

SAFE SIERRA STREETS: RECLAIMING HIGHWAY 395 MAIN STREETS



Leveraging regional partnerships to plan for safer, better connected, thriving communities in California's beautiful Eastern Sierra.

Attachment B

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1. Overview

Introduction to the Project

The Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) is spearheading an initiative to convert U.S. Highway 395 from a high-speed route into vibrant, community-centered main streets that better serve residents and businesses. For decades, US 395 has been pivotal for transporting goods and tourists through Mono and Inyo Counties, but its design has favored speed over community needs, endangering pedestrian safety and livability.

This project covers 15 miles of Main Streets across 15 communities, including five tribal nations, along a 280-mile stretch of US 395. (Attachments A-C) These towns are gateways to destinations like Yosemite and Death Valley National Parks, Mono Lake, and Mammoth Mountain Ski Resort, which attract roughly 2.8 million visitors yearly. However, extensive highway expansions have turned these streets into high-speed corridors that divide communities and make it difficult for residents to walk, bike, or access daily destinations.

In Mono and Inyo Counties, public land dominates—about 98% in Inyo and 94% in Mono—leaving very little private land available for housing and community development (Attachment H). This scarcity of privately owned land has limited opportunities for new housing and economic development. It constrains the local tax base and discretionary funding for community development improvements. The urgent need to reclaim our main streets as safe, vibrant spaces coincides with residents' desires for a better balance between the highway's regional role and local quality of life.

ESCOG, a Joint Powers Authority, coordinates regional planning and economic development in the Eastern Sierra. It collaborates with local, state, and federal partners to foster community development, economic diversity, sustainable recreation, and climate resilience. ESCOG and its partners are committed to equitable project execution to enhance safety, health, and connectivity in the Eastern Sierra.

History and Character of the Eastern Sierra

The focus of this grant is the fifteen traditional small towns and Tribal communities along US 395 in Mono and Inyo Counties, where the highway serves as the primary Main Street. These counties lie on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada and are linked to California mainly through Highway 395, as there are no year-round Sierra Nevada passes. Populations in these communities range from 150 to 4,000 residents, with Highway 395 cutting through each town to support high-speed freight traffic, creating unsafe and unwelcoming downtown areas. This has led to divided neighborhoods, limited economic activity, and barriers to necessary housing development. California Department of Transportation (Caltrans District 09) has jurisdiction over the Main Streets of all these communities for the entire right-of-way, including sidewalks, while federal and public land managers control the surrounding areas, preventing further private development. The result is that the communities themselves have limited autonomy over their future and the character of their communities, and the prosperity of each community is dependent on downtown revitalization, infill housing, and redevelopment. (Attachment H)

Historical Harm

In the 1950s, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) began a multi-decade project to expand Highway 395 from two lanes to four (Attachment I). The primary goals were to increase freight capacity and improve safety on the highway, but the consequences for the small communities along the highway have been profound and long-lasting.

As a result of this expansion, Highway 395 is now an uninterrupted expressway with long, 65 mph segments between communities. The transition from high-speed highway travel to these small communities is abrupt. There are no traffic-calming measures to alert drivers they are entering these populated areas, often resulting in vehicles maintaining high speeds and endangering residents. Instead of town centers and Main Streets, residents and visitors face the dangers of a freight-dominated downtown, making it an unwelcoming and unsafe space, particularly for families and children. This can be particularly dangerous at night, as there is little or no pedestrian lighting. This issue is especially acute in Tribal communities at the town edges, where the highway first enters. (Attachment J)

Caltrans' ownership of the entire highway right-of-way prevents local communities from implementing their own improvements, hindering pedestrian-friendly developments and impacting local businesses that depend on foot traffic. The lack of safe, walkable environments has led to pedestrian fatalities, including children walking to school, and discourages investments in crucial infill housing. This situation underscores the urgent need for traffic calming and safety measures in these community centers.

Local officials, residents, and business owners have identified the need to improve the downtown areas of small towns along Highway 395 as a critical issue. The ESCOG has produced a video, "[Reclaiming Highway 395 Stories](#)" (Attachment C), which highlights the impacts and includes community testimonials. Public meetings have echoed the frustration and urgency due to the current conditions that diminish livability, safety, and economic potential.

Additionally, communities along US 395 in Mono and Inyo Counties have faced over a century of marginalization, leading to social, economic, and cultural degradation, including displacement, environmental exploitation, and cultural suppression, particularly affecting Indigenous populations.

1. **Displacement of Indigenous Communities:** For thousands of years, Indigenous tribes, including the Paiute, Shoshone, and Mono Lake Kootzaduka'a, lived in the Eastern Sierra, stewarding the land and maintaining complex social and cultural systems. However, the arrival of settlers in the 19th century brought violence, displacement, and loss of land. Tribes were relocated from their traditional homelands to small reservations adjacent to townsites.
2. **Water Diversions and the Owens Valley Water Wars:** One of the most significant historical harms to the region was water diversion from the Owens Valley to Los Angeles in the early 20th century. The Los Angeles Aqueduct, completed in 1913, drained the Owens River and dried up Owens Lake, leading to ecological devastation and economic decline. Local farmers, ranchers, and Indigenous communities were left without the vital water resources they depended on for agriculture and daily life. This environmental harm was compounded by dust storms from the dry lakebed, creating public health issues that continue to affect the area. To preserve their water rights, the City of Los Angeles took

ownership of nearly all private land in the Owens Valley. These lands are still owned by the City of Los Angeles and preserved for water rights over 100 years later, crippling opportunities for housing and economic development.

- 3. Economic Struggles and Dependence on Tourism:** Many communities nurtured outdoor recreation as a primary economic driver due to the loss of water and agricultural viability. While tourism brought some economic relief, it also made the towns highly dependent on seasonal and unpredictable visitor flows. This reliance on tourism has left many communities vulnerable to economic downturns, environmental changes, and shifts in visitor patterns, with little opportunity to diversify their economies.

In short, Eastern Sierra communities have limited control over their development, with key decisions often made by external government entities. This history has left a legacy of displacement, environmental injustice, and economic difficulties. Transforming US 395 into vibrant main streets offers a chance to heal these historical wounds. This initiative aims to prioritize community needs, celebrate local culture, and promote sustainable and resilient economies that respect the region's rich heritage and diversity.

Transportation Needs and Project History

Historically, US 395 was designed to expedite vehicle movement, aiding tourists and freight but detrimentally affecting community livability. Its vehicle-centric design has escalated noise, air pollution, and hazards for pedestrians and cyclists. Decades of widening have transformed potential vibrant community hubs into traffic-heavy roads that split neighborhoods and hinder access to services and local economies. Despite extensive advocacy by residents, local governments, and tribal communities for pedestrian-friendly improvements and numerous planning efforts like the *Eastern Sierra Corridor Enhancement Plan*, the highway still fails to adequately meet community needs.

