



# INYO COUNTY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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Ronald Chegwidan  
Executive Director

TO: Inyo County Local Transportation Commission

FROM: Ron Chegwidan, Executive Director

DATE: June 20, 2007

SUBJECT: Unmet Transit Needs Findings - Recommendations

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I have reviewed the information presented at the March 21, 2007 and the April 18, 2007 Unmet Needs Hearings. I have also reviewed the information provided by the Social Service Transit Advisory Committee. 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 on May 23, 1995 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 15.0% 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.

**Testimony Presented at the Unmet Transit Needs Hearing  
on March 21, 2007 at Bishop, California:**

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**Mr. Richard Cervantes, Inyo County Supervisor:**

1. *There is an unmet transit need for one additional day of transit service to Pahrump for senior residents of Tecopa. At this time, Inyo Mono Transit is operating this route once a week. The seniors he had spoken with in Tecopa expressed a desire to have an additional weekly trip to Pahrump for medical appointments and shopping.*
2. *What is the status of the Keeler/Darwin/Olancha route that had been discussed at last year's unmet needs hearing. There is an unmet transit need for weekly transit service for seniors in Keeler/Darwin/Olancha for medical appointments and shopping in Lone Pine.*

**Executive Director's Recommendations:**

1. This is not an unmet transit need. There is currently weekly service between Tecopa and Pahrump. Two trips are currently included in the Inyo Mono Transit budget. The service has stayed at one trip per week for a couple reasons. The ridership was initially low and it has been difficult to find a driver in Tecopa who has a California driver's license. The once weekly trip has been getting more traffic. It is recommended that Inyo Mono Transit continue to monitor this situation, and, if the farebox justifies it, to start a second weekly trip from Tecopa to Pahrump.
2. This is not an unmet transit need. This was addressed at last year's unmet transit needs meeting. At the request of the LTC, Inyo Mono Transit conducted a survey analyzing what the ridership would be for this route. While the survey numbers were relatively low, a pilot route was initiated as a result of last year's unmet needs hearings. At this time, Inyo Mono Transit has not been able to hire a driver and is still advertising for a driver to complete this route. Inyo Mono Transit will update the Commission in the future about the status of this pilot route.

**Testimony Presented at the Unmet Transit Needs Hearing  
on April 18, 2007 at Independence, California:**

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**Mr. Frank Williams, Independence Resident:**

- 1. On the southbound CREST bus, there is an unmet transit need created by the long layover in Ridgecrest and then another layover in Lancaster waiting for a Metrolink train.*
- 2. There is an unmet transit need created by the northbound bus from Lone Pine and Independence not being able to link with the northbound CREST bus to Reno.*

**Executive Director's Recommendations:**

1. This is a coordination issue and not an unmet transit need. There is currently transit service to Lancaster three days a week. As the CREST bus continues south, transit coordination becomes increasingly complex. LTC staff will continue to coordinate with Caltrans and IMT to investigate ways to make the southbound CREST trip more user friendly.
2. Northbound transportation from Lone Pine to Reno is a coordination issue and not an unmet transit need. There is bus service north to Reno from Lone Pine. However, there is currently no connectivity between the Lone Pine to Bishop bus and the 7:00 a.m. northbound CREST bus to Reno. There is connectivity on the southbound return from Reno to catch the last bus back from Bishop to Lone Pine. The Lone Pine to Bishop route was developed mainly for commuters. CREST travels north from Bishop on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Potentially, the Lone Pine bus could be moved up to 6:00 a.m. one day a week to connect with the Reno-bound CREST bus.

It is recommended that IMT conduct a survey of current riders using the Lone Pine to Bishop morning bus to determine what percentage of their riders would like to see the service moved up one hour earlier. Additionally, would they still use the bus if it travels northbound one day a week starting at 6:00 a.m.? The results of this survey will be forwarded to the LTC at a future date. It is not recommended that the Lone Pine departure time be changed if it has a negative effect on ridership.

