

Mono County Local Transportation Commission

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MINUTES

December 14, 2015
(Adopted February 8, 2016)

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

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

COUNTY STAFF: Scott Burns, Jeff Walters, Garrett Higerd, Paul Roten, Gerry Le Francois, Megan Mahaffey, CD Ritter

TOWN STAFF: Grady Dutton

CALTRANS: Brent Green, Ryan Dermody, Jad Andari

ESTA: John Helm

GUESTS: Consultant Sandra Bauer; Phil & Kathy Higerd

1. **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chair Fred Stump called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. at the Town/County Conference Room, Minaret Village Mall, Mammoth Lakes, and attendees recited the pledge of allegiance.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

3. **MEETING MINUTES:**

MOTION: Adopt minutes of Nov. 9, 2015, as amended: 1) Item 2, last sentence: Airlines **proposal in progress is to** sell tickets that include pass-through opportunities. 2) Item 9B, first sentence: **Meridian Minaret/Forest Trail** roundabout proposed 20 years ago. (Hogan/Johnston. Ayes: 5. Abstain due to absence: Holler.)

4. **LOCAL TRANSPORTATION**

A. **Resolution of Appreciation:** Chair Stump read aloud a resolution of appreciation to Garrett Higerd, whose parents were present.

MOTION: Present resolution of appreciation to Garrett Higerd. (Fesko/Johnston. Ayes: 6-0.)

Consultant Sandra Bauer, who was key in environmental document for Convict Lake project, described thorough pleasure working with Higerd.

5. **A. PUBLIC HEARING – Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update:** Scott Burns presented background on legally required five-year update that took advantage of new State requirements to integrate with other updates including General Plan and Housing Element, available for grants. CEQA involved. Funded by Strategic Growth Council \$325,000 grant combined with Overall Work Program (OWP) funding. Took advantage of LTC items: 395 Corridor Enhancement blueprint, Bridgeport Main Street complete streets, land ownership adjustment planning, safety, floods, fire safe. Burns commended diverse team of staff, consultants, and agencies, highlighting contributions of each.

Gerry Le Francois noted Antelope Valley RPAC spent time on RTP functions, pedestrian, transit, bikes, vehicles, road network, and state/federal system. The RTP serves dual purpose as Circulation Element for General Plan. Most recent outreach to RPACs on all updates. LTC has given good feedback.

Wendy Sugimura released draft July 31, comments closed Sept. 29. Comments from Planning Commission, Mono Supervisors, Caltrans.

Final EIR response to comments: Sugimura reviewed comments from Great Basin Air Pollution Control District; Paradise resident on recreation, climbing lanes, and foot paths (no policy changes); Mono Lake

Committee on wildlife collisions, bike path to consider (added to bike transportation plan); USFWS on wildlife collisions, carcass disposal, roads in sage grouse habitat; PC/BOS: BOS said truck traffic data accurately represented Mono's concerns, so leave it in (approving body, so it stayed). Being data-driven, however, Caltrans perceived terms affecting data sets/programs, legal implications, and potential liability.

Interstate truck routes: Define legal implications, or just Caltrans responsibility? Dermody stated safety and hazardous are triggering mechanisms. Safety program exists. Hot spot, have a problem. Using terms affects data sets, programs. Use only when truly have hot spot.

Prioritize Caltrans work? Dermody stated if data set backs up issue. Green couldn't speak to whether Mono would be liable, but Caltrans would be.

Stump wanted to push back against bureaucracies. Term hazardous can go, but safety needs to stay. This is our document, will reflect concerns of our citizens. Send message that it still needs to be looked at.

What criteria triggered by safety? Dermody noted Caltrans uses accident-driven data, SWITRS (Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System) does statewide. If multiple accidents, safety program funds can fix. On record today stating no documented safety issue with trucks.

Another word to imply same thing without triggering safety word? Hogan noted SWITRS is done per capita. Dermody indicated similar traffic, same number of lanes. Hogan thought rural world totally different. Narrow shoulders, big trucks, little risks, hazards. Safety a real issue. Johnston suggested footnote – "not safety as defined by Caltrans."

Green stated future Mono projects Mammoth Lakes north (shoulder, rumble strips, etc.) will improve safety. Caltrans definition of safety is more rigid.

Hogan noted deer collisions not reported. SWITRS data one thing, reality something else. Fesko saw reality from Mono's point of view, not Caltrans. All based on perspective. Becomes relative. Maybe footnote to exclude. "Increased levels" is a safety concern. Maybe graph or chart OK. Footnote OK? Have Caltrans craft wording to its satisfaction. Treat Caltrans as partner even though it's Mono's document.

Sugimura suggested highways part of international truck network. Not use "heavy." Dermody thought data show "increasing" truck traffic.

