

# **FY 2014–16 Triennial Performance Audit of Eastern Sierra Transit Authority**



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SUBMITTED TO:

**Inyo County Local Transportation Commission  
Mono County Local Transportation Commission**

SUBMITTED BY:

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INTERNATIONAL

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## Section I

### Introduction

California's Transportation Development Act (TDA) requires that a triennial performance audit be conducted of public transit entities that receive TDA revenues. The performance audit serves to ensure accountability in the use of public transportation revenue.

Inyo County engaged Michael Baker International (Michael Baker) on behalf of the Inyo County Local Transportation Commission (ICLTC) to conduct a performance audit of the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA or Authority) covering the most recent triennial period, fiscal years 2013–2014 through 2015–2016.

The purpose of the performance audit is to evaluate ESTA's effectiveness and efficiency in its use of TDA funds to provide public transportation in its service area. This evaluation is required as a condition for continued receipt of these funds for public transportation purposes. In addition, the audit evaluates ESTA's compliance with the conditions specified in the California Public Utilities Code (PUC). This task involves ascertaining whether ESTA is meeting the PUC's reporting requirements. Moreover, the audit includes calculations of transit service performance indicators and a detailed review of the transit administrative functions. From the analysis that has been undertaken, a set of recommendations has been made which is intended to improve the performance of transit operations.

In summary, this TDA audit affords the opportunity for an independent, constructive, and objective evaluation of the organization and its operations that otherwise might not be available. The methodology for the audit included conducting in-person interviews with ESTA executive management and staff, document collection from ESTA and Inyo County and Mono County LTCs, data analysis, and on-site observations. The *Performance Audit Guidebook for Transit Operators and Regional Transportation Planning Entities* published by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) was used to guide in the development and conduct of the audit.

### Overview of the Transit System

#### Background

The Eastern Sierra Transit Authority was formed through adoption of a Joint Powers Agreement on October 10, 2006 by the County of Inyo, County of Mono, City of Bishop, and Town of Mammoth Lakes. ESTA was created to meet the growing need for public transportation for the four member jurisdictions and throughout the entire Eastern Sierra region. The ESTA Board of Directors is made up of eight members, two from each of the member jurisdictions and appointed from their respective governing bodies. ESTA began operating transit services on July 1, 2007, assuming control of all the services, staff, and capital from the system formerly known as Inyo Mono Transit. The agency recently celebrated its 10 year anniversary.

ESTA is guided by its Vision Statement:

*The purpose of the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority is to provide excellent public transportation services in an entrepreneurial style within the Eastern Sierra Region. The Authority, through its leadership, provides responsive and reliable services and is a regional platform for service planning and funding decisions.*

Service Area Characteristics

Inyo County

Inyo County is geographically located in east central California, stretching from San Bernardino County to the south, Kern County to the southwest, Mono County to the north, Fresno and Tulare Counties to the west, and the State of Nevada to the east. The topography is composed of the highest and lowest points in the contiguous United States: Badwater Basin in Death Valley National Park at 279 feet below sea level and Mount Whitney adjacent to Sequoia National Park at 14,505 feet above sea level. The county’s geographical land area encompasses 10,181 square miles. Major highways include U.S. Routes (US) 6 and 395 and State Routes (SR) 127, 136, 168, 178, and 190. A demographic snapshot of the county is presented below in Table I-1:

**Table I-1  
Inyo County Demographics**

City/Jurisdiction	2010 US Census Population	Change from 2000 US Census %	Population 65 years & older %	2017 Department of Finance Estimates	Land area (in square miles)
Bishop	3,879	+8.5%	15.75%	3,954	1.86
Unincorporated Area	14,667	+2.1%	19.94%	14,665	10,179
Total Inyo County	18,546	+3.4%	19.06%	18,619	10,181

Source: 2010 U.S. Census, California Department of Finance, 2017 Population Estimates

The city of Bishop, along with the suburbs immediately surrounding it, contains over 50 percent of all County residents and approximately 67 percent of the County’s residents live within a 15-mile radius of Bishop. Bishop is the only incorporated city in the County. Independence is the county seat. Other communities include Big Pine, Independence, Lone Pine, Olancho, Shoshone, and Tecopa. The county and the city of Bishop saw modest growth between the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census. The senior citizen population, comprised of residents aged 65 and over is 19 percent countywide. The 2017 population for Inyo County is estimated to be 18,619 as reported by the State Department of Finance. The five federally-recognized Indian reservations in Inyo County are located in the communities of Bishop (Bishop Paiute Tribe), Big Pine (Big Pine Paiute Tribe of the Owens Valley), Fort Independence (Fort Independence Community of Paiutes), Lone Pine (Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Tribe), and Furnace Creek (Timbisha Shoshone Tribe).