See our review of 22 US 395 Corridor and Main Street Plans that call for Complete Street features additions - Attachment L.

Barriers Created by the Existing Facility and Proposed Planning Activities

The current configuration of US 395 poses several barriers to community connectivity, safety, and economic vitality:

- **Community Division and Limited Livability:** The highway divides towns and neighborhoods with its high-speed, four-lane layout, prioritizing vehicles over pedestrians. This hinders access to schools, businesses, and community spaces. This design diminishes the sense of community and turns main streets into busy, unsafe corridors.
- **Unsafe Conditions for Pedestrians and Cyclists:** US 395 lacks facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, resulting in dangerous conditions at school crossings and major intersections. Its wide lanes and high speeds lead to frequent collisions, creating unsafe conditions for non-motorized users and discouraging walking or biking. The highway features limited sidewalks, no dedicated bike lanes, no streetscaping, and lacks traffic calming measures at community entrances, failing to signal the transition from the expressway. Additionally, half of the communities in this project need stop lights or stop signs along their Main Streets.
- **Economic and Environmental Impacts:** Noise and air pollution from heavy traffic along US 395 make nearby properties less appealing for residential and commercial development. Additionally, the limited private land in our counties restricts new housing and business

opportunities. This scarcity of developable land increases costs and hinders local growth and economic resilience.

ESCOG and Caltrans District 09 Partnership for US 395 Main Street Vision

ESCOG was initially excited to partner with Caltrans District 09, which had secured funding to develop a Project Study Report (PSR) for transforming US 395 into a community-focused main street. However, due to budget constraints, District 09 can no longer fund the PSR, posing a significant challenge. Despite this setback, the continued support from the community and District 09 strengthens our commitment to this vision. Local partnerships with Caltrans to develop PSRs had been effective for implementing the community's vision for previous projects in Lee Vining and Bridgeport, and we hope to expand this successful model for the region.

Despite the recent loss of funding for the PSR, the strong support from our communities and District 09 has reinforced our commitment to the US 395 Main Street vision. ESCOG is now seeking funding to lead the development of the PSR. This initiative will focus on comprehensive community engagement and forming citizen advisory committees to ensure public participation is at the project's core. We aim to establish a transparent and inclusive process that prioritizes local needs and addresses concerns of disadvantaged communities, advancing our partnership with Caltrans to create safe and vibrant communities.

Proposed Planning Activities

ESCOG proposes a comprehensive set of planning activities aimed at reclaiming US 395 as a community asset and addressing the barriers created by its current design:

- 1. Traffic Calming and Safety Enhancements:** The project will implement traffic calming measures such as curb extensions, raised crosswalks, and refuge islands to reduce vehicle speeds and enhance safety for all users. These modifications will make our main streets safer and more accessible for pedestrians and cyclists. Additionally, the project will create consistent, locally tailored gateway treatments to inform motorists they are entering a community and highlight the unique character of the Eastern Sierra.
- 2. Multimodal Streetscape Improvements:** Expanding sidewalks, adding bike lanes, and enhancing transit stops are key to transforming US 395 into vibrant, multimodal streetscapes. These improvements will convert the high-speed highway into welcoming community spaces encouraging people to linger, shop, and connect.
- 3. Community-Driven Design and Place-making:** Working with local stakeholders, including tribal communities, ESCOG aims to ensure US 395's redesign honors each town's unique character and history. Place-making elements like public art, street trees, and enhanced lighting will foster community pride and ownership. ESCOG collaborates with the Inyo County Council for the Arts, Mono Arts Council, and C5 Community Arts Center to involve artists and cultural leaders, ensuring the project authentically reflects each community's identity.
- 4. Environmental Resilience and Sustainability:** The project will incorporate sustainable features like shade trees, rain gardens, and bioswales to improve environmental quality, manage stormwater, and enhance climate resilience. These efforts aim to create healthier, more livable communities along US 395.
- 5. Supporting Local Businesses and Mixed-Use Development:** The project aims to boost local business growth and encourage mixed-use development by improving access and

creating attractive spaces. This strategy will address housing and economic challenges due to limited private land availability, promoting a more connected and resilient community.

- 6. Comprehensive Solutions for Connected Communities:** The funding application will support feasibility studies, including updating the *2007 Bishop Area Access and Circulation Study*. This update will gauge community and business support for solutions to manage truck traffic in Bishop, exploring alternative routes, streetscaping, and multi-modal transportation options to ease Main Street congestion. This study is crucial for advancing the *2022 Downtown Bishop Specific Plan and Mixed-Use Overlay*.

Primary Project Locations and Map

(Note: all plans cited are discussed in Attachment L)

- **Coleville (pop. 353):** Located in Antelope Valley, a Mono County unincorporated community by the Nevada border, it houses about 70 Marine Corps families whose children attend school along Highway 395. Centrally located, Coleville provides all government services (post office, library, schools) for the area. The highway lacks sidewalks, stoplights, or calming features. With no prior visioning or planning to address these issues, Mono County seeks funding to develop a unified community vision for a safer downtown, including traffic calming, streetscaping, medians, trails or bike lanes, and gateway elements.
- **Walker (pop. 401):** Walker is an unincorporated community in Antelope Valley known for its access to the West Walker River, popular among anglers. It is the largest community and the commercial center of the area, hosting essential services like general stores, a gas station, restaurants, several hotels, and satellite County offices on 395. The highway is consistently three lanes wide. Residents have documented concerns about speeding, with drivers often passing illegally in the center turn lane. HM4 Safety grant funds have been awarded for minor traffic calming work, which may include painted bike lanes and possibly crosswalks. Mono County is seeking additional funding to develop a vision for a safer downtown, including traffic calming treatments, streetscaping, medians, an off-highway trail or bike lane, and gateway features.
- **Bridgeport (pop. 509):** The county seat of Mono County, Bridgeport is a historic town known for its Victorian courthouse, hot springs, fishing, and outdoor activities. It's an unincorporated community starting 1000 feet east of Emigrant Street and ending 6/10 miles later at US 395 and CA 182. The 2013 Main Street Revitalization Plan for U.S. 395 through Bridgeport helped reduce Highway 395 from five to three lanes and added Class II bike lanes to lower speeds. The Caltrans "Bridgeport Rehab" project will add new sidewalks and bulbouts with high-visibility crosswalks. Mono County seeks funding to enhance the streetscape with new and wider sidewalks, more trees, crosswalks, and gateway features.
- **Bridgeport Indian Colony (pop. 120):** Located $\frac{2}{3}$ mile north of Bridgeport, this small Native American community focuses on preserving its cultural heritage and traditions while providing services to residents. Despite being integral to the greater Bridgeport area, plans for a pathway enabling tribal residents to walk and bike to Bridgeport have been delayed or cut due to Caltrans' staffing and funding limitations. The colony seeks funding to develop a community vision for safe infrastructure to better connect with Bridgeport services.

