



INYO COUNTY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION



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Michael Errante, Executive Director

MINUTES

INYO COUNTY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

On-line Only

All members of the public are encouraged to participate in the discussion of any items on the Agenda. Questions and comments will be accepted via e-mail to: jkokx@invocounty.us. Any member of the public may also make comments during the scheduled "Public Comment" period on this agenda concerning any subject related to the Inyo County Local Transportation Commission. PUBLIC NOTICE: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Transportation Commission Secretary at (760) 878-0201. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the Inyo County Local Transportation Commission to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting (28CFR 35. 102-35. ADA Title II).

February 15, 2023

9:04 a.m. Open Meeting

1. Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Stephen Muchovej
Celeste Berg
Doug Thompson
Jose Garcia
Scott Marcellin
Jennifer Roeser

Others Present:

Marilyn Mann Inyo County
Darcia Blackdeer Lent Inyo County
Jenny Park IMAH
Phil Moores ESTA
Elaine Kabala City of Bishop
Nora Gamino City of Bishop Public Works Director
Brandon Bardonex Inyo County Public Works
Justine Kokx Inyo County Public Works/LTC
Ashley Helms Inyo County Public Works
Grace Chuchla Inyo County Counsel

Meaghan McCammon Inyo County
Neil Peacock Caltrans
Juven Alvarez Caltrans
Catharine Crayne Caltrans
Mark Heckman Caltrans
Stephanie (?) Caltrans
Lauren Prehoda Caltrans
Nathan Robinson USFS
Don Mcghie LADWP
Kristin Goree Caltrans

2. Public Comment
3. Presentation by Inyo County Counsel Grace Chuchla regarding the Brown Act and teleconference rules upon termination of the COVID-19 state of emergency.

Grace's presentation prompted various questions around AB 2449, which allows for a limited number of times per year that a Board member may participate remotely (2x with "just cause"), there must be a quorum in person, and the Board must vote on the remote participations.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Consent Agenda
 - a. Staff of the Local Transportation Commission - Request approval of the minutes of the meeting of January 18, 2023.

***Motion to approve was made by Commissioner Roeser and seconded by Commissioner Garcia. All in favor (Muchovej absent).**

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. Caltrans presentation of the Road Charge Pilot Study by Lauren Prehoda.

Lauren's presentation prompted a variety of questions from the Commissioners and attendees:

What about the possibility of double taxation during the rollout phase (Lauren explained that during the rollout phase the amount of tax paid for gas will be deducted from the road tax, thereby eliminating double taxation). Other questions came in regarding the challenges of collecting road charge taxes from interstate travelers and tourists (Yes, that is a challenge, and anticipates a balancing out to occur. Higher tech reporting will help with out-of-state mileage tracking. Working with other states to develop a system for interoperability similar to the Fuel Tax Agreement). What about just charging EV users a tax, rather than a mileage-based tax on everyone? (EV registration is \$100 per year, annual average gas taxes are \$300 per year. No way to capture taxes on EV's charging at home vs. charging stations). How will this impact

tribes who under the current system do not have to collect gas tax? (This is an interesting dilemma that will need to be worked out during the next decade or so. Any entity whose funding is based on the sale of gasoline will need to look at diversifying their revenue). What about heavier vehicles? (Anything 10,000 lbs. and below is considered a passenger vehicle, impacts to roads are reasonably similar in that weight range. Commercial vehicles are above 10K and will be dealt with differently because they already pay weight fees). Will the State be looking at insurance tech companies as third-party vendors to provide the road charge billing services? (Yes, absolutely. Usage based insurance was actually tested in the last pilot. These companies are a natural fit since they already track mileage, they will simply need to add a line item on that monthly bill. Potentially expands their business opportunities and keeps administrative costs down). Many Californians are not going to like having to pay per mile, why not raise fees on EV's? (That could potentially be a path, and ultimately, the legislature will have to debate this thoroughly. A flat fee for every EV driver may not be fair if one drives 2,500 miles per year vs. 50,000). Inyo County is unique in that we don't have to smog our vehicles every other year like other counties. Recommend taking that into consideration when thinking about how much to charge per mile, perhaps rural areas should pay less than urban counterparts due to fewer impacts to air quality.

Reminder to sign up for the pilot study, the more rural engagement the better! Rural drivers face unique issues and have a different perspective. Rural feedback is essential. Check out the calculator on the road charge pilot website to gain an estimate of what you will be paying under a road charge system using the number of miles you drive.