Mono County

Mono County is geographically located in east central California, stretching from Inyo County to the south, Fresno and Madera Counties to the southwest, Tuolumne County to the west, Alpine County to the northwest and the State of Nevada to the north and east. The county’s geographical land area encompasses 3,049 square miles with the highest elevation of 14,252 feet above sea level. Major highways include US 6 and 395 and SR 108, 120, 167, 182, and 270. A demographic snapshot of the county is presented below in Table I-2:

**Table I-2  
Mono County Demographics**

City/Jurisdiction	2010 US Census Population	Change from 2000 US Census %	Population 65 years & older %	2017 Department of Finance Estimates	Land area (in square miles)
Town of Mammoth Lakes	8,234	+16.1%	6.46%	8,002	24.87
Unincorporated Area	5,968	+3.6%	14.16%	5,711	3,024.13
Total Mono County	14,202	+10.5%	9.70%	13,713	3,049

Source: 2010 U.S. Census, California Department of Finance, 2017 Population Estimates

The town of Mammoth Lakes is the largest and the only incorporated municipality in the county. The community of Bridgeport is the county seat. Other important communities and census-designated places in the county include Benton, Coleville, Crowley Lake, June Lake, Lee Vining, and Walker. The county and the town of Mammoth Lakes saw modest growth between the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census. However, based on recent data, the population has since decreased. The senior citizen population, comprised of residents aged 65 and over is just under 10 percent countywide. The 2017 population for Mono County is estimated to be 13,713 as reported by the State Department of Finance. The two federally-recognized Indian reservations located in Mono County are the Benton (Utu Utu Gwaitu Paiute) and Bridgeport (Paiute).

System Characteristics

ESTA is the primary provider of public bus services throughout Inyo and Mono counties and is the sole provider of interregional public transportation for the entire Eastern Sierra region. ESTA offers a variety of bus services including local fixed routes, Dial-A-Ride, town-to-town services, and interregional service. Although not funded by TDA, ESTA also administers a vanpool program of employees who share the cost of commuting to work from the Bishop area to Mammoth Lakes using vehicles provided by ESTA and paid for with state funds.<sup>1</sup> In addition, ESTA operates the Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) Program that offers non-emergency medical transportation mileage reimbursement services to the transportation-disadvantaged community.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The previous vanpool commuted between Mammoth and Bishop but is not in current operation due to lack of participation. At least eight participants are needed to maintain a vanpool.

<sup>2</sup> Approximately 75 participants are enrolled in the NEMT program.

Each trip must begin or end in Inyo or Mono County. The NEMT program offers reimbursement for trips up to 300 total miles and fuel is reimbursed at the current IRS reimbursement rate.

For purposes of description in this section, ESTA bus services are organized by geographic coverage including Local Mammoth Lakes Transit Service, Local Bishop Area Service, Rural Transit Services, and Highway 395 Corridor Services.

#### Local Mammoth Lakes Transit Service

Local bus routes are available year-round in Mammoth Lakes with service levels that vary between the summer, winter, and shoulder periods. Routes are generally color coded in the bus schedule for simplicity. While year-round service is available, commencement and termination of peak season transit service is dependent on Mammoth Mountain's winter operations as well as on shoulder weather conditions for summer service.

The Town of Mammoth Lakes contracts with ESTA for extra service hours beyond a base level that is provided through TDA. The Town approved a 1 percent increase in the Transient Occupancy Tax in 2006 (Measure T), and the Town Council has designated these funds to support local transit services in the town. The Town also collects a development transportation tax that is used for transit. These locally generated revenues fund the additional service in the contract.

In addition, Measure U, or the Mammoth Lakes Mobility, Recreation and Arts & Culture Utility Users Tax Ordinance, was adopted by the Mammoth Lakes Town Council on March 17, 2010, and approved by the voters of the Town of Mammoth Lakes on June 8, 2010. The intent of Measure U includes expenditures to enhance mobility, recreation, and arts and culture such as providing transit service for special events that occur throughout the year.

#### Year-Round Routes

*Purple Line:* The Purple Line runs along SR 203, Sierra Park Road, Manzanita Road, Lupin Street, Minaret, Forest Trail, Hillside Drive, and Canyon Boulevard from Vons Supermarket to The Village and to Meridian/Manzanita with stops by Mammoth Hospital, Mammoth Lakes Library, Mammoth Mountain RV Park, and the Mammoth Lakes California Welcome Center. This line operates daily from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with stops every 30 minutes.

*Gray Line:* The Gray Line was in operation during the audit period and ran along Meridian Boulevard and Old Mammoth Road, originating at Vons and served the Mammoth Lakes Campus of Cerro Coso Community College, Mammoth Hospital, and Mammoth Lakes Library. It terminated at Juniper Springs Resort. This line operated year-round seven days a week from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with stops every 30 minutes. The Gray Line ceased operation in late December 2016 due to declining ridership. Funding from the Gray Line has been used to fund year-round expansion of the Town Trolley route in order to provide service to the Meridian Boulevard area between Old Mammoth Road and Juniper Springs Resort.

*Town Trolley:* The Town Trolley operates year-round on seasonally-adjusted schedules. The summer service schedule makes stops at Snowcreek Athletic Club, Sierra Center Mall, Minaret Village Shopping Center, The Village, and Canyon Lodge every 20 minutes from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. During the shoulder seasons, service is provided from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. from June through November. The winter Night Trolley operates daily during the winter schedule between Canyon Lodge, The Village, and Snowcreek Athletic Club. The trolley operates from 5:40 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. with stops every 20 minutes. Year-round service was expanded to the Meridian Boulevard area between Old Mammoth Road and Juniper Springs Resort to fill a service gap identified in the most recent Short Range Transit Plan.

### Seasonal Routes

*Lake Basin Trolley:* During the summer months, from July through early September, the Lakes Basin Trolley operates from The Village to Mammoth Lakes Basin from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily. The trolley departs The Village every 30 minutes with stops at Twin Lakes (Tamarack Lodge), Lake Mary, Lake Mamie, and Horseshoe Lake. This trolley also tows a 12-bike trailer for access to scenic cycling.

