



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

**DATE**

**Wednesday, April 4, 2018**

The regular meeting of the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) Authority Advisory Committee (AAC) held Wednesday, April 4, 2018, 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 Vice Chair Candy O'Donel-Browne at 10:10 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Karen Baker, California Welcome Center, Merced  
 Jim Donovan, Yosemite National Park  
 Sandy Hogan, Mono County LTC (via videoconference)  
 Steve Martinez, Caltrans, District 10 for Tom Dumas (via teleconference)  
 Candy O'Donel-Browne, Mariposa County Economic Development Corp.  
 Terri Peresan, Mariposa County Department of Community Services (via videoconference)  
 Terry Selk, Yosemite/Mariposa Tourism Bureau (via videoconference)  
 Steve Smallcombe, Upper Merced River Watershed Council  
 Nanette Villegas, Merced Mall  
 Hub Walsh, Private Citizen

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Layla Forstedt, Fresno/Clovis Conference and Visitors Bureau  
 Lisa Mayo, Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau  
 Michelle Miller, Yosemite/Madera County Visitors Bureau  
 Jeff Simpson, Mono County Economic Development  
 Moses Stites, Fresno Rural Transit  
 Sean Williams, Holiday Inn Express  
 Vacant, Fresno  
 Vacant, Mono

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Peggy Arnest, Fresno Council of Governments (via videoconference)  
 Denise Demery, VIA Adventures  
 Michael Draper, Mono County (via videoconference)  
 Gordon Shaw, LSC Transportation Consultant (via videoconference)

**STAFF PRESENT**

Cindy Kelly, Assistant Transit Manager  
 Navneet Mattu, Transit Admin. Assistant  
 Patrick Pittenger, Executive Director

1. **Introductions**

Candy O'Donel-Browne led the introductions and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Public comment**

None.

3. **Minutes**

Steve Smallcombe moved to approve the minutes from the:

- a. April 5, 2017, YARTS Authority Advisory Committee meeting
- b. October 18, 2017, YARTS Authority Advisory Committee meeting
- c. January 17, 2018, YARTS Authority Advisory Committee meeting

Seconded by Sandy Hogan.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. **Information/Discussion only**

- a. Monthly Ridership and Customer Service Report for December 2017 - February 2018
- b. YARTS Ridership History
- c. YARTS Financial Report/Budget Update
- d. Minutes of the January 22, 2018 YARTS JPA meeting (to be approved at the April 9, 2018, JPA meeting)

Cindy Kelly informed the committee that notes were added to Item 4a detailing ridership by location. Sandy Hogan stated that the additional information is very helpful.

Cindy Kelly stated that there has been some decline at certain locations in regard to ridership but overall there has been an increase in ridership.

Candy O'Donel-Browne stated that the purchase of the first bus was a huge deal but there are no plans for capital replacement. Patrick Pittenger responded that the first 10 buses were purchased without a capital replacement plan, but staff is currently working with our consultant on the Short Range Transit Plan to address this issue.

Sandy Hogan asked when we purchased our first bus and what funds were used to purchase the buses. Cindy Kelly responded that the first bus was purchased in 2010 with funds from the ARRA grant which are no longer available as a funding source. Sandy stated that it would be a great idea for YARTS to have a capital replacement plan.

Terri Peresan stated that we should put some money aside and save up for capital replacement. Cindy Kelly stated that YARTS is currently saving for that now.

5. **YARTS Social Media Statistics First Quarter 2018**

Cindy Kelly mentioned that the two most significant social media accounts for YARTS are the Facebook page and the YARTS website. She also stated that the average visitor engagement for the year was 2959 hits per week on Facebook and the YARTS website had over 212,000 views in the first quarter of 2018.

Sandy Hogan asked how people who do not use social media are tracked. Cindy Kelly responded that it is difficult for us to track other data and it is easier for us to track on social media. Sandy suggested that we add this to the on-board surveys for the Short Range Transit Plan.

Steve Smallcombe mentioned that there is a spike at January 15<sup>th</sup> service. Cindy Kelly responded that the reason for the spike is the free day; we had free service day on YARTS on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

Candy O'Donel-Browne asked if anyone is counting how many people were turned away on the free days. Cindy Kelly responded that we did not have anyone turned away on the free days. Sandy Hogan suggested that we have a contingency plan in place to have extra buses. Cindy responded that it will be difficult for us to pay for the extra buses; but we do inform our riders that the free day service is based on a first-come and first-serve basis and we suggest to them to take the earlier runs.