**Ms. Stacy Sparrow:**

- 1. There is an unmet need for mid-day transit service from Bishop to Keough's Hot Springs Resort. The Lone Pine to Bishop bus stops on an on-call basis at the hot springs. Right now the four-hour wait in Bishop is too long. She spoke at the 2006 Unmet Transit Needs hearing and thought this was addressed but it hasn't been. Can the existing service to the Wilkerson neighborhood be extended on a call-stop basis?*

### **Executive Director's Recommendations:**

1. This is not an unmet transit need. Transportation from Wilkerson to Bishop is currently available on a call-stop basis from the Lone Pine to Bishop bus.

At this year's hearing, Mr. Charles Broten of IMAAA said there is an Unmet Transit Need for roundtrip transportation of senior citizens from Bishop to Keough's Hot Springs Resort with a stopover for people seeking a therapeutic soak in the hot springs. It is also likely that children and young adults looking to swim at the pool will use this service. Staff concurs that this may be an unmet transit need. It is recommended that Inyo Mono Transit extend the regularly scheduled Wilkerson service twice daily to Keough's Hot Springs Resort as a pilot route. This will give Bishop residents who need hot springs therapy several options for roundtrip travel to Keough's Hot Springs Resort and should also address Ms. Sparrow's need.

Though the Wilkerson route is scheduled six times a day, several of those trips are on a call-stop basis. Inyo Mono Transit indicates that they average around four trips a day to Wilkerson. Inyo Mono Transit does not anticipate that an additional call-stop in Keough's will compromise the timeliness of their Wilkerson service. Keough's Hot Springs is open from 11:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. and closed on Tuesdays. It is recommended that the Bishop to Wilkerson call-stop service be extended to Keough's Hot Springs at 11:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. and; for Wilkerson to Bishop, the corresponding 12:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. service. This pilot route will extend the service approximately two miles. IMT will need to report back to the Commission as to the amount of use for this extension. They can quantify this by either figuring the farebox for this portion of the trip or by calculating the number of times they stop at Keough's.

### **Ms. Lee Barron, Southern Inyo Health Care District:**

1. *There is an unmet transit need for Southern Inyo Health Care District to have a transit service funded by the Inyo County LTC. There is limited availability of radiological, cardiac, and dermatological, and other types of specialty care services in the Owens Valley. There is an unmet transit need for transporting specialty care patients to Ridgecrest, Lancaster, and Loma Linda.*

### **Executive Director's Recommendations:**

1. There are unmet needs for the transportation of specialty care patients out of the area from the southern Owens Valley. IMT drivers are not trained to provide service to specialty care patients. At this point, we don't have enough information to know if this request is reasonable to meet. Right now, the estimated budget for the first year of the Southern Inyo Healthcare District Transportation Department would be \$418,892. There are not adequate TDA funds available to cover this. LTC staff met with Ms. Barron to discuss her plans. LTC staff will assist Ms. Barron by working cooperatively with Caltrans to identify the availability of funding resources and to explore other startup options.

**Mr. Charles Broten, Inyo Mono Area Agency on Aging:**

1. *Concerned that local transportation service will be reduced by the change of organization of Inyo Mono Transit to the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority.*
2. *There is an unmet transit need for roundtrip transit service from Lone Pine to Reno in a day.*
3. *There is an unmet transit need for more regular transit service to Keough's Hot Springs. There is also a need for people from Bishop to travel to Keough's Hot Springs for medicinal purposes. Soaking in hot springs brings relief to individuals with certain types of ailments.*
4. *Has safety concerns for pedestrians in Independence, Big Pine, and along North Sierra Highway in Bishop. He would like to have previous studies consolidated and then a plan initiated to mitigate these impacts.*

**Executive Director's Recommendations:**

1. This is not an unmet transit needs request. The change in organization is a process. Routes identified through the unmet transit needs hearing process can only be discontinued by the LTC. The County will still conduct the Unmet Transit Needs process in conjunction with Eastern Sierra Transit Authority.
2. Roundtrip transportation from Lone Pine to Reno is more of a coordination issue than an unmet transit need. See response No. 2 to Mr. Frank Williams comment.
3. This qualifies as an unmet transit need and may be reasonable to meet if farebox warrants it. See the reply to Ms. Sparrow's unmet transit need request. It is recommended that Inyo Mono Transit extend the Bishop to Wilkerson call-stop service to Keough's Hot Springs twice daily as a pilot route.
4. This is not an unmet transit need request. This is a safety concern. The LTC will work cooperatively with Caltrans to address safety concerns in the US Highway 395 corridor.

