



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

DATE

Wednesday, April 3, 2019

The regular meeting of the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) Authority Advisory Committee (AAC) held Wednesday, April 3, 2019, 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 Cindy Kelly at 1:34 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Candy O'Donel-Browne, Mariposa County Economic Development Corp.
 Karen Baker, California Welcome Center, Merced
 Jim Donovan, Yosemite National Park
 Jonathan Farrington, Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau (via videoconference)
 Sandy Hogan, Mono County LTC (via videoconference)
 Lisa Mayo, Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau
 Terri Peresan, Mariposa County Department of Community Services
 Jeff Simpson, Mono County Economic Development (via videoconference)
 Steve Smallcombe, Upper Merced River Watershed Council
 Hilda Sousa, Caltrans, District 10 for Tom Dumas
 Moses Stites, Fresno Rural Transit (via teleconference)
 Nanette Villegas, Merced Mall
 Hub Walsh, Private Citizen

MEMBERS ABSENT

Layla Forstedt, Fresno/Clovis Conference and Visitors Bureau
 Matthew McClain, Mono County Recreation
 Michelle Miller, Yosemite/Madera County Visitors Bureau
 Sean Williams, Holiday Inn Express

OTHERS PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

Stacie Dabbs, Executive Director
 Xavier Garcia, Transit Admin. Assistant
 Emily Haden, Legal Counsel
 Cindy Kelly, Assistant Transit Manager
 Mary-Michal Rawling, Public Affairs Manager
 Artis Smith, Transit Director

1. **Introductions**

Cindy Kelly led the introductions and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Cindy called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

2. **Public Comment**

None.

3. **Minutes**

Jonathan Farrington asked for the minutes to reflect that his suggestion on Item 10 was for extending the spring and fall service, not for operating additional service at those times.

Sandy Hogan moved to approve the minutes from the January 9, 2019 YARTS Authority Advisory Committee meeting.

Seconded by Terri Peresan.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. **Information/Discussion Only**

- a. Monthly Ridership and Customer Service Reports for December 2018 - February 2019
- b. YARTS Ridership History
- c. YARTS Financial Report/Budget Update
- d. Minutes of the January 14, 2019, YARTS JPA meeting (to be approved at the April 8, 2019, JPA meeting)
- e. YARTS Social Media Statistics First Quarter 2019
- f. YARTS Reservation System Update
- g. YARTS Federal Lands Access Program Free Days Update
- h. YARTS Summer 2019 Schedules

Item 4d - Sandy Hogan noted that Bob Gardner should be listed as Mono County, not Tuolumne County.

Item 4h - Sandy Hogan pointed out that June Mountain should be listed as June Lake Junction on the Highway 395/120 price schedule and June Lake Loop should be listed as June Lake Junction on the face page of the Highway 395/120 schedule.

5. **YARTS/Mariposa County Annual Agreement for Services, Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020**

No questions. So noted.

6. **YARTS/Fresno Council of Governments Agreement Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 Amendment No. 3 and Budget**

No questions. So noted.

7. **YARTS/DOI-NPS Cooperative Agreement Fiscal Year 2020 -2025**

No questions. So noted.

8. **YARTS/MCAG Agreement for Services Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020**

Sandy Hogan requested that an explanation be provided of the relationship between MCAG and YARTS. Sandy felt it was important for people to understand how much of a financial impact there would be if YARTS had to administer its own program.

Stacie Dabbs explained that MCAG operates as an umbrella agency to YARTS to provide administrative services, including support from Transit staff, accounting, human resources and other administrative staff. Stacie mentioned that it is a great benefit to YARTS to have staff available if needed and only pay for staff time used.

Sandy Hogan stated the information was helpful for people to hear and that operation costs would be much more expensive if YARTS had to hire its own staff.

Hilda Sousa asked about the possibility of a multi-year agreement.

Hub Walsh mentioned that a multi-year agreement was proposed a few years ago, but the consensus of the JPA at that time was to wait and see if additional members would be invited to join YARTS prior to committing to a multi-year agreement.

Steve Smallcombe asked how much time is spent reviewing the agreement every year.

Emily Haden stated that she reviews the agreement annually and makes only minor changes if needed.

Karen Baker suggested proposing a 3 to 5 year agreement next year.

Hub Walsh moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority authorize the Chair to sign the Agreement for Services between YARTS and MCAG for a period of one year commencing on July 1, 2019 and terminating on June 30, 2020.

Seconded by Sandy Hogan.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Candy O'Donel Browne arrived at 2:00 p.m. and presided over the meeting.