*Reds Meadow Shuttle:* From late June to early September, or as weather permits, the US Forest Service administers a vendor contract with ESTA for daily shuttle service from the Mammoth Mountain Main Lodge Adventure Center to Reds Meadow/Devils Postpile. In June 2012, ESTA transitioned from the original Challenge Cost Share Agreement with the US Forest Service to a Special Use Permit which provides fewer stipulations to the revenue generated from the service. From the Mammoth Mountain Adventure Center, the Reds Meadow/Devils Postpile Shuttle runs once an hour from 7:15 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., every 20 minutes from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and every 45 minutes from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The Reds Meadow Shuttle will also transport visitors from The Village in coordination with running times of the Mammoth Area Shuttle (MAS) Bike Shuttle.

*June Mountain Shuttle:* In FY 2013-14, ESTA and the June Mountain Ski Area executed an agreement for ESTA to provide general public service during the ski season between Mammoth Lakes and June Mountain. Two round trips are provided daily, one each in the morning and afternoon. This service coincided with the re-opening of the June Mountain Ski Area after closure the previous year, and also replaces the ESTA June Mountain Express which primarily served as an employee shuttle for the June Mountain Ski Area in which employees use vouchers that covered the ride. June Mountain Ski Area employees ride free on the new service, as do guests of Mammoth Mountain lodging properties with a voucher. Remaining bus riders pay a fare.

*Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (MMSA) Winter Routes:* In addition to the above services, in July 2012, the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (MMSA) and ESTA agreed for ESTA to provide contract transit service for access from the town to Mammoth Mountain. MMSA had operated private bus service for decades between the town and the mountain. These additional routes during the winter include the Red Line, Blue Line, Yellow Line, Green Line, and Blue-Yellow Combination.

Furthermore, during the summer, MMSA privately funds and operates the Mammoth Area Shuttle (MAS) Bike Shuttle that provides daily access to the Mammoth Bike Park from The Village every 30

minutes from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The route extends from The Village to the Mammoth Mountain Adventure Center from June through September. ESTA does not provide this service.

### Mammoth Dial-A-Ride

Door-to-door general public Dial-A-Ride is provided year-round with priority given to special needs riders. The service operates from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and weekends from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Limited service is available after 5:00 p.m. only for eligible riders who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and with 24 hours advance notice. The evening service provides complementary paratransit service to the fixed route under ADA regulations. The Dial-A-Ride service area consists of two zones—Zone 1 is the greater Mammoth area including North Village, the Industrial Park, and Old Mammoth, and Zone 2 is the outlying area of Mammoth Airport and the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area Main Lodge.

### Local Bishop Area Service

Local transit service in Bishop and the surrounding area is provided by general public Dial-A-Ride with priority given to seniors and disabled. Service is available Monday through Thursday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m., Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 a.m., and Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The extended Friday and Saturday night service is referred to as the “Nite Rider.” Bishop Area Dial-A-Ride service consists of two zones - Zone 1 includes the greater Bishop area and Zone 2 covers the outlying areas. A check-point Dial-A-Ride system was instituted where the vehicle picks up passengers from marked designated locations at certain times and then transports them to their destination in the service area. Check-point pickups are located at Vons/Kmart, Paiute Palace Casino, Joseph’s Market, and Northern Inyo Hospital. Check-point Dial-A-Ride offers a \$1.00 discount off regular Dial-A-Ride fares.

Outside this audit period, it is noted that ESTA began the Bishop Creek Shuttle in summer 2017 serving South Lake and Lake Sabrina. Service is provided 7 days per week from June 17 through August 20, then weekends through October 15.

### Rural Transit Services

ESTA rural transit service is spread among different communities in Mono and Inyo counties. Both dial-a-ride and town-to-town services are provided that link these small rural locations. Lone Pine dial-a-ride offers door-to-door bus service in and around the community of Lone Pine for the general public and special needs riders. The Lone Pine dial-a-ride service consists of two zones and is provided Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Walker dial-a-ride offers door-to-door bus service for the communities within the Antelope Valley including Walker and Coleville for the general public and special needs riders. Service is provided Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For both dial-a-rides, reservations are encouraged but same-day service is available.



Benton-Bishop service is provided on Tuesday and Friday from 8:25 a.m. to 3:35 p.m., with interim stops in Hammil Valley and Chalfant. One round trip per day is provided in which passengers are able to stay in Bishop for 5 hours before the return trip.

Service from Tecopa Heights in southeastern Inyo County to Pahrump, Nevada, is provided two Thursdays per month with an interim stop in Shoshone. Service is provided in a very isolated area and serves important lifeline transit needs. This service has been contracted to a local senior center to provide trips. One round trip is provided and begins in Tecopa on Thursday at 8:00 a.m., returning from Pahrump at 11:50 a.m. the same day. Prior-day reservations are necessary. While the vehicle is in Pahrump between 8:50 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., door-to-door service within Pahrump is available.

### Highway 395 Corridor Services

Corridor services include both town-to-town service and long-haul interregional service. Bishop-Mammoth Commuter Express includes three trips a day in each direction Monday through Friday from 6:50 a.m. to 7:50 p.m. Interim stops are made at Crowley Lake, Tom's Place, Pine Creek Road & Highway 395, and Round Valley (Tuesday and Thursday only). Stop requests at Round Valley/Pine Creek Road must be called in the prior day, while same-day stop requests at Tom's Place can be accommodated. Also, in conjunction with the Reno route, there are 4 roundtrip options per weekday between Bishop and Mammoth.