<http://www.caroadcharge.com/engage/contact-us/>

Calculator: <http://www.caroadcharge.com/about>

3. Discuss the option to change ICLTC regular meeting start time to 8:00 am.

Commissioner Muchovej asked to discuss this possibility to reduce the amount of down time for the Commissioners that have regular jobs in addition to volunteering to be on a board. Would not need to take off as much time. Commissioner Garcia agreed, but recommended starting at 3 or 4 pm, towards the end of the day. Chair Berg and Commissioner Roeser both wanted to take into consideration the drive times for all participants, as well as accessibility to the public. Vice Chair Thompson also wanted to make sure that agency staff can accommodate that start time. Consensus was to try the early eight o'clock start around the June meeting, after any technology kinks at the various in person meeting locations have been worked out (City, COB, and Independence). Will need a Resolution to change the meeting time.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

4. FY2022-2023 Q2 Overall Work Plan and Rural Planning Assistance invoice

5. Synopsis of County operations on Buttermilk Road

Commissioner Muchovej wanted clarification about who is maintaining the Buttermilk Road. His understanding is that the County requested that it be a County Road, therefore the County is obligated to maintain the road. There is a project from ESCOG to install a toilet there. How is that possible with the road being in that condition? Nathan Robinson provided an update. The USFS is willing to work with the County to repair the road to make sure the toilet installation happens and is willing to lend a hand if Inyo needs assistance with the road. Commissioner Roeser thanked Stephen for keeping this topic at the forefront. She wants to be respectful of the ESCOG moving forward with the project, she had an opportunity to speak with Elaine to ensure the RFP incorporated local considerations about the overarching recreation plan. At the same time she has been working with the County Admin around how to develop a stakeholder working group. Would appreciate Stephen's involvement. The Buttermilk area is so expansive, all the way to the Tablelands, Rovana, etc. Elaine Kabala provided an update on the Buttermilk plan. ESCOG has a project looking at convening stakeholder meetings to get input from residents and stakeholders. Awarded a contract on Friday. Stay tuned for an upcoming website for the ESCOG and its activities. Commissioner Muchovej brought up the final paragraph of the Buttermilk Road maintenance summary; it didn't sit well with him, that the County decides to leave a road in bad condition in order to reduce dust that an otherwise well-maintained road might stir up for Starlite residents. Chair Berg agreed. Doesn't think dust is a good strategy for developing policies for road maintenance. Commissioner Muchovej asked if an option might be to bring it up to stay current with Forest Service standards. Nathan reiterated that the USFS desires to have the County retain the responsibility for maintenance, not the USFS. Vice Chair Thompson brought up the similarities between the Buttermilks and the Alabama Hills. The use has increased. It's a long process to create a management plan, which is further complicated by having multiple landowners and agencies out there. A long process. Commissioner Roeser added that she really admires the work the Alabama Hills Stewardship group has accomplished. That is exactly the kind of process that is needed in the Buttermilk region. There is a lack of cohesive agreement on what kind of maintenance is needed. Really what it comes down to is kinds of use, how are the uses managed? Need an overarching management plan. Need to model after the Alabama Hills Stewardship group. So incredibly complex, some want it paved, some don't. Need everybody at the table to agree on standards. With the various stakeholders, landowners, and interests, it's a confounding situation. Commissioner Muchovej mentioned leveraging funding that the GBUAPCD gets. Also brought up a need to put a seasonal ban on dispersed camping. Vice Chair Thompson replied that the process of developing a management plan requires becoming scribes, we don't get to impose personal desires in the process. Let the people decide. Not all are happy, but at the end of the day it's a great process. Chair Berg summarized the conversation by reiterating the need for USFS to coordinate with the County for the toilet installation. Also, to continue to monitor the progress made by ESCOG and the development of a working group. Commissioner Roeser really wants to start that process. Commissioner Muchovej wonders if the statement that the road would be allowed to deteriorate to the point of neglect potentially puts the County in a position of liability if the County is purposefully neglecting the road. Follow up needed with County Counsel. Nora Gamino provided some clarification from her perspective as a former USFS staff: There are two discreet sections of road that can't be talked about together. The County maintains the first ~8 miles. From 168 to cattleguard -the first three miles - there is no USFS maintenance designation there. After the cattleguard the USFS designates it as level II – high clearance 4x4. The first three miles is the area of discussion/concern.