Sugimura stated Katz study is being updated, may include projections. Holler noted not yet funded. Green indicated accurate info would help secure funding.

Stump reminded speed limits are set by State law. Reducing speed limit in Chalfant was defeated in Sacramento. Try: "Encourage changes or flexibility in State laws to allow for greater speed limit reductions in communities where major highways go through communities and speed has become an issue." Mechanism for local entity to funnel request? Strengthen wording. Holler suggested, "This is a main street, not a freeway."

Johnston asked if LTC wishes to pursue special circumstance legislation to allow lowering speed limits for bedroom communities. Stump thought legislation should provide pathway for local concerns to be processed or give Caltrans flexibility to address speed limits in local areas. Maybe policy item elsewhere, not p. 42.

Hogan asked if something could be added at this late date? Sugimura replied, "Yes. Find appropriate wording. Policy more likely in p. 85 under 8A. Add something to work with Caltrans and other stakeholders on options related.

--- Break: 10:25-10:30 ---

Sugimura: Edit p. 42: Speeds on US 395 along Mono Lake in Mono City.

Midwest guardrail = standard, a brand, separate from finish (shiny galvanized). Johnston suggested new guardrail rather than specifying exact kind. Higerd stated guardrail different height than historic, safer. Midwest is engineering specification for height and hardware, not manufacturer (multiple manufacturers). Add 10.B.5: Utilize self-weathering finishes

Trails Plan: Emotional on OHV, so minimize user conflict, advised PC & BOS.

Sugimura will make policy and info changes, get back to LTC.

Sandra Bauer mentioned scoping meeting with California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) and Mountain Warfare Training Center (MWTC). Three comments: Lahontan, CA Parks & Recreation, and Caltrans. Released draft, gave public 60 days to comment. Half of 16 comments strictly concerned projects. Comments helpful, constructive. Caltrans: Wide range of topics including airport safety, scenic highway, etc. Final EIR prepared to address comments, identified large number of significant environmental impacts. No significant effects on transportation issues.

USFWS satisfied with response? **Sandra** Bauer noted sufficiently content to not take further steps. Commended Mono for policies to enable species to be addressed through planning. Mono commended on biological.

Rumblings about sage grouse in Nevada, political pressure. How affect? Burns noted BLM funds Mono to participate in LAWG (Local Area Working Group) projects. Mono is committed, not want listing.

Stump complimented Sandra Bauer as part of positive comment letters. Process made it possible, she said. Hogan noted Sandra Bauer has 20 years in area. Sandra Bauer stated mitigation involved policies.

Compact development alternatives affect future land exchanges like Pine Glade? Not identified, bring up at RPACs. Burns stated compact looks at adjusting land use designations, more involved, contentious.

Sandra Bauer noted it would show higher potential development than proposed General Plan. Want benchmark to compare; no project alternative does that.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING: No comments. **CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING.**

Truck traffic: US 395 and 6 are part of the National Truck Network and experience increasing truck traffic that can impact residential communities along these routes. According to Caltrans, narrow shoulders pose a concern, but not a hazard. Pursue changes in State legislation or other methods to provide for flexibility to set speed limits based on special local conditions and circumstances. Use self-weathering steel or similar finishes when feasible in transportation projects.

Stump commended Sugimura for complimentary agency comments on EIR.

MOTION: Adopt Resolution R15-09 making Responsible Agency findings under CEQA, and approving and adopting the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program and the 2015 Regional Transportation Plan; direct staff to make administrative edits and corrections as necessary; and direct staff to file the Notice of Determination. (*Hogan/Johnston. Ayes: 6-0.*)

B. PUBLIC HEARING – Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP): Gerry Le Francois noted carryover of ~ \$2 million. Town has two big-ticket items that might be voted on. 2016 starts July 1. Mono column potentially in jeopardy. STIP every two years. California Transportation Commission met last week, adopted allocation plan \$150 million; no money to allocate to projects. Le Francois will email final version. 3090: Locals can front money, State could approve or give back money. Outside money tied up in transportation, not want to lose. Preconstruction funding: Get closer to allocating. Local projects tend to suffer. If not in top echelon, no money to allocate.

Olancha/Cartago construction likely move back. Unfunded local projects back also.

Added half million for ESTA vehicles. Very little new programming. Ironic to accept/reject RTIP, but move stuff around. 57 other RTIPs exist.

Green noted original 2015-16 allocation was ~ \$600 million. Went down, leaving \$150 million short. Gas prices declining, so just getting worse. All projects are worthy, but if no money, no money. Instead of fighting over scraps, push projects and legislation to increase funding. Highest priority is ESTA. Olancha/Cartago could move back, Freeman Gulch 2 likely to move forward.

In danger of being moved into future? Le Francois recalled past RTIPs in this position. Mono should look at programming – not done this time. Local projects always second. Due to State tomorrow.