The Lone Pine-Bishop Express service provides three trips a day in each direction Monday through Friday from 6:15 a.m. to 7:40 p.m. A mid-day trip is available three days a week from Lone Pine to Bishop. Interim stops are provided in Wilkerson, Big Pine, Aberdeen, and Independence. Stop requests at Wilkerson and Aberdeen Store must be called in the prior day. Also, in conjunction with the Lancaster route, there are 4 roundtrip options per day between Bishop and Lone Pine.

Intercity service is provided between Bridgeport and Gardnerville on Wednesdays with one trip in each direction. Stops are provided in Bridgeport, Walker, Coleville, and Gardnerville. While in Gardnerville, the vehicle provides door-to-door service for the passengers who rode in from Bridgeport/Walker/Coleville for about 3.5 hours that the vehicle is in town before the return trip at 7:00 pm.

The withdrawal of Greyhound intercity bus service from the Highway 395 corridor in 2001 resulted in Inyo and Mono counties instituting the former Carson Ridgecrest Eastern Sierra Transit interregional bus service between the end-points of Carson City in the north and Ridgecrest in the south. Over the years the route was expanded to Reno (both airport and Greyhound station) and the Lancaster Metrolink train station in Los Angeles County. Today, collectively referred to as 395 Routes, the intercity service connects communities along the corridor and links to other intercity transportation services. Days of service were expanded on these routes during the audit period. The Reno Route travels between Lone Pine and Reno Monday through Friday (no service on Wednesdays in the past). The service starts in Lone Pine at 6:15 a.m. and serves cities and towns along Highway 395 such as Independence, Big Pine, Bishop, Mammoth Lakes, June Lake, Lee Vining, Bridgeport, and Walker, before entering Nevada near Topaz Lake and continuing to the larger cities of Gardnerville, Carson City, and Reno. The northern terminals in Reno are the Reno-Tahoe

International Airport and the Greyhound station. The full trip one way takes about 6 hours. The bus then has a relatively short layover of over an hour before making the return trip to Lone Pine by 7:40 p.m.

The Lancaster Route runs each weekday (no service on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the past) from Mammoth Lakes to Lancaster. The service starts in Mammoth Lakes at 7:50 a.m. and serves cities and towns along Highway 395 such as Crowley, Tom's Place, Bishop, Big Pine, Independence, Lone Pine, Inyokern, Mojave, and Lancaster. The expanded service to Lancaster replaced one run of the Kern Regional Transit line and allows direct connections to the Metrolink regional train service serving the greater Los Angeles region. The full trip one way from Mammoth takes a little over 5 hours. The bus then has a relatively short layover of a little over an hour before making the return trip to Mammoth Lakes by 7:00 p.m.

For both intercity routes, stops by request only are made at Aberdeen, Coso Junction, Pearsonville, Tom's Place, June Lake Junction, Coleville, and Gardnerville. Reservations are strongly recommended because of the limited seating for the one round trip per route.

In promoting transit connections to thru-hikers, ESTA, on its website, compiled a map showing its bus stops that are most relevant to thru-hikers to connect to different sections of major hiking trails, resupply locations and other services. There are seven main transit stops along US 395 where trail users can easily use transit and access the Sierra Nevada backcountry.

With the exception of services in Mammoth Lakes, ESTA does not operate on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Presidents Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. ESTA operates all of its services in Mammoth Lakes on these holidays.

### Fares

ESTA fares are structured according to passenger category and the type of transit trip. Due to the various services offered and distance of travel, different fares are applied. Discount fares are available to riders age 60 and over, disabled individuals, and youth under the age of 16. Adult fares are charged to non-disabled persons age 16 and over. Children under age 5 ride free when accompanied by a paying adult. Multi-ride discounted passes are available. Fares are paid directly to the driver on most routes, and tickets/passes can be purchased from drivers and on the ESTA website for convenience. Tickets and fares are also available at ESTA's Bishop and Mammoth Lakes offices. Social service agencies purchase tickets for their clients to ride onboard the system.

Both cash and check are accepted on the buses, although checks must be from a local bank to be accepted. ESTA also processes credit card payments for advance reservations and advance purchases with a minimum charge of \$10.00. In 2014, ESTA began accepting credit cards on the Reno and Lancaster route buses. ESTA has in place a credit card policy describing the use of credit and related charge activities.

For town-to-town services and 395 Routes, one-way fares are charged according to the origin and destination of the passenger trip. Shorter trips charge a lower fare than a longer trip. Passengers

who travel round trip on the Reno or Lancaster routes the same day are charged for only one way for certain origin-destination combinations. These passengers depart the bus at an interim stop (e.g., Carson City or Gardnerville) in the morning for services such as at a V.A. hospital, and reboard for the return trip in the afternoon.

Mammoth Lakes fixed-route services within town are free of charge. The Reds Meadow fare is a set charge established in the agreement with the Forest Service that helps to recover the operating costs of the service. Reds Meadow fares include daily, 3-day, and season passes for adults and children. The fare for Bishop Dial-A-Ride varies based on destination within the service area. Bishop, Lone Pine, and Mammoth dial-a-ride fares are all zone based.

Discounted passes are also available for each Dial-A-Ride. The passes are sold in increments of a 30-day pass and a 10-ride pass for Zone 1, as well as a town-to-town 10-ride pass. Check-point pickups for Bishop Dial-A-Ride receive a \$1.00 discount off the regular fare. For service from Tecopa to Pahrump, multiple drop-offs in Pahrump are available for an additional \$1.00 per stop.

