



**Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)
Joint Powers Authority
MINUTES**

DATE

Monday, June 14, 2021

A special meeting of the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Board was held on Monday, June 14, 2021 via teleconference/videoconference and was called to order by Chair Silveira at 1:02 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Scott Silveira, Merced County Supervisor, Chair
Bob Gardner, Mono County Supervisor, Vice Chair
Ryan Campbell, Tuolumne County Supervisor
Stacy Corless, Mono County Supervisor
Kathleen Haff, Tuolumne County Supervisor
Daron McDaniel, Merced County Supervisor
Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County Supervisor
Rosemarie Smallcombe, Mariposa County Supervisor
Michelle Roman, Mayor, City of Kingsburg
Tom Wheeler, Madera County Supervisor

MEMBERS ABSENT

Rey Leon, Mayor, City of Huron

OTHERS PRESENT

Peggy Arnest, Fresno Council of Governments
Denise Demery, VIA Adventures
Jim Donovan, Yosemite National Park
Selena McKinney, LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.
Curtis Riggs, VIA Adventures
Gordon Shaw, LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.
Tyler Summersett, Tuolumne County Transportation Council

STAFF PRESENT

Christine Chavez, Transit Manager
Skyler Summers, Assistant Transit Manager
Xavier Garcia, Transit Administrative Assistant
Stacie Guzman, Executive Director
Nav Bagri, Finance Director
Eva Garibay, Public Programs Specialist II
Emily Haden, Legal Counsel
Alicia Ochoa-Jones, Purchasing and Contracts Manager
Mary-Michal Rawling, Public Affairs Manager

1. Roll Call

Chair Silveira led the introductions and called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. National Park Service report

Jim Donovan reported that the day-use reservation program is in effect through September 30, 2021. Construction has begun on Tioga Road to create new parking areas. Delays of 15-30 minutes are expected there. PG&E is working intermittently to replace power lines along Highway 140 and could cause delays of up to 30 minutes. The Bridalveil Fall Trail is closed this summer due to construction.

Peggy Arnest asked if the shuttles are running in Yosemite Valley.

Jim Donovan replied that shuttles will not be operating in Yosemite Valley or Mariposa Grove this summer.

4. Information items:

None.

5. Consent calendar:

None.

6. Action items:

a. Presentation and Acceptance of Final Strategic Plan

Gordon Shaw gave a PowerPoint presentation on the final recommendations of the Strategic Plan.

Director Roman asked if marketing is being done to promote ridership on YARTS.

Stacie Guzman noted that marketing has historically been targeted towards out-of-state and out-of-country travelers but staff's main focus has been keeping YARTS operating through the pandemic. Once we enter a post-COVID environment, staff will revisit the marketing recommendations in the Short Range Transit Plan and use available resources to market to local travelers.

Christine Chavez added that the YARTS AAC is a great resource to market to local travelers since they work closely with hotels and visitor bureaus in the local communities.

Director Campbell asked if it is possible to increase the bicycle storage on the buses.

Christine Chavez replied that staff will discuss adding additional on-board bicycle storage with the vendor when new buses are purchased.

Director Corless moved to accept the final YARTS 2021 Strategic Plan.
Seconded by Director Smallcombe.

Ayes – Directors Campbell, Corless, Gardner, Haff, McDaniel, Menetrey, Silveira, Smallcombe

Noes – None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Provide Direction for Operations and Maintenance Contract Scope of Work

Christine Chavez gave a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed service modifications to be included in the Operations and Maintenance contract scope of work.

Chair Silveira asked if taking action at this meeting would set fixed service dates for the Highway 395/120 corridor or would there be flexibility to adjust those dates.

Christine Chavez replied the Request for Proposals (RFP) needs to include the total number of services hours for each corridor but the service dates can be adjusted as needed. She also noted that none of the proposed service modifications would take place until the 2023 summer season.

Director Haff asked if there will be an opportunity at a later time to discuss adding an express run to the Highway 120 route.

Christine Chavez replied that staff worked with the contractor to evaluate adding an express run to the Highway 120 route and found that it would not provide much of a cost savings.