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- **Lee Vining (pop. 590):** As the eastern gateway to Yosemite National Park via Tioga Pass, Lee Vining offers stunning views and outdoor activities centered around the Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center. In 2025, Caltrans will begin implementing the 2018 Lee Vining Main Street Rehabilitation vision, which will reduce roads from five to three lanes, add Class II Bike Lanes, back-in parking, wider sidewalks, bump-outs, and beacon crosswalks. Mono County is seeking funding to enhance community visioning and develop gateway features that manage traffic flow as it enters the town, which stretches from Visitor Center Drive south to CA 120.
- **Bishop Paiute Tribe (pop. 1,651):** As the largest tribe in the Eastern Sierra and fifth largest in California, the Bishop Paiute Tribe's reservation borders Highway 395. Residents frequently walk or bike along the highway to access services in nearby Bishop. The tribe has developed economic ventures along the highway, including a casino, gas station, and a new hotel. They are seeking funding to enhance pedestrian safety, streetscaping, and gateway features, along with other traffic calming measures for both the reservation members and other pedestrians near Bishop.
- **Bishop (incorporated pop. 3,789, the sphere of influence pop. 11,275):** As the commercial and government hub of Inyo and Mono Counties, Bishop confronts challenges with its US 395 Main Street in implementing Complete Street solutions while managing 15,300 vehicles daily. It's also the terminus of US 6, a critical freight link between the Port of Los Angeles and distribution centers in Reno, NV. The *2022 Downtown Bishop Specific Plan and Mixed-Use Overlay* promotes a vibrant downtown with multi-modal transportation but requires traffic reductions for multi-modal improvements. If this grant is awarded, the city will update the *2007 Bishop Area Access and Circulation Study* to consider route alternatives to reduce truck traffic primarily accessing Highway 6 via Highway 395, increase multimodal options, and develop traffic calming designs like bulbouts, medians, streetscaping, and gateway features to enhance safety and reduce speeds.
- **Big Pine (pop. 1,570):** An unincorporated town, Big Pine is the gateway to the Palisade Glacier and the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest. Lacking comprehensive visioning, traffic calming measures, or stop signs/lights, both elementary and high schools are separated from most residences by Highway 395. The Big Pine Civic Club is an ardent supporter of this visioning work but cannot initiate or administer a planning project. Inyo County is seeking funding to engage the community in developing a vision for Main Street that enhances pedestrian safety, introduces traffic calming, and adds gateway features to delineate the community's Main Street.
- **Big Pine Paiute Tribe (pop. 500):** The Big Pine Paiute Reservation is situated at the southern edge of Big Pine and serves as the initial entry point for motorists from the south. As drivers transition from highway to main street speeds upon entering the reservation, the community contends with high-speed traffic moving through the community. Residents rely on neighboring Big Pine for services like groceries and schools but lack pedestrian safety and traffic calming features. The highway divides their community, restricting connectivity and economic growth. The tribe seeks funding to develop a comprehensive community vision, incorporating pedestrian, multi-modal transportation solutions and traffic calming measures, including gateway features to signal the transition into a community.

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- **Fort Independence Paiute Reservation (pop. 148):** Located two miles north of Independence, Fort Independence is the only community in the project scope with a divided expressway cutting it in half and not contiguous to a corresponding town. The tribe has received funding to develop a long-range transportation plan, focusing on a grade-separated crossing of 395 and a non-motorized connection to Independence. They seek additional funding to unify their community planning efforts and enhance traffic calming at their gateways.
- **Independence (pop. 761):** Independence is the unincorporated county seat of Inyo County, often described as a preserved pioneer community. Main Street/Highway 395 spans four lanes without medians or traffic calming measures, leading to pedestrian fatalities due to high-speed traffic through the less than a mile-long town. Comprehensive community engagement and visioning for Main Street have been lacking. Inyo County is seeking funding to engage the community in developing a vision for downtown improvements, including complete streets and gateway features to slow traffic.

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- **Lone Pine (pop. 1,580):** Famous for its proximity to Mount Whitney, the highest peak in the contiguous United States, Lone Pine is the southern gateway to the Eastern Sierra. It is unincorporated and lacks formal community visioning for Main Street, which could use gateway features to signal entry into the community. Lone Pine High School, located on Highway 395 at the town's south end, and students have been hit crossing Main Street. Inyo County seeks funding to develop a comprehensive vision for pedestrian safety, traffic calming enhancements, and gateway features.
- **Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Reservation (pop. 350):** Located at the southern end of Lone Pine, this community is the first Main Street community motorists encounter after 115 miles of traveling at expressway speeds. The reservation is bisected by Highway 395 and lacks traffic calming and pedestrian infrastructure like other Eastern Sierra reservations. As a small sovereign community, the Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone faces challenges in planning and implementing mitigations. If this grant is awarded, they plan to develop a vision for connectivity, including complete street improvements and gateway features.

Source: Attachments D, E

2. Response to Merit Criteria

Community	Pop.	Main Street Speed Limit	Average Annual Daily Traffic	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income
Coleville	353	45 mph	4,300	\$42,071	\$17,891
Walker	401	45 mph	4,000	\$55,149	N/A
Bridgeport	509	25 mph	4,200	\$107,500	\$40,170
Bridgeport Indian Colony	120	25 mph	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lee Vining	590	25 mph	3,600	\$107,500	\$24,616
Bishop	3,789	25 mph	15,300	\$76,948	\$36,047
Bishop Paiute Reservation	1,651	45 mph	N/A	N/A	N/A
Big Pine	1,570	35 mph	6,200	\$62,576	\$39,964
Big Pine Paiute Tribe	500	35 mph	6,200	N/A	N/A
Fort Independence Tribe	148	65 mph	6,300	N/A	N/A
Independence	761	25 mph	7,600	\$57,917	\$28,402
Lone Pine	1,580	25 mph	6,600	\$39,881	\$27,933
Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone	350	45 mph	6,600	N/A	N/A

Equity and Justice40:

- The transformation of Highway 395 into a four-lane expressway has caused significant environmental, social, and economic disruptions across the Eastern Sierra, particularly affecting marginalized and Indigenous communities. These rural and Tribal communities often lack the necessary resources for grant writing, administration, and advocacy, relying on support from larger organizations like ESCOG. The Eastern Sierra's rural areas suffer from insufficient political representation and governmental capacity, hindering effective community engagement, vision development, and strategic planning to address the historical damages wrought by Highway 395's expansion.
- Nationally, Native Americans have the highest per capita pedestrian death rates, often due to high-speed roads lacking sidewalks in their communities (www.smartgrowthamerica.org). Along Highway 395, Tribal communities are particularly vulnerable as they are situated on the town's outskirts and are the first areas vehicles encounter. These reservations generally

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lack traffic calming measures and pedestrian infrastructure, disconnecting them from town services like schools, stores, and healthcare.

