



**Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)
Authority Advisory Committee
MINUTES**

DATE

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

The regular meeting of the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) Authority Advisory Committee (AAC) held Wednesday, October 18, 2017 at the Merced County Association of Governments, Front Conference Room, 369 W. 18th Street, Merced, CA and conducted by video/teleconference at the Sierra Center Mall, Board of Supervisors Conference Room, Third Floor, 452 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes, CA, Fresno Council of Governments, 2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201, Fresno, CA and Mariposa County government Center, Board of Supervisors Chambers, 5100 Bullion Street, Mariposa, CA and was called to order by Danna Stroud at 10:14 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Karen Baker, California Welcome Center, Merced
 Jim Donovan, Yosemite National Park
 Sandy Hogan, Mono County LTC (via videoconference)
 Michelle Miller, Yosemite/Madera County Visitors Bureau
 Candy O'Donel-Browne, Mariposa County Economic Development Corp. (left at 10:40am)
 Terri Peresan, Mariposa County Department of Community Services
 Terry Selk, Yosemite/Mariposa Tourism Bureau
 Jeff Simpson, Mono County Economic Development (via videoconference)
 Steve Smallcombe, Upper Merced River Watershed Council
 Moses Stites, Fresno Rural Transit (via videoconference)
 Danna Stroud, Mono County Citizen (via teleconference)
 Nanette Villegas, Merced Mall

MEMBERS ABSENT

Tom Dumas, Caltrans, District 10
 Layla Forstedt, Fresno/Clovis Conference and Visitors Bureau
 Lisa Mayo, Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau
 Sean Williams, Holiday Inn Express
 Vacant, TheBus, Merced
 Vacant, Fresno

OTHERS PRESENT

Peggy Arnest, Fresno Council of Governments
 Michael Draper, Mono County
 Denise Demery, VIA Adventures
 Hub Walsh, Community Member

STAFF PRESENT

Cindy Kelly, Assistant Transit Manager
 Navneet Mattu, Transit Administrative Assistant
 Ty Phimmason, Associate Planner
 Patrick Pittenger, Executive Director
 Dick Whittington, Transit Manager
 Joy Young, Administrative Assistant

1. **Introductions**

Danna Stroud led the introductions and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Public comment**

None.

3. **Minutes of the July 19, 2017 YARTS Authority Advisory Committee meeting**

Jeff Simpson moved to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2017 YARTS Authority Advisory committee meeting with corrections to the closing sentence which stated Joint Powers Authority instead of Authority Advisory Committee.

Seconded by Sandy Hogan.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. **Information/Discussion only**

- a. Monthly Ridership and Customer Service Report for June 2017 - August 2017
- b. YARTS Ridership History
- c. YARTS Financial Report/Budget Update
- d. Minutes of the July 24, 2017 YARTS JPA meeting (to be approved at the October 23, 2017, JPA meeting)

Patrick Pittenger gave a brief introduction at the request of the committee chair, Danna Stroud.

5. **YARTS Free Service on Free National Park Service Gate Days Implementation Plan**

Cindy Kelly reported on the YARTS free service being offered on free National Park Service gate days along with the implementation plan.

Hub Walsh asked why we were not taking reservations for the free service on free gate days. Cindy stated that time restrictions were a factor and that it was based on first come, first served seating.

6. **YARTS FY 2015 - 16 Audit Rejection and Resolution**

Cindy Kelly informed the committee that the annual audit for YARTS FY 15-16 was rejected by the California State Controller's Office due to a compliance issue. Staff addressed the issue with a correction submitted within the same week with matters being reconciled by the California State Controller's office on August 25, 2017.

7. **YARTS Reservations Update**

Cindy Kelly gave an update on the YARTS reservations stating that YARTS and Betterez entered into a one-year contract starting December 17, 2016.

8. **YARTS Social Media Statistics**

Cindy Kelly gave a brief update on the YARTS Social Media Statistics stating that the YARTS website has averaged over 38,000 visits per month and that at least 53% of the visitors are using yarts.com for the first time.

9. **YARTS Emergency Procurement for Mariposa Park and Ride Sinkhole Repair**

Cindy Kelly reported on the YARTS Emergency Procurement for Mariposa Park and Ride Sinkhole repair stating on February 27, 2017, at 6:00 a.m., Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) staff received a call from Mariposa County Sheriff's department informing them of numerous reports of a developing sinkhole at the Mariposa Park and Ride. She stated that it was possibly caused by the continuing storm events in the area. At the direction of Public Works staff, the Mariposa County Public Utilities District (MPUD) was called to do an evaluation. Upon completion of the evaluation by MPUD, it was deemed that the site was unsafe and would need to be barricaded to prevent any additional property damage or possible injuries to those using the park & ride facility. Public Works barricaded and closed the site from public use that evening. YARTS staff applied for financial assistance from FEMA/CalOES. Additional storms caused additional material to "cave-in" and the Director strongly urged YARTS staff to get the sinkhole fixed as soon as possible to avoid more damage to the Park and Ride area. Staff employed an emergency procurement for the repairs at the Park and Ride.