9. **Low Carbon Transit Operations Program Fiscal Year 2018 - 2019**

No questions. So noted.

Steve Smallcombe moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority:

- a. Approve the Executive Director as Authorized Agent for the LCTOP fiscal year 2018 - 2019 Free and Reduced Fares to Yosemite for Merced and Mariposa County residents; and
- b. Adopt Resolution No. 2019/04-08-01 identifying the Executive Director as Authorized Agent for YARTS.

Seconded by Karen Baker.

Abstained by Terri Peresan.

MOTION CARRIED.

10. **Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 Caltrans 5311(f) Funding; Public Hearing and Resolution**

Nanette Villegas 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 2019 - 2020; and
- b. Adopt Resolution 2019/04-08-02 authorizing funding under FTA Section 5311 (49 U.S.C. Section 5311) with the California Department of Transportation.

Seconded by Jeff Simpson.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

11. YARTS Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 Budget

Cindy Kelly gave a brief PowerPoint presentation to provide a better understanding of the YARTS budget. Cindy discussed YARTS' various revenue sources and expenses as well as the challenges YARTS faces, including finding funding for the sustainability of YARTS and adhering to the California Air Resource Board's (CARB) Innovative Clean Transit measure.

Hub Walsh asked if the CARB's measure would impact YARTS since service is operated outside of Air Quality zones.

Jim Donovan stated his interpretation of the measure is it would be mandated for all transit agencies regardless of where they operate.

Sandy Hogan asked if the Contractor takes care of the maintenance on YARTS buses.

Cindy Kelly stated that the Contractor does take care of regular maintenance but YARTS is invoiced for any major repairs that are needed.

Sandy Hogan asked if maintenance costs will increase as the buses get older.

Stacie Dabbs stated that maintenance costs will increase as the buses age. Stacie said YARTS is trying to get as much life out of their current buses as possible; however, long-term maintenance costs will be an issue so buying new buses will be necessary.

Hub Walsh mentioned that bus acquisitions have generally been grant-driven, not budgeted.

Cindy Kelly mentioned that the contribution is not included in the budget since Tuolumne County is not officially a voting member yet. Cindy said once they join, a budget amended will be issued to include their contribution.

Sandy Hogan asked why the office expenses had nearly tripled from the previous year.

Cindy Kelly explained that the office expenses include funds for a Short-Range Transit Plan meeting in the park in September as well as funds for a 20th anniversary celebration of the YARTS service.

Steve Smallcombe 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 2019 - 2020; and
- b. Approve the proposed YARTS budget for fiscal year 2019 - 2020.

Seconded by Terri Peresan.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

12. YARTS Park & Ride Facility Mariposa

Stacie Dabbs provided a brief history of the sinkholes at the park and ride, the options available to address them and staff's proposal to sell the property.

Candy O'Donel Browne asked who the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is.

Stacie Dabbs explained that the FTA is the federal agency who decides the rules under which a public transit agency must operate.

Emily Haden stated that YARTS has a vested interest in selling the property quickly. Emily explained that municipalities are legally required to offer property for sale to housing projects first but that requirement does not currently apply to JPAs; however, that could change.

Sandy Hogan asked if there is federal interest in the property since it was purchased with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds.

Emily Haden stated that the title to the property is under YARTS.

Sandy Hogan stated that there should be conditions as part of the sale that ensure the property is maintained for as close to its original use as possible.

Steve Smallcombe stated that Tesla wanted to put vehicle charging stations in Mariposa and using the park and ride for that purpose might be ideal.

Sandy Hogan stated that the use of ARRA funds should be researched to see if there are deed restrictions.

Hub Walsh stated that future use of the park and ride should not be a condition of the sale. Hub said the buyer should be able to determine how the property will be used.

Jonathan Farrington asked what the timeframe would be for the selling the property.

Emily Haden stated the sale could be completed by midsummer.

Hub Walsh moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority direct staff to begin the sale process of the YARTS-owned Park & Ride facility located at 4974 Joe Howard Street, Mariposa, CA. Seconded by Steve Smallcombe.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

13. **YARTS Short-Range Transit Plan Appendix E**

Candy O'Donel Browne stated that the information would be a great handout at the Yosemite Gateway Partners meeting as many of the tourism-based agencies would find it invaluable.

Lisa Mayo stated that she appreciated having a better ridership profile and that it will be useful from a tourism perspective.

Gordon Shaw pointed out that YARTS receives riders from 55 individual nations and from every state in the United States, including Washington DC and Puerto Rico.

