



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

DATE

Wednesday, July 15, 2020

The regular meeting of the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) Authority Advisory Committee (AAC) was held Wednesday, July 15, 2020 via teleconference/videoconference and was called to order by Chair O'Donel-Browne at 1:40 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Candy O'Donel-Browne, Mariposa County Economic Development Corp., Chair
Karen Baker, California Welcome Center Merced, Vice Chair
Jim Donovan, Yosemite National Park
Dana Hallett, Private Citizen, Mariposa County
Sandy Hogan, Mono County LTC
Matthew McClain, Mammoth Lakes Recreation
Steve Smallcombe, Upper Merced River Watershed Council
Hilda Sousa, Caltrans, District 10 for Tom Dumas
Moses Stites, Fresno Rural Transit
Nanette Villegas, Merced Mall

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jonathan Farrington, Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau
Lisa Mayo, Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau
Terri Peresan, Mariposa County Department of Community Services
Jeff Simpson, Mono County Economic Development
Hubert Walsh, Private Citizen, Merced County

OTHERS PRESENT

Peggy Arnest, Fresno Council of Governments
Denise Demery, VIA Adventures
Michael Draper, Mono County LTC

STAFF PRESENT

Christine Chavez, Transit Manager
Kate Molthen, Assistant Transit Manager
Xavier Garica, Transit Administrative Assistant
Stacie Guzman, Executive Director
Nav Bagri, Finance Director
Adam Perez, Multimedia Specialist
Mary-Michal Rawling, Public Affairs Manager

1. Roll Call

Chair O'Donel-Browne led the introductions and called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Minutes of the April 1, 2020 YARTS Authority Advisory Committee meeting

No questions.

Sandy Hogan moved to approve the minutes from the April 1, 2020 YARTS Authority Advisory Committee meeting.

Seconded by Matthew McClain.

Ayes – Members Baker, Donovan, Hallett, Hogan, McClain, O'Donel-Browne, Smallcombe, Sousa, Villegas

Noes – None

Abstain – None

Absent – Members Farrington, Mayo, Peresan, Simpson, Stites, Walsh

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Information/Discussion Only

a. Service Update, Ridership History and Customer Service Reports for March 2020 – June 2020

Christine Chavez gave a PowerPoint presentation on service updates and ridership history.

No questions.

b. YARTS Quarterly Marketing and Media Update

Mary-Michal Rawling gave a PowerPoint presentation on marketing and media updates for the 4th quarter of fiscal year 2019 - 2020.

Sandy Hogan asked if any advertisements are running on radio stations on the eastside.

Mary-Michal Rawling replied that advertisements are currently running in the Mammoth Times newspaper, online and on Facebook, but she will investigate possibly including radio stations as well.

5. Low Carbon Transit Operations Program - Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 and Resolution

Katherine Molthen gave a PowerPoint presentation on the LCTOP allocation for fiscal year 2019 - 2020.

No questions.

Sandy Hogan moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority:

- a. Approve the Executive Director as Authorized Agent for the LCTOP Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 Free Fares to Yosemite for Merced and Mariposa County Residents; and
- b. Adopt Resolution No. 2020/07-20-01, identifying the Executive Director as Authorized Agent for YARTS for Free Fares to Yosemite for Mariposa and Merced County Residents.

Seconded by Nanette Villegas.

Ayes – Members Donovan, Hallett, Hogan, McClain, O’Donel-Browne, Smallcombe, Sousa, Stites, Villegas

Noes – None

Abstain – None

Absent – Members Baker, Farrington, Mayo, Peresan, Simpson, Walsh

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. State of Good Repair Annual Allocation and Resolution

Katherine Molthen gave a PowerPoint presentation on the State of Good Repair project allocation for fiscal year 2020 - 2021.

Steve Smallcombe asked if a new logo had already been decided on.

Christine Chavez responded that the discussion regarding a new logo was put on hold indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The action for this item is to allocate funds to the project so they are available when the agency is ready to proceed with removing the bus wraps and repainting the buses.

Sandy Hogan asked about the status of the rebranding effort that was recommended by the Short-Range Transit Plan.