- Highway 395, a key route for many, especially disadvantaged populations who often walk or bike, poses dangers due to high-speed traffic, lack of crosswalks, and poor lighting. Implementing effective pedestrian safety measures will enhance safe access to daily destinations and mobility for vulnerable groups, such as children, the elderly, and those with disabilities. ESCOG plans to use the funding to empower community organizations, helping historically underrepresented groups influence decisions on traffic calming and pedestrian safety. A comprehensive engagement strategy will ensure equitable distribution of safety investments. This will involve traditional workshops, digital charrettes, surveys, direct partnerships with community organizations and Tribes, and mobile workshops in local gathering spots to include those often overlooked.
- To rectify past inequities from Highway 395 and meet the Justice40 criteria, ESCOG will adopt a comprehensive, inclusive planning approach. This involves addressing historical and ongoing disparities in community planning and decision-making, enhancing mobility, and improving access to daily destinations. ESCOG will ensure extensive community engagement focusing on inclusivity, representing all groups including youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations. To meet the Justice 40 goals, ESCOG will use data-driven strategies to ensure that 40% of the project's benefits reach disadvantaged and Tribal communities equitably.

Facility Suitability:

- Originally a two-lane road, Highway 395 was expanded to four lanes to manage increased tourism in the Eastern Sierra, driven by outdoor recreation and Los Angeles's water rights acquisitions. This expansion eliminated on-street parking and other traffic-calming features to accommodate the wider highway. For example, freight traffic on Bishop Main Street has nearly doubled from 19.9% of all vehicles in 2010 to 34.5% in 2021. There have been no pedestrian improvements or traffic calming mitigations implemented within the communities since the highway was expanded to four lanes, and through traffic commonly does not differentiate between being on the highway and being in a town.
- Recreation and tourism are the economic foundations of Inyo and Mono County, with the economic benefits closely linked to the appeal of their downtown areas. Revitalizing Main Streets is a key objective in regional strategies like the Sierra Jobs First Strategy, the Eastern Sierra CEDS, and the City of Bishop Economic Development Plan. Mitigating highway traffic will facilitate housing development by creating suitable conditions for infill and mixed-use projects in downtown areas. Given the lack of greenfield development opportunities in the Eastern Sierra, infill remains the primary method for adding housing units. However, current truck traffic on Main Street creates unsafe and undesirable conditions for residential development.
- An inclusive planning process will be initiated to identify traffic calming measures along Highway 395, starting with comprehensive outreach to gather input from residents, Indigenous groups, local businesses, and other stakeholders. This effort will focus on understanding the specific needs and characteristics of each community. After collecting community feedback, the process will evaluate traffic calming options—like roundabouts, gateway features, enhanced lighting, pedestrian crossings, and streetscaping—based on their suitability to local priorities. Ongoing engagement will ensure that the final decisions reflect

community values and effectively signal to motorists that they are entering a community, enhancing safety and cohesion.

Community Engagement and Community-based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships:

ESCOG is a key institution for community and economic development, housing, sustainable recreation, and climate resiliency across Inyo and Mono Counties. It has shaped a regional vision for prosperity through extensive community engagement from Death Valley to Antelope Valley. This vision supports initiatives such as Sierra Jobs First, the Eastern Sierra Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and the Towns-to-Trails Plan for a non-motorized trail network across the region.

The key to this project is using funds to support community advocacy and engagement at the local level, particularly as the Eastern Sierra lacks non-volunteer community advocacy organizations in the 15 communities targeted by this application. To overcome engagement barriers in rural and Indigenous communities, ESCOG will implement a comprehensive strategy that combines traditional and innovative methods, ensuring inclusive participation and empowerment.

1. **Collaborative Community Workshops:** ESCOG will hold facilitated listening sessions and charrettes with residents, tribes, environmental advocates, and community organizations. These interactive sessions will identify highway impacts and solutions.
2. **Partnerships with Tribal and Local Leaders:** ESCOG will engage with tribal governments to ensure inclusion in developing solutions, and dedicated workshops will be provided for visioning solutions adjacent to or on Tribal reservation lands.
3. **Virtual Engagement Platforms:** Recognizing that not all residents can attend in-person meetings, virtual platforms will allow remote participation to ensure that underserved populations can fully engage in discussions.
4. **Mobile Community Engagement:** Traditional community engagement can be inaccessible for disadvantaged, Latino, and Tribal community members due to work conflicts, travel arrangements or other barriers. The ESCOG will arrange for mobile workshops to bring digital tools to provide spaces for community dialogue where residents are already gathering, including youth sports, street fairs, and other community events.
5. **Multilingual Engagement:** ESCOG will ensure inclusive community participation by offering materials and workshops in Spanish.

Partners will include the Bishop Paiute Tribe, the Big Pine Paiute Tribe, the Fort Independence Tribe, the Bridgeport Indian Colony, the Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Tribe, the Big Pine Civic Club, the Independence Civic Club, the Mono Basin Regional Planning Advisory Committee, the Bridgeport Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee, the Antelope Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee, La Causa - Hispanic Voices for Community Improvement, the Bishop Area Chamber of Commerce, the Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce, the Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce, the Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce, the Antelope Valley Chamber of Commerce, and others. (Attachment K - LOS)

Equitable Development:

- Eastern Sierra communities are restricted from expanding beyond developed areas due to public land constraints, leading many to modify zoning laws for mixed-use housing in

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commercial zones. Yet, current traffic conditions detract from the appeal of these infill housing developments. Community surveys indicate that 48% of respondents avoid downtown areas due to truck traffic. The Bishop Mixed-Use Overlay highlights pedestrian safety across Highway 395/Main Street as a significant concern. Efforts are underway with Caltrans to enhance safety at nonsignalized crossings with flashing beacons and signage. Still, more comprehensive treatments are needed to support and encourage housing developments along Main Street. This challenge is consistent across the project study area.