#### 6. **YARTS Reservation System Update**

Cindy Kelly gave an update on the YARTS reservation system stating that YARTS entered in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of online reservations and the statistics were provided for January - March 2018.

Cindy mentioned that people have already started to request summer schedules. The monthly passes are being built and we are hoping to initiate them by May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. Cindy also stated that staff is working on the reservation system to make it better.

Terry Selk congratulated Cindy Kelly for the improvement on the reservation system.

#### 7. **YARTS Free Day Update**

Cindy Kelly reported that there was a great turnout for the free service days and the ridership increased from last year. Cindy stated that November 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and January 15<sup>th</sup> were free service days on YARTS and the next free service dates are April 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. In November, a quarter of the ridership was from the free days.

Cindy stated that the promotion of free service days in April is going great in collaboration with UC Merced; we are cross promoting. UC Merced is promoting YARTS free service on Earth day while YARTS is promoting the Shakespeare event from UC Merced in Yosemite.

#### 8. **YARTS/NPS Cooperative Agreement - Amendment No. 4**

Cindy Kelly stated that this is the fourth year of the five-year Cooperative Agreement. The final modification of the amendment has been approved by the National Park Service. Once finalized, it will be executed by the Executive Director.

#### 9. **Mariposa County/YARTS Annual Agreement for Service, Fiscal Year 2018 - 2019**

Cindy Kelly informed the committee about the annual agreement between YARTS and Mariposa County for providing services and funding. Cindy stated that it has not changed from last year.

Terry Peresan mentioned that it was on their board agenda, and it did pass.

Sandy Hogan stated that for the contingency plan for the free days, we can ask other parties for their buses. Terry Peresan responded that they have a small transit agency and they only run for certain times.

#### 10. **YARTS/Fresno Council of Governments Agreement Fiscal Year 2018 - 2019 Amendment No. 2**

Cindy Kelly stated that YARTS is entering into its third year of contract with Fresno Council of Governments (FCOG). Cindy informed the committee that Amendment No. 2 to the YARTS/FCOG contract has been reviewed and signed by Counsel and the Executive Director and is currently being processed by the Fresno Council of Governments.

11. **YARTS Summer 2018 Schedules**

Cindy Kelly informed the committee of the YARTS 2018 Summer Schedules. Cindy mentioned that schedules have been released to the public and are distributed along each corridor, except for Mono County. Cindy stated that we are printing schedules in house this year and we have them personalized for each of the corridors. Cindy stated that we have deleted a few stops from the Merced Corridor to save time and cost of operation.

Steve Smallcombe commented that the schedules look great.

Terri Peresan asked for an electronic copy of the Hwy 140 schedules for summer 2018. Cindy Kelly made note of it and staff will send schedules to Terri.

12. **YARTS Operations Plan for Emergencies and Other Critical Events**

Cindy Kelly stated that staff has developed an Operations Plan for Emergencies and Other Critical Events. Cindy mentioned that the website is about 50% effective and Facebook is about 30% effective when it comes to emergency situations notifications. Cindy stated that we will deliver the Emergency Plan along with the schedules to each corridor.

Hub Walsh stated that it is a great idea to have a plan in place. The YARTS Operations Plan for Emergencies and Other Critical Events was praised by Candy O'Donel-Browne, Sandy Hogan and Terri Peresan.

13. **Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP)**

Cindy Kelly informed the committee that this is the first time we received LCTOP funds. Cindy stated that YARTS will provide discounted fares in Merced for the disadvantage community starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. Cindy mentioned that this program will accommodate 425 adults and 100 children in the City of Merced.

Karen Baker asked how YARTS will determine if someone qualifies. Cindy Kelly responded that staff will examine different types of ID's, such as: Medical card, EBT card or other ID's for proof of low income/disadvantaged community.

Terri Peresan stated that she does not oppose the requested action but chooses to abstain due to funding concerns.

Steve Smallcombe moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority adopt Resolution No. 2018-0216 authorizing the Acceptance of Funds and Project under the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program and authorizing the Executive Director as the Designated Agent.

Seconded by Karen Baker.

Abstain: Terri Peresan.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

14. **Fiscal Year 2018 - 2019 Caltrans 5311(f) Funding; Public Hearing and Resolution**

Cindy Kelly mentioned that the Intercity Bus 5311(f) Program has been a longstanding source of funding for YARTS and the primary aim of the program is to assure rural resident's access to the Intercity Bus in urban areas. Cindy stated that the funding cycle is open as of now and the application has become competitive.

