



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

**DATE**

**Wednesday, June 9, 2021**

A special meeting of the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) Authority Advisory Committee (AAC) was held Wednesday, June 9, 2021 via teleconference/videoconference and was called to order by Chair O'Donel-Browne at 1:41 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Candy O'Donel-Browne, Mariposa County Economic Development Corp., Chair  
Karen Baker, Merced Regional Airport, Vice Chair  
Jim Donovan, Yosemite National Park  
Jonathan Farrington, Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau  
Sandy Hogan, Private Citizen, Mono County  
Matthew McClain, Private Citizen, Mono County  
Jeff Simpson, Mono County Economic Development  
Hilda Sousa, Caltrans, District 10  
Moses Stites, Fresno Rural Transit  
Nanette Villegas, Merced Mall

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Dana Hallett, Private Citizen, Mariposa County  
Lisa Mayo, Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau  
Terri Peresan, Mariposa County Department of Community Services

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Peggy Arnest, Fresno Council of Governments  
Denise Demery, VIA Adventures  
Michael Draper, Mono County LTC  
Selena McKinney, LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.  
Gordon Shaw, LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.

**STAFF PRESENT**

Christine Chavez, Transit Manager  
Skyler Summers, Assistant Transit Manager  
Xavier Garcia, Transit Administrative Assistant  
Stacie Guzman, Executive Director  
Nav Bagri, Finance Director  
Alicia Ochoa-Jones, Purchasing and Contracts Manager  
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 1:41 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.

**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.

Matthew McClain asked if new buses must be purchased or if used buses is an option.

Gordon Shaw replied that used buses have higher operating costs.

Christine Chavez added that staff evaluated purchasing used buses and found their useful life is not comparable to that of new buses and there is no funding available to purchase used buses with YARTS' current grants.

Matthew McClain suggested connecting flights from the Bishop airport to Yosemite as well as looking into whether YARTS can secure parking or a staging area on airport property.

Moses Stites asked if providing shuttle service with smaller vehicles might be an option to continue the Highway 41 route from Fresno.

Gordon Shaw replied that demand on the Highway 41 route is focused on locations close to the Park and ridership data does not support beginning the route in Fresno.

Matthew McClain stated he would like to see the Strategic Plan more fleshed out with the AAC's input incorporated.

Christine Chavez replied that the Strategic Plan is intended to provide guidance on service levels for the upcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Operations and Maintenance contract. The recommendations in the plan are just suggestions and discussions regarding shuttle service, electrification, etc. can still be had.

Candy O'Donel Browne added that YARTS is in a situation where it must shrink in order to grow. The agency must make reductions where it can now in order to be sustainable in the future.

Jonathan Farrington moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority accept the final YARTS 2021 Strategic Plan.

Seconded by Jeff Simpson.

**Ayes – Members Baker, Donovan, Farrington, Hogan, McClain, O'Donel-Browne, Simpson, Sousa, Stites, Villegas**

**Noes – None**

**Absent – Members Hallett, Mayo, Peresan**

**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.

No questions.

Moses Stites moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority 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 Sandy Hogan.

**Ayes – Members Baker, Donovan, Farrington, Hogan, McClain, O'Donel-Browne, Simpson, Sousa, Stites, Villegas**

**Noes – None**

**Absent – Members Hallett, Mayo, Peresan**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**c. Issue Invitation of Membership to Madera County**

Stacie Guzman noted that the continuation of the Highway 41 service after the summer 2022 season is dependent upon Madera County joining the YARTS JPA.

No questions.

Sandy Hogan moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority direct staff to issue the attached letter of invitation to Madera County to join the Joint Powers Authority for Yosemite Regional Transportation Services.

Seconded by Candy O'Donel-Browne.

**Ayes – Members Baker, Donovan, Farrington, Hogan, McClain, O'Donel-Browne, Simpson, Sousa, Stites, Villegas**

**Noes – None**

**Absent – Members Hallett, Mayo, Peresan**

**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.

No questions.

Jonathan Farrington moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority 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 Jeff Simpson.

**Ayes – Members Baker, Donovan, Farrington, Hogan, McClain, O’Donel-Browne, Simpson, Sousa, Stites, Villegas**

**Noes – None**

**Absent – Members Hallett, Mayo, Peresan**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**e. YARTS Operations Strategy in Response to COVID-19**

Nanette Villegas asked if passengers are still required to sign liability waivers.

Christine Chavez replied affirmatively and stated the waivers will remain in place until further notice.

Jonathan Farrington moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority 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 Matthew McClain.

**Ayes – Members Baker, Donovan, Farrington, Hogan, McClain, O’Donel-Browne, Simpson, Sousa, Stites, Villegas**

**Noes – None**

**Absent – Members Hallett, Mayo, Peresan**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**7. Discussion items:**

None.

## 8. Transit Manager's Report

Christine Chavez asked whether the AAC would like to return to in-person meetings or continue holding meetings via Zoom.

After a brief discussion, Sandy Hogan moved to continue holding meetings via Zoom.  
Seconded by Matthew McClain.

**Ayes – Members Baker, Donovan, Farrington, Hogan, McClain, O'Donel-Browne, Simpson, Sousa, Stites, Villegas**

**Noes – None**

**Absent – Members Hallett, Mayo, Peresan**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## 9. Member Remarks

Sandy Hogan remarked that she is impressed with the depth of knowledge of staff and expressed appreciation for their expertise and professionalism.

Jonathan Farrington remarked that he appreciates the openness of the conversation about the role of the AAC.

Matthew McClain remarked that the AAC has a wealth of expertise and he encourages staff to engage them whenever possible.

Stacie Guzman expressed appreciation for the AAC's comments, patience, and wanting to be involved. She also thanked Candy O'Donel-Browne for her service as Chair of the AAC for fiscal year 2020-21.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE YARTS AUTHORITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 3:52 P.M.**