- Highway 395 poses a major obstacle to affordable housing in Inyo and Mono Counties due to noise, pollution, and safety issues. Implementing traffic calming measures such as reduced speed limits, expanded sidewalks, improved pedestrian crossings, and dedicated bike lanes can enhance downtown walkability and safety, fostering new housing opportunities. Currently, few homes exist along Highway 395 in both counties, yet there is a documented need for housing across all income levels. Effective traffic mitigations, including pedestrian safety enhancements and freight rerouting, are essential to attracting investment for infill housing development. (Attachment J)
- The project is intended to advance opportunities for those communities that have the least opportunity to develop a vision for land use, affordable housing options, and policy-making, especially those lacking planning infrastructure for their downtowns, including Big Pine, the Big Pine Tribe, Independence, Lone Pine, the Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone, Walker, and Coleville.

Climate Change Resiliency:

- Despite their small size, communities in the study area feel unsafe using alternative transportation due to current conditions, leading to reliance on vehicles. The Safe Sierra Streets project, in partnership with Caltrans District 9, aims to enhance multi-modal transportation options to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and lower greenhouse gas emissions. The focus is on developing plans ready for implementation that maximize Complete Street solutions and include climate-resilient infrastructure improvements to address heat island effects and other climate change impacts. (Attachment J)
- Mono and Inyo counties have climate action plans and have established baselines of their carbon emissions to measure their progress in reducing them. Mono County's 2022 Resource Efficiency Plan identifies a prominent goal to 'Improve Connectivity and Efficiency of Resident and Employee Transportation,' citing on-road vehicles as the single largest source of Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Mono County. Aging infrastructure along US 395 is becoming less resilient to extreme weather events and climate-related stressors. The Caltrans District 9 Climate Change Adaptation Priorities Report has identified critical infrastructure along US 395 in the grant project area as priority assets vulnerable to flooding and extreme temperature changes from climate change. These findings will be incorporated into the planning process to develop solutions that are climate resilient. This project will help align local and State agencies' project priorities to reduce VMT and make communities more resilient to the effects of climate change, while enhancing the safety and sustainability for residents, visitors, and the local economy.

Workforce Development and Economic Opportunity:

Workforce Development: Through the California Jobs First effort, ESCOG is partnering with Cerro Coso Community College, Mortherlode Job Training Center, the Sierra Business Council and others to develop job pathways to fill capacity gaps in professional positions in the Eastern Sierra, including land management, planning and hospitality. Cerro Coso Community College will be launching the new associate degree program in January 2025 with job training opportunities in GIS mapping, planning, and land management, with a requirement for work experience. This grant will provide opportunities for job training experience to assist with outreach and engagement, especially tribal engagement, translation services, and other support services that will facilitate future regional capacity building and increased wages for disadvantaged students.

Economic Opportunity: Downtown revitalization through traffic impact mitigation is a key goal in several regional economic strategies, including the Sierra Jobs First Initiative, Eastern Sierra CEDS, Bishop Strategic Plan, and Inyo County General Plan. Nearly half of all workers in the region are in the tourism sector, earning under \$50,000 annually (Sierra Jobs First, 2024). Tourism, primarily driven by low-revenue activities like fishing and hiking, significantly contributes to local government revenue through the Transient Occupancy Tax, accounting for 27.31% to 56.3% of general fund revenues (City of Bishop and Town of Mammoth Lakes FY 24-25 Budgets). The *2022 Eastern Sierra Business Resource Center Business Plan*, which catalyzed the establishment of the first Small Business Development Center office in the region, identified tourist attraction into downtowns as a key opportunity to drive small business development, noting “destination development is needed to attract passersby to stop and explore.” Traffic mitigation in commercial areas is crucial for creating vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtowns that attract residents and tourists, as stated in the 2015 Bishop Economic Development Plan, and to broaden and enhance regional economic prospects.

Planning Integration:

The Safe Sierra Streets project directly supports previous planning efforts completed by Inyo and Mono Counties, Tribal governments, the City of Bishop, and Caltrans District 9. The scope of this effort includes conducting a planning audit of existing plans to identify gaps in community engagement, assess community support and suitability for existing planning recommendations, update outdated plans as needed based on community engagement, and advance downtown plans to a Project Study Report to guide Caltrans funding in the future. Many communities in the study have previously completed Main Streets improvement plans either in part or comprehensively, including Lone Pine, Independence, Fort Independence Reservation, the City of Bishop, Lee Vining, and Bridgeport. Several communities have had little or no community engagement to inform a vision or plan for their Main Streets, including the Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Tribe, the Big Pine Tribe, the Bishop Paiute Tribe, and the Antelope Valley, which includes the communities of Walker and Coleville. Please refer to the Planning Document Analysis (Attachment L) included in the attachments to this proposal. Because Highway 395 is under Caltrans jurisdiction, implementation of locally developed community plans is contingent on the funding priorities and project readiness requirements of Caltrans. This funding is necessary for Eastern Sierra communities to be empowered to advance their planning efforts toward shovel readiness in partnership with Caltrans through the development of the US 395 Main Streets PSR.

Eastern Sierra Council of Governments
Safe Sierra Streets: Reclaiming Highway 395 Main Streets
Scope of Work and Budget Description

Scope of Work Description

Task 1. Project Initiation

1.1 Establish Memorandums of Understanding with Regional Agency Partners

- Upon grant award, ESCOG will work with Regional Agency Partners to refine the project scope and budget to ensure alignment with community and transportation safety improvement goals.
- Develop and execute Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between ESCOG and key regional partners, including Mono County, Inyo County, the City of Bishop, Tribes, Caltrans, and other partners outlining project management responsibilities, reporting requirements, and financial obligations.
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations for the collaboration on the project.

1.2 Procure Consultants

- Prepare and distribute a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify and hire consultants specializing in transportation planning, complete streets, community engagement, and urban design.
- ESCOG anticipates preparing two RFPs. First, ESCOG will prepare an RFP for Task 2, Task 3, and Task 4 to achieve economies of scale for this regional planning effort. ESCOG will prepare a second RFP for Task 5 to conduct engagement for and prepare the updated Bishop Area Access and Circulation Study.

1.3 Project Kick-Off

- Organize a formal project initiation meeting with all stakeholders and consultants to outline the project goals, deliverables, timeline, and coordination mechanisms.
- Establish communication protocols and a project management framework.

Task 2. Existing Conditions Analysis

2.1 Preliminary Research and Existing Plan Document Review

- Conduct a thorough review of existing transportation plans, community visioning efforts, land use documents, and other previous studies related to U.S. Highway 395.
- Assess the socio-economic, environmental, and transportation-related data of Mono and Inyo Counties.

2.2 Establish Community Engagement Working Group

- Form working groups within communities with representatives from local communities, Tribes, businesses, non-profits, and key stakeholders to provide input and guide community engagement throughout the project.

