



Town of Mammoth Lakes

Planning & Economic Development Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: April 10, 2024

AGENDA TITLE: Consideration of Unmet Transit Needs within the Town of Mammoth Lakes

REQUESTING DEPARTMENT:

Public Works / Eastern Sierra Transit Authority

Haislip Hayes, PE Public Works Director

Phil Moores, Executive Director

OBJECTIVE:

Staff recommends the Planning & Economic Development Commission receive public input and provide feedback to staff regarding the evaluation of unmet needs in the Town of Mammoth Lakes and provide direction to staff regarding unmet needs or transit services.

BACKGROUND:

State law provides for a Citizen Participation Process that requires the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (the Mono County Local Transportation Commission [LTC] in the case of Mammoth Lakes) to hold at least one public hearing to ensure broad community participation and solicit the input of transit-dependent and transit-disadvantaged persons, including the elderly, disabled, and persons of limited means. A public hearing on unmet transit needs is also required prior to the LTC allocating any funds not directly related to public transportation services, specialized transportation services, or facilities provided for the exclusive use of pedestrians and bicycles. The purpose of the unmet needs hearing is to solicit comments on unmet transit needs that may exist within Mammoth Lakes and that might be reasonable to meet by establishing or contracting for new public transportation or specialized transportation services or by expanding existing services. To meet the public hearing requirement for both the Citizen Participation Process and unmet transit needs, and to facilitate public input on transit needs, the LTC has directed that Unmet Transit Needs assessments be conducted in coordination with the Regional Planning Advisory Committees (RPAC) for the County and the PEDC for the Town during the spring of each year. The input received at these sessions will be presented to the LTC for consideration at their meetings in May and June.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:

The Mono County LTC defines the following terms relative to the unmet transit needs process.

- **Unmet Transit Needs:** A need of the Mono County elderly, disabled, low income, youth, and other transit-dependent groups for transit service that is currently not available and, if provided for, would enable the transit dependent person to obtain the basic necessities of life primarily within Mono County. "Necessities of life" are defined as trips necessary for medical and dental services, essential personal business,

employment, social service appointment, shopping for food or clothing, and social and recreational purposes.

- **Reasonable to Meet:** Transit needs for the necessities of life which pertain to all public and/or specialized transportation services that:
 - Can be proven operationally feasible;
 - Can demonstrate community acceptance;
 - Would be available to the general public;
 - Can be proven to be economical; and
 - Can demonstrate cost effectiveness by meeting current fare box revenue requirements of the Mono LTC (10% of operating cost) within two years.

Prior to making allocations for transit service for FY 2024/25, the Mono County LTC must adopt a resolution regarding unmet transit needs. The resolution must include a finding that:

- there are no unmet needs, or
- there are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet, or
- there are unmet transit needs, including needs that are reasonable to meet.

If the LTC finds that there are unmet transit needs, including needs that are reasonable to meet, then the unmet needs shall be funded before any allocation is made for streets and roads. It should be noted that the Mono County LTC has not allocated any transit funds to streets and roads within the last five years. This process does not require that unmet needs that are reasonable to meet be funded in place of transit service needs that are currently funded. However, it does provide a forum for such needs to be considered for funding.

The Eastern Sierra Transit Authority, in its role as the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) for Mono County and with assistance from LTC/County/Town staff, has attended Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) or community meetings in Antelope Valley, Bridgeport Valley, June Lake, and Mono Basin to solicit public input. Input from those meetings, as well as input from the Mammoth Lakes Planning & Economic Development Commission meeting will be submitted to the LTC for consideration of the annual unmet transit needs process in June.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Planning & Economic Development Commission receive public input and provide feedback to staff regarding the evaluation of unmet needs in the Town of Mammoth Lakes and provide direction to staff regarding unmet needs or transit services.