Chair Silveira asked if staff could explain the process for making changes to the contract.

Christine Chavez explained that ideally transit contracts have flexibility to make changes if the service hours remain the same, so everything doesn't have to be figured out at the time of the bidding of services. The contracts also typically have a cushion to allow changes that don't reduce or increase the number service hours by more than 15%.

Director Smallcombe moved to direct staff to develop a scope of work that incorporates service modifications on all corridors as presented in the Strategic Plan (June 2021).
Seconded by Director Campbell.

Ayes – Directors Campbell, Corless, Gardner, Haff, McDaniel, Menetrey, Silveira, Smallcombe

Noes – None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

c. Issue Invitation of Membership to Madera County

Director Wheeler informed the Board that Madera County has budgeted \$50,000 for their contribution to join the YARTS JPA but will continue working the Madera County Board of Supervisors to come up with the additional \$17,000.

Stacie Guzman stated that YARTS can work with Madera County to keep their contribution at \$50,000 for the next two years if that would help facilitate them joining the YARTS JPA sooner. The contribution would not increase to \$67,000 until the summer season of 2023 when Fresno is no longer contributing funds.

Director Menetrey moved to direct staff to issue the attached letter of invitation to Madera County to join the Joint Powers Authority for Yosemite Regional Transportation Services, inclusive of Madera County's contribution being \$50,000 until the summer season of 2023 when it would increase to \$67,000.

Seconded by Director Corless.

Ayes – Directors Campbell, Corless, Gardner, Haff, McDaniel, Menetrey, Silveira, Smallcombe

Noes – None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

d. Select Preferred Option to Secure Matching Funds for Bus Purchases

Christine Chavez gave a PowerPoint presentation on the available options to secure matching funds for bus purchases.

Director Corless mentioned that she provided staff with a contact at the Golden State Finance Authority to discuss potential loan opportunities.

Christine Chavez noted that the YARTS AAC discussed the possibility of purchasing used buses and determined purchasing new buses should be the priority.

Director Smallcombe moved to direct staff to:

- a. Utilize the balance of the Capital Reserve and a portion of the General Reserve to meet the local match requirement for either the FTA 5339(b) grant or the federal earmark; and
- b. Request a meeting with Superintendent Cicely Muldoon to discuss additional funding from the park for YARTS capital needs; and
- c. Explore loan opportunities from member agencies, partners and/or financial institutions.

Seconded by Director Gardner.

Ayes – Directors Campbell, Corless, Gardner, Haff, McDaniel, Menetrey, Silveira, Smallcombe

Noes – None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

e. YARTS Operations Strategy in Response to COVID-19

Staff presented an update on the current operations strategy as it relates to COVID-19, including the recommendation to lift capacity restraints on YARTS buses, and options for resuming “regular” services.

Denise Demery asked why passengers still need to sign liability waivers.

Emily Haden replied that the legislature has not passed a law that absolves businesses if a passenger were to sue for claiming to have contracted COVID-19 on the bus. The liability waivers offer both the agency and the contractor protection from potential litigation.

Director Menetrey moved to direct staff to resume full capacity of buses, allowing for 22 passengers to make a reservation to travel on YARTS. Face coverings will continue to be required as long as mandated by TSA and FTA, and the \$1 COVID surcharge to remain in place through the summer services.

Seconded by Director Corless.

Ayes – Directors Campbell, Corless, Gardner, Haff, McDaniel, Menetrey, Silveira, Smallcombe

Noes – None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Discussion items:

None.

8. Executive Director’s report

Stacie Guzman asked whether the JPA would like to return to in-person meetings with satellite locations available via Zoom or continue holding meetings only via Zoom.

After a brief discussion, the Directors chose to return to in-person meetings with satellite locations available via Zoom.

9. Directors' reports

Director Gardner noted that there was a backup of about 3 hours at the east gate entrance to Yosemite on the Monday after Memorial Day and suggested creating messaging at the bottom of the grade to inform drivers of backups, reservation requirements, etc.

10. Adjournment

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE YARTS JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY, THE MEETING WAS
ADJOURNED AT 3:16 p.m.**