2.3 Community Engagement and Visioning

- Organize public outreach and visioning sessions to gather input on the community's needs and aspirations for U.S. Highway 395.
- Utilize surveys, design charrettes, virtual and mobile workshops, and public meetings to ensure diverse voices are included in shaping the future design of the corridor.

Attachment B

2.4 Existing Conditions and Community Engagement Summary Memo

- Summarize key findings from the existing conditions analysis and community input, including safety issues, pedestrian and bicycle accessibility, and traffic concerns.
- Present these findings to the community engagement working group for review.

Task 3. Draft Complete Street Regional Project Study Report (PSR)

3.1 Administrative Draft Complete Street Regional Project Study Report

- Develop an administrative draft that outlines potential design concepts for each community in the study area for transforming U.S. Highway 395 into a complete street that prioritizes traffic calming, pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure, public spaces, and gateway features.
- Include preliminary engineering recommendations for locations of roadway improvements, traffic calming, gateway elements and streetscaping, including landscaping palettes appropriate for the high desert climate of the Eastern Sierra.
- Include a detailed alternatives analysis and cost, schedule, and scope information, including estimated schedule and costs for environmental mitigation and permit compliance.
- It will include an inventory of known environmental resources, identification of potential environmental issues and constraints, the type of environmental document anticipated for NEPA and/or CEQA compliance, and potential mitigation measures and estimated costs.
 - We anticipate environmental mitigation and constraints will be minimal due to project scope being primarily located on existing infrastructure and requiring limited land disturbance
- Completion of the PSR will allow inclusion in Inyo and Mono Counties' Regional Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIP), providing the opportunity to fund subsequent project phases through formula or discretionary sources.

3.2 Draft Complete Street Regional Project Study Report

- Release a draft report to agency partners, stakeholders, and the community for review and feedback.
- Provide opportunities for input on the proposed designs and recommendations through public meetings and workshops.

3.3 Community Engagement Workshops

- Conduct workshops to gather feedback on the draft report and design concepts, ensuring that residents, businesses, and local organizations are fully engaged in the decision-making process.

3.4 Agency Partner Review and Board Presentations

- Present the draft report to regional agency partners, including Caltrans and local governments, for review and feedback.
- Hold formal presentations to the ESCOG Board and other relevant bodies to gather further input and guidance.

4. Final Complete Street Regional Project Study Report

4.1 Administrative Final Complete Street Regional Project Study Report

Attachment B

- Incorporate feedback from community engagement, agency partners, and board presentations into an administrative final report for internal review.

4.2 Public Final Complete Street Regional Project Study Report

- Publish the final report for public dissemination, ensuring transparency and accessibility to all community members and stakeholders.

4.3 Community Workshops

- Host additional workshops to present the final report and outline the next steps for implementation.
- Address any remaining questions or concerns from the public and agency partners.

4.4 Agency Partner Review and Board Presentations

- Finalize the report based on any additional feedback from partners and formalize presentations to the ESCOG Board and other decision-making bodies for approval.

5. Bishop Area Access and Circulation Study

5.1 Existing Conditions Analysis

- Conduct a thorough review of existing transportation plans, community visioning efforts, land use documents, and other previous studies related to U.S. Highway 395, specifically the *2007 Bishop Area Access and Circulation Study*.
- Conduct a detailed analysis of traffic patterns, pedestrian and bicycle access, and circulation issues specific to the Bishop area, including key intersections and roadways.

5.2 Community Engagement Workshops and Surveys

- Gather input from Bishop area residents and businesses through workshops and surveys to identify priority access and mobility concerns.

5.3 Draft Route Alternatives Analysis

- Develop draft alternatives for improving traffic flow, pedestrian and bicycle access, and overall safety in Bishop.
- Present the alternatives for public and stakeholder review and input.
- Determine public support for alternate route concepts.

5.4 Draft City Mobility Alternatives Analysis

- Assess potential mobility improvements through Bishop to alleviate congestion within the downtown area, including new arterial or collector roads, pedestrian and bicycle access and other multi-model circulation improvements.
- Present the alternatives for public and stakeholder review and input.
- Determine public support for Mobility Alternative Concepts.
- Draft update for City of Bishop General Plan Mobility Element as needed.

5.5 Final Bishop Area Access and Circulation Study

- Incorporate public and agency feedback into the final study, detailing prioritized improvements and actionable steps for enhancing access and circulation in Bishop.
- Present the final study to the ESCOG Board to recommend for City Council consideration and present to Bishop City Council for approval.

6. ESCOG Project Management and Grant Administration

Task 6.1: Technical Assistance and Project Management

Attachment B

- ESCOG's administrative team will provide ongoing monitoring of the Highway 395 project, ensuring compliance with grant requirements, and that all deliverables are on track for completion by the proposed deadline.

Task 6.2: Grant Administration, Invoicing and Reporting

- ESCOG will submit regular progress reports, including financial and performance updates, to relevant state and federal transportation agencies to monitor the project's progress.

Scope of Work Deliverables:

- MOU documents with regional agency partners
- Existing conditions analysis report
- Community engagement summary memo
- Draft and final Complete Street Regional Project Study Reports
- Bishop Area Access and Circulation Study Report
- Reporting as required by grant agreement

Budget Description:

ESCOG is seeking an 80:20 match grant award for the Safe Sierra Streets: Reclaiming Highway 395 Main Streets project. Upon grant award, the ESCOG will convene project partners to develop and execute Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between ESCOG and key regional partners, including Mono County, Inyo County, the City of Bishop, Tribes, Caltrans, and other partners outlining project management responsibilities, reporting requirements, and financial obligations. Non-federal funding will be provided with cash and in-kind contributions by project partners, including the ESCOG. Commitments for the submission and funding of this project have been provide by Resolution of the relevant agency, and are included below.

