



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

DATE

Wednesday, July 17, 2019

The regular meeting of the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) Authority Advisory Committee (AAC) held Wednesday, July 17, 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 Tuolumne County Transit Agency, TCTA Conference Room, 975 Morning Star Drive, Suite A, Sonora, CA and was called to order by Chair Candy O'Donel Browne at 1:45 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Candy O'Donel-Browne, Mariposa County Economic Development Corp.
 Jim Donovan, Yosemite National Park
 Jonathan Farrington, Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau
 Sandy Hogan, Mono County LTC (via videoconference)
 Matthew McClain, Mammoth Lakes Recreation (via videoconference)
 Terri Peresan, Mariposa County Department of Community Services
 Jeff Simpson, Mono County Economic Development (via videoconference)
 Hilda Sousa, Caltrans, District 10 for Tom Dumas
 Moses Stites, Fresno Rural Transit (via teleconference)
 Nanette Villegas, Merced Mall

MEMBERS ABSENT

Karen Baker, California Welcome Center, Merced
 Layla Forstedt, Fresno/Clovis Conference and Visitors Bureau
 Lisa Mayo, Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau
 Michelle Miller, Miller's Landing, Wishon
 Steve Smallcombe, Upper Merced River Watershed Council
 Hub Walsh, Private Citizen
 Sean Williams, Holiday Inn Express

OTHERS PRESENT

Peggy Arnest, Fresno Council of Governments (via teleconference)
 Catherine Carr, Caltrans District 9 (via videoconference)
 Denise Demery, VIA Adventures
 Michael Draper, Mono County LTC (via videoconference)
 Rick Franz, Caltrans District 9 (via videoconference)
 Tyler Summersett, Tuolumne County Transit Agency (via videoconference)

STAFF PRESENT

Xavier Garcia, Transit Admin. Assistant
 Cindy Kelly, Assistant Transit Manager
 Mary-Michal Rawling, Public Affairs Manager
 Artis Smith, Transit Director

1. **Introductions**

Chair O'Donel Browne led the introductions and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Chair O'Donel-Browne called the meeting to order at 1:45 p.m.

2. **Public Comment**

Jonathan Farrington commented that Yosemite has its original names back for The Ahwahnee and Camp Curry.

3. **Minutes**

Sandy Hogan noted two corrections to the Members Absent section of the minutes:

1. Matthew McClain is a representative of Mammoth Lakes Recreation, not Mono County Recreation.
2. Michelle Miller is a representative of Miller's Landing in Wishon, not Visit Yosemite | Madera County.

Jonathan Farrington moved to approve the minutes as corrected from the April 3, 2019 YARTS Authority Advisory Committee meeting.

Seconded by Sandy Hogan.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. **Information/Discussion Only**

- a. Monthly Ridership and Customer Service Reports for March 2019 - May 2019
- b. YARTS Ridership History
- c. YARTS Financial Report/Budget Update for July 2018 - May 2019
- d. Minutes of the April 8, 2019 YARTS Joint Powers Authority meeting (to be approved at the July 22, 2019 JPA meeting)
- e. Social Media Statistics - 2nd Quarter 2019
- f. Reservation System Update - 2nd Quarter 2019
- g. Free Days Update - 2nd Quarter 2019

Item 4b - Sandy Hogan commented that ridership was significantly down in March, April and May of this year compared to the same period last year.

Cindy Kelly replied that ridership is down 43% across the board this year compared to last year due to the lasting impact of the Ferguson Fire of July 2018 as well as the long winter season. Cindy explained these two events caused many road closures over the winter season which, at times, impacted YARTS' ability to get to Yosemite, sometimes only being able to go as far as Mariposa or Midpines.

5. **YARTS Park & Ride Update**

Cindy Kelly provided a status update on the disposition of the YARTS Park & Ride and stated she is currently waiting for further information from Caltrans on how to proceed. Cindy also stated that a second commercial appraiser will be assessing the property value in August.

Chair O'Donel Browne asked if the Mariposa Park & Ride is in an opportunity zone and Cindy Kelly replied that it is.

Cindy Kelly stated that Mariposa County is interested in the property and it could potentially be a simple transfer once the owner of the property is determined.

Sandy Hogan asked about the federal interest in the property.

Cindy Kelly explained that since the property was purchased with 5320 Transit in Parks grant funds, YARTS would have to pay back either Caltrans or the Federal Transit Administration their portion if the property is sold. Cindy stated that once ownership of the property is determined, Stacie Dabbs could open negotiations with Mariposa County to transfer the property, which could release the federal interest for both parties.

