

Town of Mammoth Lakes
Walk,Bike,Ride Draft 1.0

Comments from: John Helm, Executive Director - Eastern Sierra Transit Authority

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1	Public transit is really not available for transportation into the Town from the airport. This is per a mutual agreement between the lodging properties and the taxi operators at the time that commercial air service commenced.
16	The location of the proposed Village Mobility Hub is not convenient from a transit perspective. I think, at best, it will serve as a parking garage and not be very convenient for that either. A true Transit Hub to incorporate ground floor commercial, parking and other amenities including transit would be much better sited on Minaret just south of the identified New Development (proposed) where the current surface parking lot is located. This location would be as close as reasonably possible to the central Village plaza and the Village Gondola, and would provide convenient access to transit that would serve Main Lodge.
17	Reference to "Mono County Transit" should probably read, Eastern Sierra Transit. There is no Mono County Transit.
18-19	Proposed Lakes Basin major transit hub does not seem to me to be a significant transit trip generator. People going to Twin Lakes will most likely want to go to Tamarack Lodge, or the General Store (in the summer). Currently, there's nothing really to do at that turn-out parking area, other than a scenic view of Twin Lakes and the falls coming down from Lake Mamie. Also, bike share operations at locations like this could pose a threat to existing and future bike rental companies in Town.
20	Expanded Gondola. I do not believe it is realistic to expect that a gondola from the Town Center to The Village could make intermediate stops and still be at all efficient. Each terminal for stops would require staff (increased operating costs) and would slow the travel time dramatically. With no intermediate stops, it is currently quicker to drive from The Village to Canyon Lodge, than to travel by the gondola. If a Town Center to Village gondola made intermediate stops, it would be inefficient to the point that I think people would not want to use it. This page also mentions a potential new gondola line from Main Lodge to Reds Meadow. I believe there would be insurmountable hurdles to such a gondola due to the fact that it would travel over significant wilderness area.
27	Many of the services described for thru-hikers are already provided by the Reds Meadow store.

30	<p>Super App. ESTA currently has real-time transit information available through an app we use with Swiftly. It provides much of the transit information you reference on the Super App description page. One concern with a Super App is, I believe, that entities (ESTA, MLT, MMSA, MLR, MLTPA, etc.) will be hesitant to abandon their existing investment (money and time) in information apps, and start from scratch with a new and, as yet unproven app. Some kind of a system that could seamlessly merge all of the information that the existing entities have through their existing apps might overcome this hurdle. One other consideration is the fact that Swiftly covers all of our service area (Reno to Lancaster), not just Mammoth. ESTA would not be eager to abandon this regional information service for a separate Mammoth centric system.</p>
33	<p>I think that the comment that the schedule for ESTA's route between Bishop and Mammoth does not meet the needs of commuters working 40-hour weeks is dated. Over a year ago, we added another weekday morning run from Bishop to Mammoth that arrives at 7:50am, with an evening departure at 5:15pm. This specifically meets the needs of employees who work an 8:00am to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday schedule. One of the challenges with Mammoth is, as a tourist based economy, employees in the service sector work a wide variety of shifts and schedules. It is a challenge to structure transit schedules to meet all of these needs.</p> <p>Also on this page, I disagree with the statement that "winter conditions slow travel times making transit an unreliable choice for commuters with the town and regionally". Slow road conditions affect private automobiles just as much as transit vehicles. In the case of a 2-wheel drive automobile that has to chain-up every time the chain restrictions go up, transit is more efficient, as all of ESTA's buses have auto-chains.</p> <p>The statement that snow coaches or snowmobile shuttles would allow for faster service on challenging icy road conditions is dubious. ESTA's buses, equipped with auto-chains, and hard-chains for extremely challenging conditions, are able to operate at the posted speed chain restriction speed limits (25mph-R2; 35 mph-R1). Snow coaches could not operate at faster speeds without exceeding the speed limit. One of the biggest challenges with inclement weather roadways is other drivers in ill-equipped vehicles, or with inexperienced drivers, who become stuck and block roadways. Snow coaches or snowmobile shuttles would not solve this problem unless they operated on separate roadways.</p>
36	<p>Active Recreation Shuttles. Private operators already provide trailhead service, where they will transport passengers to, or pick-up passengers from trailheads. In addition, ESTA and YARTS already provide opportunities for transit between the June Lake area and Mammoth. In the winter, passengers can take the morning June Mountain Shuttle to June Lake Junction, then cross-country ski back to Mammoth Lakes. In the summer, hikers can walk the San Joaquin Ridge, then drop down into the June Lake area and catch the YARTS bus back to Mammoth, or take the bus to the June Lake area in the morning (ESTA or</p>

	<p>YARTS) and then hike back to Mammoth. ESTA is launching a new summer seasonal route to service the Bishop Creek Recreation area this summer with twice daily round trips between Bishop and trailheads at South Lake and Lake Sabrina. The Forest Service has studied similar possible service to Rock Creek, and to Whitney Portal, although no specific operating plan (or funding) has been developed yet.</p>
40	<p>The statement that bikes are only loaded and unloaded at the Adventure Center and Reds Meadow Resort is not true. A passenger can load a bike onto the bike rack (space available basis) at any posted Reds Meadow Shuttle stop. The Devils Postpile Ranger station is a shuttle stop.</p>
Table 3	<p>Transit/Trail Hub Connections: Average cost of \$54k to \$86k seems low. It's my understanding that the transit shelters on Old Mammoth Road at the Park & Ride, and on Meridian at Talus cost \$50k to \$60k each and do not include restrooms or other amenities identified in the W,B,R plan</p> <p>Transit Frequencies: Cost of up to \$500k is misleading, because it doesn't include operating costs. ESTA's 40' transit buses currently cost about \$450k each.</p>
Table 4	<p>Transit-Only Routes: Realistically, I think this would require a significant investment in a parking structure where people could park, then ride the transit-only route. For example, if the Lakes Basin area were made "transit-only" significant parking would need to be developed in Town to allow people to conveniently park then catch the bus to the Lakes Basin area.</p>
Table 5	<p>Expanded Gondola System: I think it important to note that the estimated \$4m to \$4.5m annual operating costs is more than double the combined annual operating costs for all of the transit service operated in the Mammoth area by ESTA and MMSA combined. I don't know how such a system could be funded, and the feeder transit service would still be necessary.</p>
51	<p>Gondola Case Study: I think that Telluride's situation and a potential gondola expansion in Mammoth is an apples-to-oranges comparison. Telluride's is efficient because it has very few terminals (basically 3) and more than cuts in half the travel distance as compared to driving (3 miles vs 8 miles driving). A Town Center gondola would not reduce the travel distance as compared to driving, and would require inefficient and expensive intermediate terminals if it is not to entirely by-pass the Main Street businesses.</p>
58	<p>Real-Time Information: As mentioned previously, ESTA already has this information service available through the Swiftly App. We do not currently have electronic signage as depicted in the photo, although it's possible for major transit stops.</p>