over Caltrans' cone of silence and referenced the environmental document asking if Caltrans has a need for any public comments on what the future should bring.

Cedrik clarified that the environmental document will address the public comments that were submitted in October. He explained that Caltrans is following standard procedures. He reminded the commission that Caltrans is seeking further input on access options with the preferred alternative. This project is mostly being done for the safety of the community and visitors traveling the highway.

Courtney Smith said that the Commission should only receive input during the public comment period. The discussion of this topic is pertinent to Agenda Item No. 9 and should be included as a part of the consideration of that item.

Bob agreed with Doug that the public needs to be heard but stated that no action can be taken at this time. Marty asked for this item to be discussed at a later time.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

**ITEM NO. 3** Secretary of the Local Transportation Commission - Request approval of the minutes of the meeting of October 19, 2011.

Susan Cullen moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of October 19, 2011. Laura Smith seconded the motion. Marty Fortney abstained  
Motion carried 5-0-1.

**ITEM NO. 4** Jill Batchelder of ESTA request the commission program Resolution No. 2011-13 authorizing the submittal of the Federal Fiscal Year 2012 Section 5311 Program of Projects (POP) with Eastern Sierra Transit Authority as the sub recipient of \$73,735 in Federal Funds and authorize the Executive Director to sign the Certifications and Assurances for operating assistance for general public transit services in Inyo County.

Rick Pucci moved to approve Resolution 2011-13. Doug Thompson seconded the motion. Motion carried 6 - 0.

**ITEM NO. 5** Courtney Smith passed out a revised staff report and resolution that reflects more 2009-2010 funds being available than was shown in the staff report. The reasons for this is that \$19,500 of funds for the Pressure Washer were allocated using 2008-2009 funds and also \$606 Inyo received from the Mono County LTC for the Diesel Bus Filters project. Courtney requested the Commission approve Resolution No. 2011-14 allocating \$78,967 in FY 2009-2010 Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA) funds to Eastern Sierra Transit (ESTA) for Support Vehicles (\$67,000) and additional funds to complete the security fencing and lighting project at the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority headquarters at the Bishop airport (\$11,967).

It was initially assumed that PTMISEA funds could be spread out over the ten-year period these funds will be allocated. It has been determined that FY 2009- 2010 funds must be allocated by June 2012. Slow bond sales have resulted in FY 2010-2011 funds being delayed.

Doug Thompson was concerned about additional \$11,000+ had been addressed in previous meetings.

Courtney explained that there were cost increases to the project and that the TEA exchange loan approved at a previous meeting would still need to be used because funding would not be completed until the allocation of Transit Security Grant Funds for FY 2010- 2011.

Laura Smith motion to approve Resolution No. 2011-14. Marty Fortney seconded.

Motion Carried 6 - 0

**ITEM NO. 6** Courtney request the commission approve Resolution No. 2011-15 allocating an estimated amount of \$103,390 in FY 2011-2012 STA funds to Eastern Sierra Transit (ESTA) for operating costs. The STA funds are only an estimated based on a percentage of diesel tax money that has not been received yet. An efficiency analysis was completed so funds can be used for operating expenses. ESTA audited data showed operating cost decreased in the last three years making them eligible to use the STA funds for operating expenses.

Marty Fortney motioned to approve Resolution No. 2011-15. Rick Pucci seconded.

Motion Carried 6 - 0

**ITEM NO. 7** Courtney request the commission to approve Resolution No. 2011-16, allocating \$132.00 of Regional Planning Assistance (RPA) funds to the County Engineers Association of California to complete two updates to the Statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment. The total cost for this project is \$500,000 statewide. Inyo County's share of this is \$132 using the RSTP exchange formula.

Rick Pucci motioned to approve resolution No. 2011-16. Laura Smith seconded.

Motioned Carried 6 - 0

**ITEM NO. 8** Courtney request commission approves the project ranking set forth in the staff report. The commission released a call TE project resulting in two applications Warren Street pedestrian and aesthetic improvements (City) and Red Hill and Ed Powers bicycle lanes (County). A scoring committee consisting of Ron Chegwiddden (Caltrans), Deborah Lyons (Forest Service) and Cathreen Richard (Inyo County Planning Department) scored the applications. Courtney briefly reviewed the scoring committee's findings. The Red Hill and Ed Powers project was ranked first.

With cost increases and missing components to existing projects being programmed, only \$733,000 of the 1.2 million is available in this call. Warren Street project is so large it did not fit the funds well. The programming will be detailed in the RTIP action item.

Bob Kimball spoke for the merits of the Warren Street project as did Laura Smith, though they both agreed with the recommended project ranking.

Doug Thompson motioned to approve project ranking. Marty Fortney seconded.

