

- Request:**
1. Provide direct federal funding to the **Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)** for operational support and fleet replacement in order to continue to relieve congestion into and within Yosemite National Park.
 2. Discontinue the policy of charging a gate fee for those entering National Parks on public transit.

Description: YARTS is the nation’s oldest public transit system providing service to a National Park. With more than 20 years of history, YARTS is the product of a partnership among the member counties of its Joint Powers Authority, the U.S. Forest Service, and the National Park Service. YARTS was the solution to the congestion and pollution created by millions of people visiting Yosemite National Park every year in personal vehicles. Today, YARTS provides quality transit service into the Park on each of the four state highways into Yosemite during the summer months, and year round on Highway 140. More than 100,000 visitors enter Yosemite on YARTS buses every year.



Necessity: Currently, there are insufficient federal funding streams to support YARTS and the service expansion needed to address the growing congestion issues in Yosemite National Park. The system relies heavily on FTA 5311(f) and 5339 grant funding for some of the operational costs and capital infrastructure needs but this provides only a small amount of what is needed to provide optimal service to this expansive, mountainous region of central California. In order to sustain the service into the future, YARTS needs increased federal funding for the operation and maintenance of services, vehicle replacement, and funds to prepare for the system’s transition to compliance with zero-emission regulations.

Funding request:

1	Fleet Replacement: 6 clean-diesel, over-the-road coaches (~\$920,000/vehicle)	\$5,520,000
2	Annual apportionment for operations and maintenance	\$800,000
	Total Request	\$6,320,000

1) Capital Funding – Fleet Replacement

Over the next few years, YARTS will need to replace one third of its fleet – a total of six over-the-road coaches that have met or are nearing the end of their useful life. YARTS does not have access to local funds to serve as a grant match for competitive capital grants and has focused on fleet expansion over the past few years to steer away from more expensive leased vehicles. Fleet replacement is a priority for YARTS and necessary to avoid further reductions in services.

2) System Sustainability – Additional Funding for Operations and Maintenance

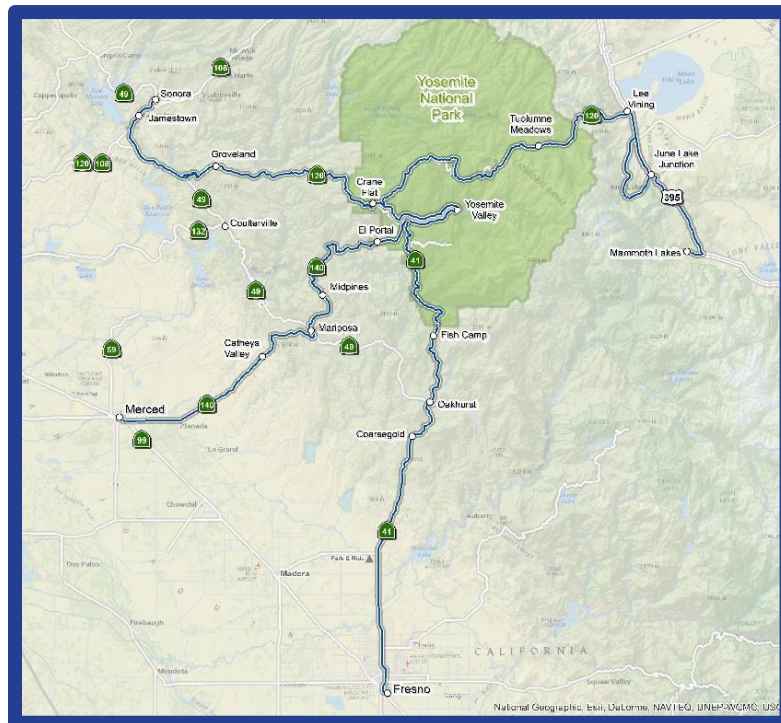
YARTS has operated with limited revenue since its inception that has not kept pace with the increasing costs of operating transit in California. While nearly 40% of YARTS' revenue comes from the Department of Interior, the annual amount has been relatively flat over the past 20 years. During that time, YARTS has secured several grants, increased local contributions and fares, and has consistently worked to generate new revenue through partnerships with Amtrak and Greyhound. Last year, YARTS entered into a new contract with an operations and maintenance service provider which resulted in a 40% increase in costs. With the continued increase in the cost of operating and maintaining this public transit system, YARTS is seeking an increase in federal funding to support the long-term sustainability of the service to ensure YARTS continues to be a critical partner in Yosemite National Park's strategy to reduce vehicle congestion into and throughout the park.

Policy Request: Discontinue Collection of Gate Fee for Passengers using Public Transit

The National Park System is best served when visitors enter federal land using public transit. Fewer private vehicles means a decrease in local emissions and less disturbance of wild and pristine environments. Changing the policy requiring the collection of gate fees from passengers on public transit systems into Parks would incentivize visitors to use alternative transportation options when planning their trip.

Investing in YARTS means:

- Supporting the creation of **JOBS** in rural communities that depend on Yosemite for tourist-generated revenue.
- Providing **EQUITABLE** access to Yosemite National Park from surrounding disadvantaged communities.
- Prioritizing the **SUSTAINABILITY** of public transit and natural resources by incentivizing ridership.



CONTACT:

Stacie Guzman
Executive Director
YARTS
(209) 723-3153
stacie.guzman@
mcagov.org