Fleet

ESTA’s vehicle fleet by the end of the audit period comprises 70 vehicles. Among the fleet are six support vehicles utilized for staff transportation and three 14-passenger Ford vans that are used for the vanpool service. The remaining 61 vehicles are used for public transit revenue service and range in age from their acquisitions between 2006 and 2016. The majority of revenue service vehicles are Ford E-450 cutaway buses that can accommodate 15 to 16 ambulatory riders, or 11 to 12 riders plus 2 wheelchair passengers. The larger newer fixed-route buses can accommodate 37 passengers plus two wheelchairs. Revenue service vehicles in the fleet are wheelchair accessible while the staff transportation vehicles and the vans used for vanpools are not. ESTA’s revenue fleet is summarized in Table I-3.

**Table I-3  
ESTA Revenue Fleet Inventory**

Year	Make & Model	Quantity	Fuel Type	Seating Capacity
2006	Supreme Classic American Trolley	6	Unleaded	26 (2 W/C)
2007	Starcraft Allstar	4	Unleaded	16 or 12 (2 W/C)
2008	Starcraft Allstar	4	Unleaded	15 or 11 (2 W/C)
2008	Blue Bird Xcel 102	1	Diesel	33 or 29 (2 W/C)
2009	Starcraft Allstar	2	Unleaded	15 or 11 (2 W/C)
2010	Starcraft Allstar	1	Unleaded	18 or 8 (4 W/C)
2011	El Dorado Aeroelite	2	Diesel	25 or 19 (2 W/C)
2012	El Dorado Aeroelite	2	Diesel	21 or 17 (2 W/C)
2012	El Dorado Aeroelite	1	Diesel	25 or 21 (2 W/C)
2012	El Dorado National Axess	9	Diesel	37 (2 W/C)
2012	El Dorado National EZ Rider	3	Diesel	37 (2 W/C)

Year	Make & Model	Quantity	Fuel Type	Seating Capacity
2012	Starcraft Allstar	3	Unleaded	15 or 11 (2 W/C)
2012	Braun Entervan	2	Unleaded	5
2013	Braun Entervan	1	Unleaded	5
2013	Starcraft Allstar	4	Unleaded	15 or 11 (2 W/C)
2013	Starcraft Allstar	1	Unleaded	20 or 16 (2 W/C)
2013	El Dorado Aeroelite	1	Diesel	25 or 21 (2 W/C)
2014	Supreme Classic American Trolley	1	Diesel	34 or 30 (2 W/C)
2014	Champion Defender	2	Diesel	25 or 21 (2 W/C)
2014	El Dorado Aeroelite	1	Diesel	25 or 19 (2 W/C)
2014	Starcraft Allstar	3	Unleaded	15 or 11 (2 W/C)
2014	Starcraft Allstar	1	Unleaded	20 or 16 (2 W/C)
2014	Freightliner Sprinter	4	Diesel	14 or 7 (2 W/C)
2016	Hometown Villager	1	Diesel	34 or 30 (2 W/C)
2016	Starcraft Allstar	1	Unleaded	20 or 16 (2 W/C)
<b>Total</b>		<b>61</b>		

Source: ESTA  
W/C=Wheelchair

Eleven of the vehicles are owned by the Town of Mammoth Lakes and provided to ESTA for use on local service in the town. These include four 2007 Ford Starcraft Allstar cutaway buses and six 2007 and one 2014 Ford Supreme Classic American Trolleys. A significant acquisition by ESTA was delivery of 12 transit buses of various styles and sizes in 2014.

### Facilities

ESTA's main administrative office is located in the terminal of the Eastern Sierra Regional Airport (KBIH), located 2 miles east of Bishop. ESTA leases office space and ground for parking. Most of the transit vehicles are parked in a paved lot across from the terminal building. The office houses executive management, administrative staff, operations, and dispatch for the non-Mammoth Lakes services. The Town of Mammoth Lakes expanded a Town-owned facility from which ESTA leases six bays and office space for vehicle parking, operations, and dispatching of the local Mammoth transit services. The vehicles used for the local Mammoth service, including the Town-owned vehicles and the Reds Meadow buses, are also parked at this facility. Because there are not enough spaces in the bus bays for the fleet, the vehicles that are kept indoors are typically those that will be readied for the next morning's runs. This is done in part to avoid potential issues caused by harsh weather elements. ESTA rotates buses every 4-5 days into the bays for overnight storage so they are able to melt out the night prior to service.

Additional transit vehicles are stored at other locations in both counties for efficiency and practical reasons for services that are too far away and/or do not serve Bishop or Mammoth Lakes. These locations include Walker (2 buses) and Lone Pine (3 buses). The vehicles are rotated as necessary

within the main fleet for inspections and maintenance. ESTA does not conduct vehicle maintenance in-house and does not have a vehicle maintenance facility. In Mammoth Lakes, ESTA contracts with the Town for maintenance at a separate facility near the vehicle storage and operations building.

## Section II

### Operator Compliance Requirements

This section of the audit report contains the analysis of ESTA’s ability to comply with state requirements for continued receipt of TDA funds. The evaluation uses the guidebook, *Performance Audit Guidebook for Transit Operators and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies*, to assess transit operators. The guidebook contains a checklist of eleven measures taken from relevant sections of the Public Utilities Code and the California Code of Regulations. Each of these requirements is discussed in the table below, including a description of the system’s efforts to comply with the requirements. In addition, the findings from the compliance review are described in the text following the table.