Motion passed 6 - 0

**ITEM NO. 9** Request Commission 1) Approve the submittal of the 2012 RTIP to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and 2) 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.

Funding occurs every two years. The submittal due date is December 15, 2011. The RTIP becomes part to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) resulting in

the programming of projects in specific amounts and program years for State and local roads, TE projects and PPM funds. 2012 RTIP priorities are programming MOU projects on the State Highway system, complete local projects programmed in the 2010 STIP, evaluate the cost increase to existing projects and program TE projects. The Inyo County LTC has previously set aside \$9,648,000 for the future construction component of Olancho-Cartago. An additional \$2,883,000 is available to the LTC as part of the formula distribution for this STIP cycle. Spreadsheets were passed out detailing programming on the State Highway system, local streets and roads, and for TE projects. Some of the programming is different than in the staff report.

Bob Kimball asked if the commission can choose to not fund a program.

Courtney explain that potential is there but it is recommended to do it before expending funds on projects. The Commission has some discretion, though it is not possible at this point to fund a project that has not been submitted by the State, City, or County. Funds not programmed would carry forth into the next cycle.

Courtney Smith then gave a synopsis of the programming for each project in the RTIP. The Freeman Gulch project is being split into three segments because of the high cost. This is an MOU project in Kern County on State Route 14 with Kern COG contributing 40%, Caltrans ITIP funds contributing 40%, and Mono and Inyo County LTC each contributing 10%. Segment 1 is being programmed to completion in this cycle. New funds programmed by Inyo County will include \$310,000 for Construction Support and \$2,799,000 for construction in 2015-2016. For Segment 2, the funding is being calculated differently than usual with Inyo and Mono LTCs contributing 30% each and Kern COG contributing \$0 in this cycle because of needs they have elsewhere in their County. Kern COG has agreed in principle to repay Inyo and Mono in future cycles, presumably for the construction component of Olancho-Cartago. For Segment 2 in this cycle, Inyo is contributing \$975,000 for the design component, \$630,000 for Right of Way Support and \$1,653,000 for Right of Way in 2015-2016. No new funds are being programmed for Olancho-Cartago in this cycle. Because of the new programming for Freeman Gulch Segments 1 and 2, the Inyo LTC future set aside for the construction component will be reduced to \$6,686,000.

For the County, there will be no change to the South Bishop Resurfacing project. Funds are being deprogrammed from the Gill Station – Coso Road Reconstruction because the County is instead using Proposition 1B local streets and roads funds to overlay the asphalt on this road. The funds are being moved to the West Bishop Improvement project that will reconstruct approximately 3 miles of pavement on Pa Me Lane and Sunset Subdivision roads that suffer from severe transverse cracking. The Nine Mile Canyon Road Stage 2 project environmental component funds are being deprogrammed because the County was successful in obtaining Highway Safety Improvement funds to address a significant portion of the purpose and need for the project. The widening of this road is not feasible with the amount of funds Inyo County will likely receive in the next several STIP cycles. The County is programming an additional \$100,000 for the construction component of the Independence Town Rehabilitation project. The City of Bishop has decided to not push the programming out one year for the design and construction

components of the Warren Street Improvements project because it was not able to obtain TE funds in this cycle.

For TE projects, an additional \$299,000 is being programmed for the West Line Street sidewalk project. There are no cost increases on other City or County TE projects. A call for projects was released and two applications were received. The County revised the scope of the Red Hill and Ed Powers bicycle lanes project to just include Ed Powers Road after a revised engineer's estimate. It was not cost effective for the City of Bishop to program a TE component to the Warren Street Improvements project with the remaining TE funds. Therefore, the remaining TE funds, \$212,000 are being programmed as a TE reserve that the City and/or County can access at a future date.

Up to 5% of the STIP share can be used for Planning, Programming, and Monitoring (PPM) funds. Unlike the staff report, staff proposes to program the entire amount of PPM funds. This will program more than is anticipated to be uses. As a result, the City and County will be able to due future STIP amendments to reduce this amount by as much as \$250,000 to \$300,000 to fund cost increases to City and/or County projects.

Doug Thompson asked if Sunland bicycle lanes project had been funded. Courtney said that it was funded last cycle and linked to the South Bishop Project and no cost increase is being requested at this time.

For Public Transportation Account (PTA) funds, there are still funds programmed for bus shelters in the City of Bishop. Since ESTA discontinued fixed route services, this project has been dropped resulting in \$169,000 left PTA funding that can only be programmed if it is federalized.

Bob Kimball expressed the opportunity it would be if the funds could be used for roads.

Courtney suggested that if the \$169,000 is only for transit funds, it will be programed for transit. If not, it will be used for local streets and road if that is the direction of the Commission. It is not clear if this can be determined before the submittal deadline for the RTIP.