Green presented LTC priorities. Le Francois stated Mono and Town still should submit to show ready; State could defer allocation. Green attended once, articulated concerns. Wentworth hoped patience would be rewarded, but unlikely. Maybe start advocating. Green saw government kicking can down road five years. Looking at no-charge pilot program.

Johnston attended CSAC conference workshop on this. Gas tax needs to be raised now, not in 25 years. Pathetic, shameful not to address. Way behind eight ball.

Fesko wanted rural perspective; urged people to look at joining pilot program. Drive lots of miles, not use as much gas as urban (mile lanes used). Get voices heard. CA road charge pilot program. Any type of road charge would be 10 years out. Do something that's indexed. Johnston noted all studies have shown way behind, but legislature two votes off.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING: No comments. **CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING.**

MOTION: Adopt Resolution R15-10 approving the 2016 RTIP and allow staff to make any minor technical corrections. (*Johnston/Holler. Ayes: 6-0.*)

6. ADMINISTRATION

A. Amendment to OWP budget: Megan Mahaffey noted OWP adjustment. Funding to projects short on funding. Rollover and altering budgets to get through till May to reallocate funding.

MOTION: Adopt Amendment 01 to the Mono County OWP 2015-16 to incorporate an additional \$6,001 into the Planning, Programming and Monitoring (PPM) Work Element budgets and an additional \$9,417 into the Rural Planning Assistance (RPA) Work Element budgets; and authorize LTC executive director to sign adjusted Overall Work Program Agreement (OWPA) via minute order M15-05.
(Hogan/Holler. Ayes: 6-0.)

B. Collaborative Work Agreement (CWA) extension for scenic byway grant: Megan Mahaffey provided background. August 2010 scenic highway nomination funded with local match is set to expire next year. Dermody noted ultimate decision maker is CA Department of Finance.

Scott Burns did not expect quick response, so get reimbursed as much as possible. When it started, prompting by Town staff, financing mechanism. Pot of money if actually designated as scenic byway, but pot sent away. If money not come back, want more to show for efforts than plan on shelf. Have web presence, tool for visitors and policymakers. FUTURE AGENDA. Dermody advised giving money back if no project is proposed.

MOTION: Authorize LTC executive director to sign CWA requesting an extension to the unliquidated balance on the Highway 395 Corridor Management Plan. (Fesko/Wentworth. Ayes: 6-0.)

7. COMMISSIONER REPORTS: Reports deferred. Commissioner Stump relayed a message from Supervisor Alpers ~~thanked~~ **thanking** Caltrans for installing second gate near Grant Lake.

8. TRANSIT

A. Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA): John Helm said countywide ridership was off charts. Mammoth up 15%, Reno up 22%, MMSA routes 150% in November. Thanksgiving weekend borderline out of control. All traveled to Main Lodge on one road, only Main was open. Challenges worked through, but many vehicles on one road. Situation where more buses wouldn't help – sitting on bus instead of waiting at bus stop. Normally, 25 min from Snowcreek to Main Lodge. Saturday morning took hour + 20 min.

Wrapping up vehicle damages; last bus returning tomorrow. Updating short-range transit plan; final draft in January. Good product going. Procurement finalized by Inyo LTC/Mono LTC, two good proposals. Multi-year performance audits, six-year report.

Mammoth Express transported eight riders today. Reno bus departure time changed, working well except in weather. Three times dispatched separate dedicated vehicle to run on time.

B. Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS): Working on amended packet on Joint Powers Authority, bylaws and Authority Advisory Committee.

9. CALTRANS

A. Transportation Concept Report on SR 203: Dermody introduced Jad Andari. Johnston departed, so thanked for concept report and suggested segment 1 was ripe for uphill bike lane, a la Mono's efforts.

--- Commissioners Wentworth & Johnston departed at 11:50 a.m. ---

Andari requested email comments on SR 203 by Jan. 30. Bring back later? Yes, to LTC in February.

B. Activities in Mono County: SR 108 truck restriction. Actual route needs little signs 1 mi apart all along regarding public hearing. Didn't happen, so rejected. Try again, notice as mentioned, 10-day public process. Snow on pass now, closed. Post/notice it in spring. Fesko was disappointed lawyers got involved.

10. INFORMATIONAL: Inyo County hired two county counsel staff (Marshall Rudolph and John Vallejo). Stacey Simon designated acting county counsel. County counsel office authorized to look at outside contracting. Downside is higher demand on services; requested patience with legal services.

11. UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS: 1) Feedback on RTIP submittal. If no urgent items, move to February. Elect new chair in February, Town's turn at chair position.

12. ADJOURN at 11:58 a.m. to Jan. 11, 2016, only if pressing items. Stump thanked LTC, Caltrans for honest input, give and take.

Prepared by CD Ritter, LTC secretary