6. Fare Increase Update

Cindy Kelly reported that ridership is down 43% compared to last year but revenue is only down by just under \$10,000. Cindy explained that without the 15% fare increase that was implemented in January 2019, YARTS may have needed to cut service to make up for the decrease in revenue.

7. Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 Budget Amendment No. 1

No questions. So noted.

Terri Peresan moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority approve the Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 Budget Amendment No. 1, which includes an increase of \$78,000 in 5311(f) funds.
Seconded by Nanette Villegas.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. Bus and Bus Facilities Program 5339(b)

No questions. So noted.

Jeff Simpson moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority approve Resolution No. 2019-07/22-01, authorizing the application for and acceptance of funding from the Federal Transit Administration Bus and Bus Facilities Program (5339b) for the purchase of six (6) battery-electric over-the road coach buses.

Seconded by Matthew McClain.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. State of Good Repair - Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020

Sandy commented that the Short-Range Transit Plan suggested that YARTS be rebranded and asked why the buses would be repainted before that rebranding takes place.

Cindy Kelly explained that painting the buses all blue with a white YARTS logo would provide a blank canvas for rebranding in the future.

Matthew McClain moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority:

- a. Approve the State of Good Repair Project for Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020; and
- b. Adopt Resolution No. 2019-07/22-02 authorizing the execution of the Certifications and Assurances by the Executive Director.

Seconded by Terri Peresan.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

10. Continued Discussion of the Roles and Responsibilities of the YARTS Authority Advisory Committee

Matthew McClain suggested developing a board matrix with each AAC member and their skill set so it can be determined how best to use each member for marketing, sales, scheduling, etc.

Sandy Hogan commented that the by-laws were amended a few years ago but should be amended again when Tuolumne County joins as a member.

Cindy Kelly asked how big or small the committee should be.

Jeff Simpson replied that the size of the group should be manageable. Jeff said larger groups means more resources and ideas, but they can also make scheduling difficult.

Cindy Kelly commented that there are currently 14 members on the committee, and it can be difficult to secure a quorum of nine.

Jeff Simpson suggested if a member has exceeded a certain number of absences, a replacement should be considered to fill that seat.

Jonathan Farrington agreed, suggesting a replacement member be considered after 3 or more unexcused absences.

Jeff Simpson suggested using the AAC members to cultivate more outreach and marketing opportunities through small working groups.

Cindy Kelly asked for the members to send her an email with their suggestions and she would discuss them with the Executive Director and legal counsel.

11. National Park Service Report

Jim Donovan reported the following updates:

- a. The park experiences issues with congestion when 6,000 or more cars enter the valley and approximately 8,000 cars entered the valley over the 4th of July weekend.
- b. The park is working with Aramark to address the concerns with the park's shuttle service.
- c. Several projects will be underway at the park in the near future:
 1. Repaving Tioga Road.
 2. Removing roadside parking at Tuolumne Meadows
 3. Repaving Glacier Point Road.

12. Transit Director's Report

Artis Smith reported the following updates:

- a. YARTS is working with United Airlines, the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority and Amtrak on creating a new "carless and carefree Yosemite adventure" marketing campaign for a new flight service from Los Angeles to Stockton.
- b. Staff's attendance at this year's IPW Conference in Anaheim has created exciting connections. Staff will be meeting with Expedia in August to discuss selling YARTS tickets through expedia.com. Staff is also working to begin vendor agreements with touring companies from Nigeria, London, South Korea and Malaysia.
- c. Due to the late start for the eastern corridor, YARTS has extended service on the Highway 395/120E corridor through October 31, 2019 or until Tioga Road closes, whichever comes first.
- d. YARTS has partnered with Aramark to offer a 15% discount at Degnan's to YARTS passengers by showing their reservations or tickets at checkout.
- e. The LCTOP programs in both Merced and Mariposa are off to an amazing start, with more than 350 tickets issued or sold in the first two weeks.
- f. Staff will be meeting with park executive management in August to brainstorm solutions to traffic congestion and what assistance YARTS can offer.
- g. The YARTS 20th Anniversary and Short-Range Transit Plan update will take place at Yosemite Valley Lodge on September 12, 2019.

13. **Member Remarks**

Jim Donovan commented that the issue of traffic congestion in Yosemite Valley has been discussed since the 1960s and there are conflicting opinions from leadership in Washington DC on how to resolve it. Jim said the park will be looking for input on the issue at the Yosemite Gateway Partners Summit in October.

Candy O'Donel Browne mentioned that the Yosemite Gateway Partners Summit will be held on October 23rd and 24th in the Cliff Falls Room at the Yosemite Valley Lodge.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE YARTS AUTHORITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 3:10 P.M.