Table II-1 Operator Compliance Requirements Matrix		
Operator Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
The transit operator submitted annual reports to the RTPA based upon the Uniform System of Accounts and Records established by the State Controller. Report is due 90 days after end of fiscal year (Sept. 28/29), or 110 days (Oct. 19/20) if filed electronically (Internet).	Public Utilities Code, Section 99243	<p>Completion/submittal dates based on report copies provided by ESTA:</p> <p>FY 2014: October 17, 2014                      FY 2015: October 19, 2015                      FY 2016: December 8, 2016</p> <p>The FY 2016 Transit Operators Financial Transactions Report was submitted after the statutory timeframe.</p> <p>Note: Recent state legislation after the audit period changes the due date of the report until seven months after the fiscal year, beginning in FY 2017.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Partial Compliance.</b></p>
The operator has submitted annual fiscal and compliance audits to the RTPA and to the State Controller within 180 days following the end of the fiscal year (Dec. 27), or has received the appropriate 90-day	Public Utilities Code, Section 99245	<p>Completion/submittal dates based on report copies provided by ESTA:</p> <p>FY 2014: November 30, 2014                      FY 2015: December 22, 2015                      FY 2016: December 22, 2016</p>

<b>Table II-1 Operator Compliance Requirements Matrix</b>		
<b>Operator Compliance Requirements</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Compliance Efforts</b>
extension by the RTPA allowed by law.		<b>Conclusion: Complied.</b>
The CHP has, within the 13 months prior to each TDA claim submitted by an operator, certified the operator's compliance with Vehicle Code Section 1808.1 following a CHP inspection of the operator's terminal.	Public Utilities Code, Section 99251 B	<p>ESTA participates in the CHP Transit Operator Compliance Program in which the CHP has conducted inspections within the 13 months prior to each TDA claim.</p> <p>Inspections are conducted at Bishop, Lone Pine and Mammoth Lakes. Dates applicable to the audit period were:</p> <p>Bishop facility located at 703-B Airport Road: October 22, 2014; November 16 &amp; 17, 2015; and November 16, 2016</p> <p>Lone Pine facility located at 160 North Lone Pine Avenue: August 5, 2014; August 20, 2015; and September 28, 2016</p> <p>Mammoth Lakes facility located 210 Commerce Circle: July 23, 2014; July 21, 2015; and August 10, 2016</p> <p>Minor violations were cited by the CHP inspector including maintenance program, driver records, and submission of daily conditions reports; however, each facility received a satisfactory terminal rating.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Complied.</b></p>
The operator's claim for TDA funds is submitted in compliance	Public Utilities Code, Section 99261	ESTA receives TDA funds from both Inyo and Mono counties. Separate

Table II-1 Operator Compliance Requirements Matrix		
Operator Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
with rules and regulations adopted by the RTPA for such claims.		<p>allocations from each LTC are made. In Inyo County, claimants such as ESTA submit a direct request for allocation of TDA funds to the Inyo LTC using a claim form. The claim form includes checks of conformance with efficiency standards and requests for supporting documentation of the claimant.</p> <p>In Mono County, the LTC passes an annual resolution allocating local transportation funds (LTF). Funds for transit system operations are apportioned to Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes, which are claimed directly by ESTA on their behalf using a claims form.</p> <p>A resolution is then passed by the LTCs for direct allocation to ESTA. The claims process by the two LTCs is more consistent in how ESTA receives TDA funds for transit operations. ESTA complies with the rules and regulations adopted by each LTC.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Complied</b></p>
If an operator serves urbanized and non-urbanized areas, it has maintained a ratio of fare revenues to operating costs at least equal to the ratio determined by the rules and regulations adopted by the RTPA.	Public Utilities Code, Section 99270.1	<p>ESTA is not subject to this farebox recovery provision, as the Authority does not serve an urbanized area within the two counties.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Not Applicable</b></p>



<b>Table II-1 Operator Compliance Requirements Matrix</b>		
<b>Operator Compliance Requirements</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Compliance Efforts</b>
<p>The operator’s operating budget has not increased by more than 15% over the preceding year, nor is there a substantial increase or decrease in the scope of operations or capital budget provisions for major new fixed facilities unless the operator has reasonably supported and substantiated the change(s).</p>	<p>Public Utilities Code, Section 99266</p>	<p>Percentage increase in ESTA’s operating budget:</p> <p>FY 2014: 1.0% FY 2015: 3.4% FY 2016: 0.6%</p> <p>Source: FY 2013–2016 Annual ESTA adopted budgets</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Complied</b></p>
<p>The operator’s definitions of performance measures are consistent with Public Utilities Code Section 99247, including (a) operating cost, (b) operating cost per passenger, (c) operating cost per vehicle service hour, (d) passengers per vehicle service hour, (e) passengers per vehicle service mile, (f) total passengers, (g) transit vehicle, (h) vehicle service hours, (i) vehicle service miles, and (j) vehicle service hours per employee.</p>	<p>Public Utilities Code, Section 99247</p>	<p>ESTA’s performance measures are consistent with the definitions contained in the Public Utilities Code, Section 99247. Section IV of this audit describes ESTA’s reporting of performance measures.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Complied</b></p>
<p>If the operator serves an urbanized area, it has maintained a ratio of fare revenues to operating costs at least equal to one-fifth (20 percent), unless it is in a county with a population of less than 500,000, in which case it must maintain a ratio of fare revenues to operating costs of at least equal to three-twentieths (15</p>	<p>Public Utilities Code, Sections 99268.2, 99268.3, 99268.12, 99270.1</p>	<p>ESTA is not subject to this farebox recovery provision, as it does not serve an urbanized area within the two counties.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Not Applicable</b></p>