Rick Pucci asked what the impact would be from the LTC saying no to funding on a project because they don't like the alternative.

Courtney mentioned to the Commission that there is a memorandum of understanding in place leveraging funds from other agencies for Olancho-Cartago. Courtney suggested that the Commission could consider submittal of a letter of concern to Caltrans regarding the recommended alternative at a future meeting. He suggested that pulling money would be unwise at this point in time. Caltrans is unable to proceed to the design phase until the environmental phase is completed. The environmental phase is ongoing.

Marty Fortney feels that the safety reports in the environmental document are inaccurate in that all the accidents did not occur where the bypass is proposed. The Board of Supervisors continues to support the community members and submitted a letter in

support of Alternative 1. He relayed that the Olancha CSD fire chief is not pleased with the recommended alternative as it may delay emergency response.

Cedrik Zemitis of Caltrans suggests that he will consult with Traffic Engineer Terry Erlwein regarding the accident data.

Marty Fortney mentioned that at least one rancher in Olancha was not in favor of Alternative 1. He felt that it would have been ideal for the highway to bypass the community to the east but understands that Caltrans determined that was not practical.

Bob Kimball discussed his representation on the Project Development Team. LTC representatives expressed support for Alternative 1. The Project Development Team supported Alternative 3 but specifically not Alternative 4. He conditioned his support for Alternative 3 on the State maintaining the portion of the existing US 395 alignment south of SR 190 as part of SR 190 in the hopes that would continue to encourage a commercial business environment. He suggested a letter be sent from commission expressing concerns and asking for clarification on why the recommended alternative was chosen. He also mentioned that the Commission has a contractual obligated to continue on with the project.

Courtney said a letter would be drafted and agendized for consideration at the January meeting.

Doug Thompson pondered that perhaps the north and southbound lanes did not need to be as widely apart as proposed. He expressed his concern for project needs elsewhere in the County that may be a higher priority than Olancha-Cartago. He also mentioned that Alternative 1 puts the community in a tough place because the Post Office and Ranch House Café might be removed. Is it possible to move these structures?

Herman Meylemans quoted a portion of the environmental document that said “it does not appear there one place that has a concentration of accidents.”

Susan Patton brought up her concerns on the preferred alternative taking away the potential for commercial revenue in the future, the cost of the project, and access issues near Cartago.

Troy Patton proposed the bypass alternative will kill the community, decrease county tax base and place an increased burden on the local fire department for local emergencies. Though a reason for the project is increased safety, he mentioned anecdotally that the fire department responds to more accidents outside of the communities than in the communities. He said he is not opposed to the four laning as long it would stick to the existing alignment.

Scott Palamar referenced his letter of correspondence. He would like to see the Commission submit a letter in support of Alternative 1 at the next meeting. He expressed his dislike of the alternative that Caltrans chose and stated that Alternative 1 would also improve safety.

Marty Fortney motioned to approve the submittal of the 2012 RTIP and authorize the Executive Director to sign documents related to the submittal of the RTIP. Laura Smith Seconded. Doug Thompson abstained.

Motion carried 5- 0- 1

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

None

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

None

**ITEM NO. 10** ESTA Report

John Helm said that September service changes are working well. The call in advance service going north from Lone Pine has been given a grace period and will require a call one day in advance starting Jan1, 2012. Red Meadow buses are ahead of schedule and will be delivered late spring. Google transit, that will enable users to use the Google transit trip planning tool, will be available early 2012. The NextBus system has been in place for six months. Via smartphone, passengers can access real time information. Signage lets users know of the NextBus service. The URL [www.estransit.com](http://www.estransit.com) will be ESTA's only web address.

**ITEM NO. 11** Tribal Report

None

**ITEM NO. 12** Caltrans Report

Cedrik Zemitis will work with Courtney to get more information for the next LTC meeting.

**ITEM NO. 13** City of Bishop Report

Mike McDermott expects money in January for the environmental component of the Warren St. project and request for proposal are out for bid currently. Available TE funds didn't make sense to be programmed at this time. They will refine the scope for this project. The Pine to Park Path environmental document is in final draft. They are acquiring right of way for Wye Road. Public comments on the Mobility Element environmental document are due by January 10, 2012. Pending the planning commission approval in January, the Mobility Element will be brought before the City Council in February. He thanked LTC for their support.

**ITEM NO. 14** Executive Director's Report

None

**ITEM NO. 15** Reports from all members of the Inyo County LTC

Doug wishes everyone Merry Christmas.

Laura Smith wishes everyone a happy holidays and drive safely on all roads.

Marty Fortney wanted to let everyone know that SRA fees will be coming from the state. Penalties for not paying will result in a lean against the property.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

Bob Kimball adjourned the meeting at 10:53

Attest:

Doug Wilson  
Executive Director

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By Ryan Standridge, Secretary