6. ESTA Report

Ridership in December was only down about 13% since pre-COVID. Pretty good, making a comeback. Recruitment is still down, despite a wage increase. Caltrans, Inyo and DWP are getting closer to helping ESTA with the building project work-around. Thanks to Commissioner Roeser, and Neil who have stepped in to help. Hopefully this will move forward this year. Social Services Transit Advisory Council meeting is happening next Tuesday the 21st at 9:00 am. Phil will recommend to the Board to begin Reno Saturdays. Submitting a grant application to cover 50% of the cost. It's a risk, but it's worth it. Just need to do it. Not sure if it will start in Lone Pine or Bishop, depends on drivers. Please comment on Reno Saturdays by March 31st for the ESTA Board meeting on April 14th. pmoores@estransit.com Vice Chair Thompson added that we could solicit funds from businesses. Whether it starts from LP or Bishop, it doesn't matter.

7. Caltrans Report

Neil confirmed that progress is being made on the ESTA building project "workaround." Updated about State highway conditions and closures due to weather. Moving forward with Keough project (environmental) will include complete street features, two-lane separation for bicyclists and turning features at Gerkin Rd., Keough H.S. and 395. Ready to list SR 168 bike ped project. Bishop raised median project crews will be out there soon. Working with Inyo LTC to screen Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant for EV planning. Quick Maps is valuable for public and elected officials to see up to date information about projects and events. **From Chat:** <https://quickmap.dot.ca.gov/> *For those with sensory disabilities requiring alternate formats (i.e. Braille, large print, sign language interpreter, etc.) and those needing information in a language other than English, please contact Bob Gossman at 760-881-7145 or TTY 711.* Also working with Fort Independence Tribe on a grant application to look for solutions to dangerous crossing issues, the community is on one side of Hwy 395, the Fort businesses are on the other side of the highway. Many safety issues there with line of sight and curve. Phil brought up that the Big Pine Tribe reached out to him about the need for a transit stop. He is always willing to engage, especially with Tribes, please loop him in if needed. Vice Chair Thompson brought up the pedestrian strike in Lone Pine. Follows the one a couple of months ago. Also, a pole strike and a projectile. What is the timeline for construction of complete streets, such as bulb outs? Neil said he will put the construction timelines in writing and will send to Justine for distribution.

8. City of Bishop Report

Nora had a meeting with Neil and Elaine regarding the City's involvement with the LTC. East Line Street Bridge continues to move forward. Alternatives analysis phase has begun and will bring this to the public, more to come. Whitney Alley project green infrastructure project pre-design approved by Council. Will be moving forward with outreach & engagement. Integrating City's priorities into the Caltrans Bishop Pavement project. The Council's priority is downtown beautification. Raised medians starting later this month, the City will be assisting as needed.

9. Tribal Report

None

10. DVNP Report

None

11. USFS Report

Nathan Robinson Acting Forest Engineer, Inyo National Forest, provided the USFS report, he will be happy to collaborate with the LTC moving forward. Assessing damage from January storms. Lower country OHV roads were primarily affected. Looking at prioritizing repairs. A lot of the damage begins on County roads, continues onto BLM roads, and ends up on USFS roads. Poleta Rd., Black Cyn., Coyote Flat, Silver Cyn. have the most damage. Nathan.g.robinson@usda.gov

12. Executive Director's Report

Mike and Shannon were not available, Justine summarized the ongoing projects of the County and the LTC. Ashley Helms updated the Commission on airport activities and commercial air service. Flights currently between Denver and Bishop and SF and Bishop. Loads are significantly higher than last year, especially the Denver flight. Winter season will continue through March 25th, after that the SF flight will taper off, then weekend service through the next two weekends. Last flight April 9th. Hiatus through spring. Summer service to-from SF picking back up on June 23rd. Those tickets are available to book now and are reasonably priced. Not sure if it is a 6- or 7-day service. Commissioner Roeser was on the Denver flight recently and noted it was quite full.

13. Reports from all members of the Inyo County LTC

None. Chair Berg requested to have special workshops about the RTIP and RTP & MOU.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned until 9 a.m., Wednesday March 15, 2023, Quilter Consolidated Office Building, Conference Room # 207

UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS

- Social Services Transit Advisory Committee and Unmet Needs meeting & public hearing
- Adopt FY2023-2024 Overall Work Program
- Apportion FY2023-2024 LTF and STA allocations
- RTP, RTIP and ATP project prioritization
- MOU and negotiations Inyo County LTC, Mono County LTC, and Kern Cog