Table II-1 Operator Compliance Requirements Matrix		
Operator Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
percent), if so determined by the RTPA.		
If the operator serves a rural area, it has maintained a ratio of fare revenues to operating costs at least equal to one-tenth (10 percent).	Public Utilities Code, Sections 99268.2, 99268.4, 99268.5	The farebox recovery ratios per the annual audited financial statements:  FY 2014: 47.25% FY 2015: 43.69% FY 2016: 45.95%  <b>Conclusion: Complied</b>
The current cost of the operator's retirement system is fully funded with respect to the officers and employees of its public transportation system, or the operator is implementing a plan approved by the RTPA which will fully fund the retirement system within 40 years.	Public Utilities Code, Section 99271	According to the annual ESTA fiscal audit, the Authority's defined benefit pension plan is provided through CalPERS. Active plan members in the Authority's defined pension plan are required to contribute 6.25%, 7% or 8% of their annual covered salary depending upon the plan in which the employee participates. ESTA is required to contribute the actuarially determined remaining amounts necessary to fund the benefits for its members depending upon the retirement plan tier.  <b>Conclusion: Complied</b>
If the operator receives state transit assistance funds, the operator makes full use of funds available to it under the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 before TDA claims are granted.	California Code of Regulations, Section 6754(a)(3)	As a recipient of State Transit Assistance Funds, ESTA makes use of federal funds available under the Federal Transit Administration. FTA funds include 5304 Transportation Planning, 5310 competitive grant, 5311 formula apportionment, 5311(f) intercity bus, 5316 JARC, 5317 New Freedom, and 5320 alternative transportation in parks grant.

Table II-1 Operator Compliance Requirements Matrix		
Operator Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
		FY 2014: \$483,617 (operations) \$406,506 (capital) FY 2015: \$523,773 (operations) FY 2016: \$521,293 (operations)  Source: FTA National Transit Database for FYs 2014–2016  <b>Conclusion: Complied</b>

### Findings and Observations from Operator Compliance Requirements Matrix

1. Of the compliance requirements pertaining to ESTA, the Authority fully complied with eight of the nine applicable requirements. Two additional compliance requirements did not apply to ESTA (e.g., urban and blended farebox recovery ratios). A requirement that was partially met relates to the timely submission of the Transit Operators Financial Transactions Report to the State Controller. In FY 2016, the submittal date was past the statutory timeline, the only one of the three that was late during the audit period.
2. Based on the annual fiscal audits, ESTA complied with the TDA farebox recovery ratio. The farebox ratio was relatively strong compared to the TDA threshold, averaging over 45 percent during the audit period compared to the minimum statutory requirement of 10 percent. Fare revenues, as reported in the annual fiscal audit, include passenger fares paid on routes as well as payments provided by entities for fare-free transit service including MMSA, June Lake Mountain, and the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Based on unaudited data, passenger fare revenues alone resulted in farebox ratios of about 23 percent, still well above the minimum standard.
3. ESTA participates in the annual CHP inspections for its three vehicle storage locations, and received satisfactory ratings at each of its locations. Minor violations were found for some of the inspections including that vehicles were behind on their maintenance program checks referenced by either time or miles. Subsequent inspections during this audit period did not report as severe maintenance schedule issues, indicating that ESTA has improved its maintenance scheduling practice. Since ESTA does not have its own vehicle maintenance facility, the Authority relies on outside vendors for the service and has to coordinate the servicing of the vehicles. ESTA indicated communication break-downs have resulted in maintenance dates that are not recorded properly by the vendor when, in fact, maintenance inspections were performed within the timeline. ESTA is working with the vendor to improve protocols for dating

inspections. As a measure of good practice, ESTA should strive for zero late maintenance checks to ensure vehicles continue to be properly maintained according to standards.

4. The operating budget exhibited modest increases during the period, with the highest increase occurring in FY 2015. The budget increased 1.0 percent in FY 2014; 3.4 percent in FY 2015 and 0.6 percent in FY 2016.
5. ESTA continues to utilize rural and innovative federal grant funding in addition to other funding sources including TDA for transit operations. Federal formula and discretionary funding are derived from FTA Sections 5304, 5310, 5311 and 5311(f), 5316, 5317 and 5320 grant programs. The FTA Section 5320 Transit in the Park program allowed for the procurement of buses early in the audit period that enables use of the same vehicles for town to Mammoth Mountain Ski access during the winter season.

Federal operating grants comprised about 11 percent of operating revenues for the triennial period, according to the Federal National Transit Database. The lower range is the result of inclusion of contract revenue, which had the effect of increasing total revenues while reducing the percentage contributions from federal funds.

## Section III

### Prior Triennial Performance Recommendations

ESTA's efforts to implement the recommendations made in the prior triennial audit of the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority ending June 30, 2013, are examined in this section of the report. The Caltrans performance audit guidelines prescribe a review of the status of prior audit recommendations. The review included discussions about the prior recommendations with ESTA staff. For this purpose, each prior recommendation for the Authority is described as listed in the prior audit, followed by a discussion of efforts to implement the recommendation. Conclusions concerning the extent to which the recommendations have been implemented by ESTA are then presented.

#### Prior Recommendation 1

ESTA staff should conduct final review of annual State Controller Report prior to on-time submission. *(Implementation Priority: High)*

*Background:* As a continuation of a prior recommendation, the prior audit found that there should be accurate data reporting in the Transit Operators Financial Transactions Reports submitted to the State Controller. Prior to submission of the report to the State by the ESTA fiscal auditor, it was suggested that ESTA staff request a copy and conduct final review of the information contained in the report, in particular the supplemental operating data section. Although improvements had been made to the consistency of the supplemental operating data during the current triennial period, more accurate data would provide the State and other reviewers of the information a better understanding of ESTA operations and comparability to ESTA's peer transit systems.