Stacie Guzman replied that the rebranding effort discussion was started prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the unknown financial implications of the pandemic, it was determined that the rebranding effort could be placed on hold and revisited once the budget impacts from the pandemic are better understood. The State of Good Repair project is not tied to the rebranding effort, so the project can be completed whether rebranding occurs or not.

Matthew McClain commended staff for developing a strategy to address the appearance of the buses that makes financial sense and allows for modifications if needed.

Matthew McClain moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority:

- a. Approve the State of Good Repair Project for Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021; and
- b. Adopt Resolution No. 2020/07-20-02 authorizing the execution of the Certifications and Assurances by the Executive Director.

Seconded by Steve Smallcombe.

Ayes – Members Baker, Donovan, Hallett, Hogan, McClain, O’Donel-Browne, Smallcombe, Sousa, Stites, Villegas

Noes – None

Abstain – None

Absent – Members Farrington, Mayo, Peresan, Simpson, Walsh

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. YARTS/VIA Adventures, Inc. Agreement Contract Extension No. 1

Christine Chavez noted an error in the staff report that stated the contract expiration date is September 30, 2020. The correct expiration date is October 31, 2020.

Christine Chavez explained that in addition to the one year contract extension option, staff will also take a request to the JPA Board to authorize a one-time payment of \$313,313 to the contractor for the financial shortfall caused by the reduction in service hours.

Moses Stites asked for clarification on what staff's recommendation will be to the JPA Board.

Christine Chavez replied that staff's recommendation will be to extend the one year option under the current pricing and to direct staff to negotiate a revised pricing structure with the contractor to include a fixed fee and a significantly reduced hourly fee based on new service hours in an amount not to exceed the current budgeted amount.

Moses Stites asked how long VIA Adventures has been contracted with YARTS.

Stacie Guzman replied for 20 years.

Moses Stites suggested that staff research what the industry standards are in terms of pricing and scope of services for this type of agreement to determine if other options might be available before exercising the one-year contract extension.

Stacie Guzman explained that staff is planning to analyze the needs of the contract, but it will take time to do it properly. Staff will recommend that the JPA Board authorize the one-year extension option, and staff will use that time to prepare a thorough bid document.

8. Transit Manager's Report

a. Free Fare Days

Christine Chavez reported that YARTS received funding through the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) to provide free service days, but those free service days were canceled due the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the FLAP funds will expire on September 30, 2020 and there will be no opportunity for additional free service days before then, staff is working with the Federal Highway Administration to reallocate those funds to pay for free service that is provided to children who ride with fare-paying adults.

b. YARTS Planning Efforts

Christine Chavez reported that staff is working to identify resources within the community and our partner agencies to fund a planning study to identify service needs and how to recover from drops in ridership. The most recent Short-Range Transit Plan was completed in 2018, but significant changes have occurred since then and updates are needed.

Christine Chavez also introduced Kate Molthen as the new Assistant Transit Manager.

9. National Park Service Report

Jim Donovan reported that the day-use reservation program has been successful in terms of use, with reservations selling out almost every day. Vehicles allowed to enter the park have been limited to 3,600 per day, which includes guests with wilderness permits, lodging, and campground reservations. This means only 1,700 private vehicles are allowed per day, but the Park has been exceeding that number as more guests are using their 7-day passes for multiple visits than expected. The program is expected to continue for the remainder of the season.

Sandy Hogan asked if day-use reservations are forfeited if not used on the first day and if there is overnight camping available.

Jim Donovan replied that the terms of the day-use reservations are that the guest must arrive on the first day of the reservation or the reservation will be forfeited. The park has been allowing some flexibility as the law states guests who pay the \$35.00 entrance fee can return as many times as they like during the 7 days of their reservation. However, the park is being strict on not allowing guests who purchase a reservation at the beginning of the week to enter the park for the first time on a weekend. Jim also replied that there are limited camping opportunities available, mainly in Yosemite Valley. Due to social distancing requirements and limited staff, the park is not able to open most of the campgrounds, including the more remote campgrounds on the eastside.

10. Member Remarks

Chair O'Donel-Browne mentioned that the next Yosemite Gateway Partners meeting will be held on October 8, 2020 via Zoom.

Steve Smallcombe and Sandy Hogan commented that the new presentation format of the ridership data has been very helpful.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE YARTS AUTHORITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 3:00 P.M.