Attachment B

Safe Sierra Street: Reclaiming Highway 395 Main Streets Budget

Eastern Sierra Council of Governments

Safe Sierra Streets: Reclaiming Highway 395 Main Streets

Task	Activity	Total Cost	Federal Funds	Non-Federal Funds
1	Project Initiation			
1.1	Establish MOUs with Regional Agency Partners	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 1,000
1.2	Procure Consultants	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 1,000
1.3	Project Kick-Off	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 1,000
	Subtotal	\$ 15,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 3,000
2	Existing Conditions Analysis		80.000%	
2.2	Preliminary Research and Existing Plan Document Review	\$ 26,500	\$ 21,200	\$ 5,300
2.3	Establish Community Engagement Working Group	\$ 13,200	\$ 10,560	\$ 2,640
2.4	Community Engagement and Visioning	\$ 52,800	\$ 42,240	\$ 10,560
2.5	Existing Conditions and Community Engagement Summary Memo	\$ 39,600	\$ 31,680	\$ 7,920
	Subtotal	\$ 132,100	\$ 105,680	\$ 26,420
3	Draft Complete Street Regional Project Study Report			
3.1	Administrative Draft Complete Street Regional Project Study Report	\$ 320,000	\$ 256,000	\$ 64,000
3.2	Draft Complete Street Regional Project Study Report	\$ 260,000	\$ 208,000	\$ 52,000
3.3	Community Engagement Workshops	\$ 83,950	\$ 67,160	\$ 16,790
3.4	Agency Partner Review and Board Presentations	\$ 21,000	\$ 16,800	\$ 4,200
	Subtotal	\$ 684,950	\$ 547,960	\$ 136,990
4	Final Complete Street Regional Project Study Report			
4.1	Administrative Final Complete Street Regional Project Study Report	\$ 280,000	\$ 224,000	\$ 56,000
4.2	Public Final Complete Street Regional Project Study Report	\$ 170,940	\$ 136,750	\$ 34,190
4.3	Community Workshops	\$ 58,600	\$ 46,880	\$ 11,720
4.4	Agency Partner Review and Board Presentations	\$ 14,650	\$ 11,725	\$ 2,925
	Subtotal	\$ 524,190	\$ 419,355	\$ 104,835
5	Bishop Area Access and Circulation Study			
5.1	Existing Conditions Analysis	\$ 28,500	\$ 22,800	\$ 5,700
5.2	Community Engagement Workshops and Surveys	\$ 67,500	\$ 54,000	\$ 13,500
5.3	Draft Route Alternatives Analysis	\$ 190,000	\$ 152,000	\$ 38,000
5.4	Draft City Mobility Alternatives Analysis	\$ 92,000	\$ 73,600	\$ 18,400
5.5	Final Bishop Area Access and Circulation Study	\$ 120,000	\$ 96,000	\$ 24,000
	Subtotal	\$ 498,000	\$ 398,400	\$ 99,600
6	ESCOG Project Management and Grant Administration			
6.1	Technical Assistance and Project Management	\$ 122,800	\$ 98,240	\$ 24,560
6.2	Grant Administration, Invoicing and Reporting	\$ 50,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 10,000
6.3	Indirect Costs	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -
	Subtotal	\$ 272,800	\$ 238,240	\$ 34,560
	Total	\$ 2,127,040	\$ 1,721,635	\$ 405,405

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-02

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO SUBMIT AN
APPLICATION FOR THE U.S DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES PILOT PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, on January 7, 2020, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments convened as an established Joint Powers Authority as ratified by the votes of the governing bodies of its individual Member Agencies, understanding that it is necessary and desirable for the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments as a Joint Powers Authority to speak and to function on behalf of the region and to collectively identify and deliver opportunities to benefit the interests of Member Agencies' constituents; and

WHEREAS the Member Agencies agreed that the creation of a regional Joint Powers Authority that functions as a separate and discreet legal entity from individual Member Agencies would enable the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments to maximize and take advantage of opportunities for the region; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority (ESCOG) was organized to identify and apply for funding resources and receive funding for the planning and implementation of programs of regional impact or significance, and to implement such programs upon approval of the governing bodies of each Member Agency; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments is an eligible applicant for the U.S Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program funding opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the U.S Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program would have inter-jurisdictional benefits in Inyo and Mono Counties, which would enhance regional collaboration, advance the vitality of Eastern Sierra communities, and reinforce the regional identity of the iconic Eastern Sierra; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments that the Executive Director is authorized to submit a U.S Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program on behalf of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments.

PASSED AND ADOPTED 28th day of August, 2024 by the following vote:

AYES: Chair Bob Gardner, Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, Board Member Karen Schwartz

Attachment B

NOES: N/A
ABSTAIN: N/A
ABSENT: Board Member Jeff Griffiths

ATTEST: Angela Plaisted
Clerk of the Board

Bob Gardner (Aug 30, 2024 20:45 PDT)
Bob Gardner
Chairperson

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-21

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BISHOP, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AUTHORIZING THE EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR THE U.S DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES PILOT PROGRAM

WHEREAS, on January 7, 2020, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments convened as an established Joint Powers Authority as ratified by the votes of the governing bodies of its individual Member Agencies, understanding that it is necessary and desirable for the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments as a Joint Powers Authority to speak and to function on behalf of the region and to collectively identify and deliver opportunities to benefit the interests of Member Agencies' constituents; and

WHEREAS the Member Agencies agreed that the creation of a regional Joint Powers Authority that functions as a separate and discreet legal entity from individual Member Agencies would enable the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments to maximize and take advantage of opportunities for the region; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority was organized to identify and apply for funding resources and receive funding for the planning and implementation of programs of regional impact or significance, and to implement such programs upon approval of the governing bodies of each Member Agency; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments is an eligible applicant for the U.S Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program funding opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the U.S Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program would have inter-jurisdictional benefits in Inyo and Mono Counties, which would enhance regional collaboration, advance the vitality of Eastern Sierra communities, and reinforce the regional identity of the iconic Eastern Sierra; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Bishop that the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments is authorized to submit a U.S Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program on behalf of the Eastern Sierra.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 23rd day of September 2024.



Jose Garcia, Mayor

ATTEST: 

Robin Picken, City Clerk



Attachment B

STATE OF CALIFORNIA }
COUNTY OF INYO }
CITY OF BISHOP }

I, Robin Picken, City Clerk for the City of Bishop, do hereby certify that the whole number of members of the City Council of said City of Bishop is five (5); that the foregoing Resolution No. 2024-21 was duly passed and adopted by said City Council; approved and signed by the Mayor of said City; and attested by the City Clerk of said City, all at a regular meeting of said City Council, held on September 23, 2024, and that the same was so passed and adopted by the following roll call vote.

AYES: Ellis, Schwartz, Muchovej, Kong, Garcia

ABSENT: None

NOES: None

DISQUALIFIED: None

WITNESS, my hand and the seal of the City of Bishop this 24th day of September, 2024.



Robin Picken, City Clerk
CITY OF BISHOP



Attachment B
In the Rooms of the Board of Supervisors

County of Inyo, State of California

I, HEREBY CERTIFY, that at a meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Inyo, State of California, held in their rooms at the County Administrative Center in Independence on the 24th day of September 2024 an order was duly made and entered as follows:

CAO –
*Reconnecting
Communities Grant
and Reso. #2024-28*

The agenda item was moved from the Consent Agenda to the Regular Agenda for further discussion at the request of Supervisor Roeser.

Executive Director of Regional Coordination for Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Elaine Kabala provided clarification on the scope of language included in the grant application and whether it might address concerns brought up in the 2007 Bishop Area Circulation Study. Kabala answered questions on the possibility of a current study being performed with additional opportunities for public input.