Stacie Dabbs noted that she enjoyed the joint AAC and JPA meeting and the Short-Range Transit Plan process.

Terri Peresan moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority adopt Appendix E – SRTP Reservation System Ridership Profile as part of the approved YARTS Short-Range Transit Plan. Seconded by Lisa Mayo.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

14. **Invitation of Membership - Tuolumne County**

Sandy Hogan stated the report should contain language that reinforces that this would be an annual agreement and annual contribution from Tuolumne County.

Candy O'Donel Browne stated that this has been a long-standing goal for YARTS.

Lisa Mayo asked if Tuolumne County was aware of this item.

Stacie Dabbs informed the committee that conversations had taken place between her and Darin Grossi and that Tuolumne is favorable to the action.

Sandy Hogan moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority authorize the Executive Director to issue a formal invitation to Tuolumne County to join the YARTS Joint Powers Authority.
Seconded by Jeff Simpson.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

15. **YARTS Fiscal Year 2017 - 2018 Audit**

Cindy Kelly mentioned that YARTS had no findings in the audit which indicates that processes in place are working.

Terri Peresan moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority approve the audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2018, prepared by Price Paige & Company.
Seconded by Steve Smallcombe.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

16. **YARTS Authority Advisory Committee Roles, Responsibilities and Policies**

Candy O'Donel Browne noted the value of the AAC as an advisory board. Candy stated that YARTS' mission statement, bus designs, and Highway 41 service came from working groups of the AAC.

Sandy Hogan stated that the AAC should have a copy of the bylaws so that the discussion about the role of the committee members could begin in earnest. Sandy wanted the AAC to discuss term limits and the attendance policy and suggested that each AAC meeting have a working item on the agenda for discussion.

Hub Walsh said no decisions should be made until the committee has reviewed its bylaws.

Steve Smallcombe stated that the AAC should be more than a "pre-rubber stamp" committee; they should be involved in more complex YARTS issue. Steve also stated that having workshops on specific topics at meetings would be welcome.

Terri Peresan stated that the experience of the members of the AAC could add great value to YARTS if utilized.

Karen Baker suggested having two joint meetings per year with the AAC and JPA.

Hub Walsh commented that the AAC should determine the times of the meetings.

Sandy Hogan suggested keeping the 1:30 p.m. time to encourage more attendance.

Lisa Mayo stated that the 1:30 p.m. time is more difficult for her.

17. **Election of Officers for the YARTS Authority Advisory Committee Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020**

Hub Walsh moved to nominate Candy O'Donel Browne as Chair.
Seconded by Sandy Hogan.
Abstained by Candy O'Donel Browne.

MOTION CARRIED.

Sandy Hogan moved to nominate Karen Baker as Vice Chair.

Seconded by Lisa Mayo.

Abstained by Karen Baker.

MOTION CARRIED.

18. National Park Service Report

Jim Donovan stated that the winter season has greatly impacted the park. Jim mentioned that Mariposa Grove will be open beginning April 12, which is later than usual. Jim commented that snow clearing in Tuolumne Meadows began on April 1, but it will likely not open until after Memorial Day due to the amount of snow on the ground. Jim stated that the park is unsure if White Wolf Lodge will open at all this year, but the campground will open later in the season. Jim informed the committee that the park is moving forward with two major projects – the addition of a comfort station at Bridal Veil Falls and the addition of a visitor contact station in Big Oak Flat.

Cindy Kelly asked for an update on Half Dome Village.

Jim Donovan stated that half of the cabins in Half Dome Village have been destroyed by fallen trees so it may not open until sometime in May.

19. Transit Director's Report

Artis Smith stated that YARTS' Emergency Operations Plan is currently being reviewed and updates will be made as needed. Artis mentioned that YARTS has partnered with United Airlines to provide free rides to passengers flying into Fresno Yosemite Airport or Mammoth Yosemite Airport. Artis mentioned that YARTS is participating in General Mills Foods' sampling program which will provide riders with free Nutrigrain or FiberOne bars. Artis stated that YARTS has sold their existing fareboxes and was able to purchase new fareboxes with the proceeds from the sale. Artis commented that he will be attending the IPW tourism trade show and conference in Anaheim in June.

Cindy Kelly mentioned that YARTS will be applying for the Low or No Emission grant for 6 electric buses.

20. Director's Report

Stacie Dabbs mentioned that she is proud to see that YARTS has such a great reputation in the park. Stacie commented that it is evident the work done by the AAC and JPA has created a valued service to the communities YARTS operates in.

21. Member Remarks

None.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE YARTS AUTHORITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 3:27 P.M.