Terry Peresan moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority:

- a. Hold a public hearing to allow for public comments on the application for funds from the Caltrans 5311(f) grant program for fiscal year 2018 - 2019; and
- b. Adopt Resolution No. 2018/04-09-01 authorizing funding under FTA Section 5311 (49 U.S.C. Section 5311) with the California Department of Transportation.

Seconded by Hub Walsh.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

15. **YARTS/MCAG Agreement for Services Fiscal Year 2018 - 2019**

Cindy Kelly reported that since 1999, Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) has provided transit service management and marketing, financial and grant administration, and transportation planning services to the YARTS Joint Powers Authority (JPA) through service agreements. Cindy stated that the Fiscal Impact is less in comparison to the previous years.

Hub Walsh mentioned that we are in the middle of the Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) and we should continue to work with MCAG. Sandy Hogan agrees and stated that we are functioning well staying with MCAG. Candy O'Donel-Browne congratulated Cindy for doing a great job with YARTS.

Hub Walsh moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority authorize the Chair to sign the Agreement for Service between the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System and Merced County Association of Governments for a period of one year commencing on July 1, 2018, and terminating on June 30, 2019.

Seconded by Steve Smallcombe.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

16. **YARTS 2017 - 2018 Budget Amendment No. 2**

Cindy Kelly informed the committee that YARTS has been awarded additional funding for FY 2017 - 2018 and requires board action to allocate and spend the funding. Cindy reported that the changes that are made to the budget are: inclusion of \$3,353 from the State of Good Repair Program and decrease of the State Transit Assistance Funds by \$1,671.

Terry Selk moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority approve Budget Amendment No. 2, which includes additional funding from the State Transit Assistance program (STA), Quarter No. 2.

Seconded by Hub Walsh.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

17. **YARTS Fiscal Year 2018 - 2019 Budget**

Cindy Kelly informed the committee that the YARTS Bylaws require the approval of an annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year by April 15, 2018. Cindy stated that the budget as presented anticipates an increase in the cost of operating the buses, based on bids received for the new contract. Cindy mentioned that a portion of the wage costs will be covered on the Fresno project.

Hub Walsh moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority:

- a. Hold a public hearing to allow for public comments on the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2018 - 2019; and
- b. Approve the proposed YARTS budget for Fiscal Year 2018 - 2019.

Seconded by Nanette Villegas.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

18. **Election of Officers for the YARTS Authority Advisory Committee Fiscal Year 2018 - 2019**

Cindy Kelly reported that according to Article V, Section 4 of the YARTS Bylaws provides for the election of officers at the last regular meeting prior to July 1st of each year. Cindy stated that this will be the last scheduled meeting of this fiscal year, a new Chair and Vice Chair need to be elected.

Hub Walsh moved to nominate and approve Candy O'Donel-Browne as Chair of the Authority Advisory Committee for the Fiscal Year 2018-2019.

Seconded by Sandy Hogan.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Hub Walsh moved to nominate and approve Karen Baker as Vice Chair of the Authority Advisory Committee for the Fiscal Year 2018-2019.

Seconded by Sandy Hogan.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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

Jim Donovan gave the National Park Service report stating that they want to thank Cindy, Denise, and the drivers for all the hard work they did on March 23<sup>rd</sup> when the roads were closed due to the floods. Jim mentioned that there is a new stop on Hwy 41 and YARTS will be testing that route soon. Jim stated that according to the Washington Post there is an overall increase of the visitation in the park but decline in the ridership at the park shuttle buses. Jim informed the committee that 10% of the visitors in the park are traveling by commercial tour buses. Jim stated that there will be a new superintendent in charge - Mike Reynolds.

Sandy Hogan asked if we have a new contract for next year. Jim Donovan responded that we have drafted the new agreement and it will be the same as the existing one.

Candy O'Donel-Browne mentioned that there is a Yosemite Gateway Partners (YGP) meeting on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Candy informed the committee that Cindy Kelly and Gordon Shaw will be the speakers at the YGP meeting.

20. **Short Range Transit Plan Update - LSC Consultants**

Gordon Shaw informed the committee that the LSC Transportation consultants are working with YARTS on a Short Range Transit Plan and will be conducting on-board transit surveys on Highway 140 route on April 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Gordon mentioned that Selena McKinney and Cindy Kelly will be working on public workshops to communicate with people to learn about the issues on YARTS. Gordon reported that the overall approach is to come up with an operation business plan for the next five years.

Hub Walsh asked if the Short Range Transit Plan will include information on other counties include in the JPA. Gordon responded that the Short Range Transit Plan will include other counties.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE YARTS AUTHORITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:52 A.M.**