**Mr. Charles James, Healthy Communities of Southern Inyo:**

1. *There is an unmet transit need for greater flexibility in transit service between communities in Inyo County.*
2. *There is an unmet need for underprivileged children to visit local outstanding tourist attractions. He state that he knew multiple children in youth programs in Los Angeles who had climbed Mt. Whitney, that he knew of none from the Owens Valley that had*

*climbed it. He requested \$10,000 for the provision of transportation to and from southern Inyo County communities.*

**Executive Director's Recommendations:**

1. This is not an unmet transit need. The Inyo County Local Transportation Commission is hiring a consultant to create a matrix of transportation providers and the services they provide. This study will identify opportunities to make local transit more efficient. The Inyo County LTC will forward any recommendations to Inyo Mono Transit/Eastern Sierra Transit Authority.
2. To qualify as an unmet transit need, trips to "Movies Nights" and the "Big Back Yard Program" would need to be considered as "social service appointments." The transportation of "economically disadvantaged youth and their families" to a variety of community activities could be considered as "social service appointments." The ICLTC does not have enough information to evaluate if this is an unmet transit need. LTC staff will meet with Mr. James and discuss further possibilities for his program. The LTC will need to see a more detailed concept plan before it can make a decision regarding this matter.

**Mr. Richard Cervantes, Inyo County Supervisor:**

1. *There is an unmet transit need for one-day roundtrip transit between Lone Pine and Reno.*
2. *There is an unmet transit need for weekly transit service for seniors in Keeler/Darwin/Olancho for medical appointments and shopping in Lone Pine. What is the status of the Keeler/Darwin/Olancho route that had been discussed at last year's unmet needs hearing. A survey was completed that showed about 30 people in these communities would be interested in using this service. Could CREST be used to meet this service on an on-call basis?*

**Executive Director's Recommendations:**

1. See the response to Mr. William's comment No. 2.
2. This is not an unmet transit need. This was addressed at last year's unmet transit needs meeting. At the request of the LTC, Inyo Mono Transit conducted a survey analyzing what the ridership would be for this route. While the survey numbers were relatively low, a pilot route was initiated as a result of last year's unmet needs hearings. At this time, Inyo Mono Transit has not been able to hire a driver and is still advertising for a driver to complete this route. Inyo Mono Transit will update the Commission in the future about the status of this pilot route.

**Testimony Presented at the Social Services Transit Advisory Committee Meeting on February 22, 2007 at Bishop, California**

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**Mr. Rick Franz, Caltrans:**

1. *There is an unmet transit need for one-day roundtrip transit between Lone Pine/Independence and Reno because the earliest bus from Lone Pine does not arrive in Bishop until after the northbound CREST bus has left.*

**Executive Director's Recommendations:**

1. See the response to Mr. William's comment No. 2 from the April 18, 2007 unmet transit needs hearing.

**Ms. Deborah Morales, Kern Regional Center:**

1. *There is an unmet transit need for a longer stopover in Ridgecrest in the current roundtrip bus service. The current CREST service does not allow for patients to spend enough time in Ridgecrest given that the stopover overlaps the lunch hour.*

**Executive Director's Recommendations:**

1. This is not an unmet transit need. There is currently service to Ridgecrest from Lone Pine. This is a transit coordination issue. Through coordination with Southern Inyo Healthcare District and the development of their proposed transportation department, it is possible that this service will be provided in the future.

attachments: April 17, 2007 Letter from Stacy Sparrow  
Southern Inyo Hospital District Transportation Department Proposal  
Proposed Southern Inyo Hospital Healthcare District Transportation Dept. Budget  
April 18, 2007 Letter from Charles James of Healthy Communities  
IMAAA Unmet Transit Needs Testimony Letter  
IMAAA Other Transit Needs from Advisory Council  
Inyo Mono Transit Bishop to Wilkerson Schedule  
Inyo Mono Transit Bishop to Lone Pine Schedule