10. **YARTS Ridership Surveys - Highways 395/120,41,120**

Cindy Kelly reported on the YARTS Ridership Surveys for Highways 395/120, 41,120 stating that the surveys are instrumental for determining service needs and scheduling for each corridor.

11. **YARTS Summer 2018 Schedules**

Cindy Kelly gave an update on the YARTS Summer 2018 Schedules stating that summer ridership has continued to increase over the years. She stated that staff has proposed changes in summer scheduling for the next year. Changes include:

- a. Transitioning the Mammoth Lakes to Tuolumne Meadow (Bus 2) service to a full Mammoth Lakes to Yosemite Valley service.
- b. Elimination of stops on the Highway 140 service in Merced; UC Merced, Merced College, Merced Mall, Merced M Street and schedule runs to encourage use of TheBus, Merced County public transit.
- c. Transitioning Runs 20 & 23 on Hwy 41 service from Fresno to Yosemite Valley to Oakhurst to Yosemite Valley and Yosemite Valley to Oakhurst. Add a stop at the Mariposa Grove transit hub.

12. **Caltrans Strategic Partnership Sustainable Communities Grant - Transit Feasibility Study for Hwy 49 South; between Hwy 140 and Hwy 41**

Sandy Hogan moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority authorize the Executive Director to accept and execute an agreement between Caltrans and Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System for the Strategic Partnership Sustainable Communities Grant for a Transit Feasibility Study on Hwy 49 South; between Hwy 140 and Hwy 41, if awarded.

Seconded by Jeff Simpson.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

13. **MCAG's 2017 - 2020 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) Programming to include CA FLAP Grant**

Ty Phimmason reported on MCAG's 2017-2020 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) Programming to include CA FLAP Grant and that YARTS was awarded Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant funding for three years to provide free transit service to the Yosemite National Park on free gate days.

14. **Designation of State Transit Assistance (STA) - Eligible Transit Operators - YARTS**

Ty Phimmasone reported on the designation of YARTS as an STA eligible transit operator stating YARTS as an STA-eligible transit operator will be an eligible claimant for regional STA funding.

At this time, Item 18 was heard out of order.

18. **YARTS Administration Transition Plan - Retirement of current YARTS Transit Manager**

Patrick Pittenger announced that Dick Whittington will be retiring from MCAG at the end of October and gave an update on the YARTS Administration Transition Plan stating that the Transit Director position is open. Staff is working on developing a staffing plan to share some YARTS tasks and responsibilities with other MCAG transit staff.

15. **YARTS 2017 - 2018 Budget Amendment No. 1**

Terri Peresan moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority approve the inclusion and expenditure of the CA Federal Lands Access Program Funding, State Transit Assistance Funding, FEMA/CalOES Funding and additional county contributions for the Short Range Transit Plan in the 2017-2018 Budget Amendment No. 1.

Seconded by Sandy Hogan.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

16. **Oral Report - National Park Service Report**

Jim Donovan gave the National Park Service report stating that the NPS participation with YARTS is still going strong and that now is a good time to visit the park as the weather has been great. Jim thanked Dick Whittington for his service and is glad he has had the opportunity to work with Dick. Jim stated that there would be intermittent road closures over the next few months and that the Mariposa Grove opening is being pushed back to possibly spring time.

17. **Oral Report - Manager's Report**

Cindy Kelly gave the Manager's Report stating that the Short Range Transit Plan consultant RFP will be out soon and she thanked Dick Whittington for his dedication and service to YARTS.

19. **Member Remarks**

Terry Selk thanked Dick Whittington for his years of hard work and dedication to YARTS.

Sandy Hogan stated that they had a meeting with CTC stating the importance of YARTS to the Eastside. She thanked Dick Whittington for his dedication and service to YARTS.

Jeff Simpson thanked Dick Whittington for his many years of service to YARTS.

Terri Peresan thanked Dick Whittington for his many years of service to YARTS.

Nanette Villegas thanked Dick Whittington for his many years of service to YARTS and mentioned the plans to renovate the Merced Mall and that they are in the process of hiring a new General Manager.

Steve Smallcombe thanked Dick Whittington for his many years of service to YARTS.

Danna Stroud thanked Dick Whittington for his many years of service to YARTS and how the growth of YARTS was due to his dedication and she also thanked Dick for not giving up on YARTS as it is such a benefit to our community.

Denise Demery thanked Dick Whittington for his many years of service to YARTS and appreciated the partnership with the contractor and his innovations.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE YARTS AUTHORITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 12:15 P.M.