Moved by Supervisor Roeser and seconded by Supervisor Griffiths to:

- A) Adopt Resolution No. 2024-28, titled, "A Resolution of the Board of Supervisors, County of Inyo, State of California, Authorizing the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments to Submit an Application for the U.S. Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program;" and
- B) Approve and authorize the Chairperson to sign a letter of support for the grant application.

Motion carried unanimously.

WITNESS my hand and the seal of said Board this 24th
Day of September, 2024



NATHAN GREENBERG
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: _____

Routing
CC Purchasing Personnel Auditor CAO X Other: DATE: September 27, 2024

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-28

**A RESOLUTION OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS,
COUNTY OF INYO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA,
AUTHORIZING THE EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS TO
SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR THE U.S DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES PILOT PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, on January 7, 2020, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments convened as an established Joint Powers Authority as ratified by the votes of the governing bodies of its individual Member Agencies, understanding that it is necessary and desirable for the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments as a Joint Powers Authority to speak and to function on behalf of the region and to collectively identify and deliver opportunities to benefit the interests of Member Agencies' constituents; and

WHEREAS the Member Agencies agreed that the creation of a regional Joint Powers Authority that functions as a separate and discreet legal entity from individual Member Agencies would enable the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments to maximize and take advantage of opportunities for the region; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority was organized to identify and apply for funding resources and receive funding for the planning and implementation of programs of regional impact or significance, and to implement such programs upon approval of the governing bodies of each Member Agency; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments is an eligible applicant for the U.S Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program funding opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the U.S Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program would have inter-jurisdictional benefits in Inyo and Mono Counties, which would enhance regional collaboration, advance the vitality of Eastern Sierra communities, and reinforce the regional identity of the iconic Eastern Sierra; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors, County of Inyo, State of California, that the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments is authorized to submit a U.S Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program on behalf of the Eastern Sierra.

PASSED AND ADOPTED 24th day of September, 2024 by the following vote:

AYES: -5- Supervisors Griffiths, Roeser, Orrill, Kingsley, and Marcellin

NOES: -0-

ABSTAIN: -0-

Attachment B

ABSENT: -0-


Matt Kingsley, Board Chair

ATTEST: Nate Greenberg
Clerk of the Board

By: 
Assistant Clerk of the Board

Note: Due to the Mono County Board 2023 Attachments B were not Board meetings in September to approve a resolution for this application, however the Board of Supervisors provided this resolution for the same project under State funding in 2023. ESCOG will be requesting a Resolution from the Mono County Board of Supervisors at their meeting held October 22, 2024. The Mono County Planning Director and Local Transportation Commission have provided a letter of support for this project and Mono County Board Members sitting on the ESCOG Board have approved the resolution.



R23-069

**A RESOLUTION OF THE MONO COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AUTHORIZING THE EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF
GOVERNMENTS TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR THE CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES:
HIGHWAYS TO BOULEVARDS GRANT**

WHEREAS, on January 7, 2020, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments convened as an established Joint Powers Authority as ratified by the votes of the governing bodies of its individual Member Agencies, understanding that it is necessary and desirable for the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments as a Joint Powers Authority to speak and to function on behalf of the region and to collectively identify and deliver opportunities to benefit the interests of Member Agencies' constituents; and

WHEREAS, the Member Agencies agreed that the creation of a regional Joint Powers Authority that functions as a separate and discreet legal entity from individual Member Agencies would enable the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments to maximize and take advantage of opportunities for the region; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority (ESCOG) was organized to identify and apply for funding resources and receive funding for the planning and implementation of programs of regional impact or significance, and to implement such programs upon approval of the governing bodies of each Member Agency; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments is an eligible applicant for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards grant funding opportunity; and

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF MONO RESOLVES that: the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments is authorized to submit a Caltrans Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards grant on behalf of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments.

PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED this 5th day of September 2023, by the following vote, to wit:

AYES: Supervisors Duggan, Gardner, Kreitz, Peters, and Salcido.


NOES: None.

Attachment B

ABSENT: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

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Rhonda Duggan (Sep 6, 2023 13:50 PDT)

Rhonda Duggan, Chair
Mono County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Clerk of the Board


Stacey Simon (Sep 6, 2023 12:18 PDT)

County Counsel

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Attachment B



Jennifer Kreitz-District One Rhonda Duggan-District Two Bob Gardner- District Three
John Peters-District Four Lynda Salcido-District Five

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF MONO

P.O. BOX 715, BRIDGEPORT, CALIFORNIA 93517
(760) 932-5530
BOS@mono.ca.gov

Queenie Barnard, Clerk of the Board

September 5, 2023

Dear Highways to Boulevards Grant Selection Committee,

For 50+ years, U.S. Highway 395 in Mono and Inyo Counties has been engineered with singular goal of moving goods and traffic quickly and efficiently through the communities we call home. Sadly, this highway-oriented design focus has rarely considered the negative impacts that fast-moving passenger and freight highway traffic has on the communities U.S. 395 bisects. While Highway 395 serves as Main Street as it runs through the heart of our Eastern Sierra communities, its highway-focused design has been at the expense of pedestrian safety, alternative modes of transportation, and the overall livability of our communities. Highway 395 is a barrier between children and their schools, causes significant noise and air pollution, and makes properties along 395 undesirable for both commerce and residential uses alike.

For these reasons and more, the Mono County Board of Supervisors have joined the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) and Caltrans District 9 (D9) as a co-applicant for the State of California Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards (RC:H2B) Grant as a "Corridor" applicant. Mono County has suffered the ill effects caused by freeway-style highway construction on U.S. 395 and endeavors through this opportunity to advance the visions of our communities for a safer and more vibrant downtown. We seek to improve conditions for all users of U.S. 395 and reconnect the communities that have been bisected by the U.S. 395. We anticipate that a project as a part of this grant could improve walkability and safety for all users while focusing on the unique needs of Eastern Sierra communities along U.S. 395.

This is a catalytic opportunity for our community and the Eastern Sierra region, and we are grateful for the opportunity to work with our communities to envision and design solutions to address their concerns. As a co-applicant, we are ready to commit our support (in-kind contributions, staff resources, project engagement) through to the end of the RC:H2B process should ESCOG, D9 and its co-applicants be awarded the grant. We believe this grant presents a rare opportunity to advance the vision of Eastern Sierra communities located on the U.S. 395 corridor to live in safe and beautiful neighborhoods, complete with vibrant and prosperous downtowns.

Sincerely,


Rhonda Duggan (Sep 6, 2023 13:50 PDT)

Rhonda Duggan
Chair, Mono County Board of Supervisors