#### Actions Taken by ESTA

In response to this recommendation, ESTA has taken the necessary steps to improve the consistency of supplemental operating data in the Transit Operators Financial Transactions Reports submitted to the State Controller. A review of the State Controller Reports compiled during the audit period confirms that the operating data have generally been consistent with the data reported in ESTA's internal operation reports and the National Transit Database, Form RU-20. With regard to on-time submission, the FY 2014 and FY 2015 State Controller Reports were submitted on-time. However, the FY 2016 report was submitted after the statutory timeframe.

#### Conclusion

This recommendation has been implemented.

Prior Recommendation 2

Ensure vehicle maintenance is conducted within maintenance parameters. *(Implementation Priority: High)*

*Background:* In each year of the prior audit period, the CHP inspections identified a list of vehicles exceeding the industry maintenance parameters of 3,000 miles or 45 days. Trends and patterns from recent CHP terminal inspections show that fewer vehicles are found to be inspected past the parameters, an indication of improved processes. As a measure of good practice, it was recommended that ESTA strive for zero late maintenance checks to ensure vehicles continue to be properly maintained according to standards. The rate of vehicle road calls had been kept to a minimum for the prior audit period, which is quite positive given the relatively harsh operating environment in ESTA's service area.

Actions Taken by ESTA

In spite of fewer violations and road calls, CHP terminal inspections conducted during the audit period still found instances of vehicles exceeding industry maintenance parameters of 3,000 miles or 45 days. The CHP terminal inspection conducted on October 22, 2014 at ESTA's Bishop facility cited buses 604 and 605 for exceeding maintenance parameters by 11 and 12 days, respectively. In addition, a CHP terminal inspection conducted on November 15, 2016 at the Bishop facility cited buses 605, 606, and 615 for exceeding their scheduled maintenance by 13 days. Since ESTA does not have its own vehicle maintenance facility, the Authority relies on outside vendors for the service and has to coordinate the servicing of the vehicles. ESTA indicated communication break-downs have resulted in maintenance dates that are not recorded properly by the vendor when, in fact, maintenance inspections were performed within the timeline. Inspection dates are shown as the date of the invoice supplied by the vendor rather than the actual service inspection date. ESTA is working with the vendor to improve protocols for dating inspections. A new vehicle maintenance scheduling program which integrates with data from the ESTA Operational database has been developed which should provide more timely and accurate information.

Conclusion

This recommendation has been partially implemented and is forwarded in this audit for full implementation.

Prior Recommendation 3

Update the Short Range Transit Plan. *(Implementation Priority: High)*

*Background:* A typical schedule for an update of the Short Range Transit Plan is every five years. At the time of the prior audit, the SRTP for ESTA was approved in January 2009. With declines in services and the reduction in ridership for many routes, it was suggested that an update to the SRTP

would be timely and provide planning research and analysis of the routes, ride checks, and passenger surveys. Performance standards and targets were included in the 2009 SRTP, and an update would further elaborate on these by updating standards and targets on a route-by-route level. Because each route in the system is distinct, ranging from local Dial-A-Ride to intercity express service to long-haul commuter service and to town-to-town service, it was suggested that there be distinct performance goals and targets for each route. Performance targets should be developed for key indicators such as passengers per hour, farebox recovery, operating cost per hour, cost per passenger, on-time performance, and area coverage relative to population served. With the ability to conduct route-by-route analysis, ESTA will have additional targets to gauge its routes and help determine root causes of system performance issues. The Authority was awarded a grant to fund the SRTP update which should be completed in FY 2014-15.

#### Actions Taken by ESTA

Subsequent to receiving grant funding, ESTA commissioned the update of the SRTP during the audit period. The 2015 SRTP was adopted in April 2016 and contained a five-year planning horizon. An important element of the SRTP was to identify stable funding sources for operations and capital improvements of transit services.

The document first presents and reviews the setting for transportation services, including demographic factors and the recent operating history of the public transit service supplied by ESTA. A myriad of service, capital, institutional, management and financial alternatives are then discussed. A review of ESTA performance against standards in the prior SRTP was conducted, with updated ESTA goals, objectives and standards discussed in the Alternatives Memorandum. Finally, the resulting plan is presented, including year-by-year implementation and financial strategies.

#### Conclusion

This recommendation has been fully implemented.

#### Prior Recommendation 4

Consider Transit Ambassadors to enhance ridership. *(Implementation Priority: Medium)*

*Background:* A Transit Ambassador is a volunteer trained to know the local transit systems to help first-time passengers or passengers who have questions about using the bus. A Transit Ambassador offers assurance, experience, information, and a friendly face to new passengers. It was suggested that Transit Ambassadors could be especially helpful for Bishop Dial-A-Ride, which has experienced ridership declines and relies on a certain customer base to support ridership. In general, a volunteer Transit Ambassador's responsibilities include providing training to assigned passengers or passenger groups as needed and helping a passenger or passengers plan trips. Recruitment of ambassadors can focus on target groups and locations based on previous surveys and local area knowledge of trip generation and attraction. The program may also provide opportunity to tie in ESTA's CTSA function to use ambassadors to help coordinate with local facilities that own their own client van and whether there are scheduling or possible consolidation prospects.

### Actions Taken by ESTA

*The Inyo-Mono Counties Coordinated Plan*, adopted in April 2014, recommended that ESTA as the CTSA increase staff time to allow for more mobility management activities such as providing a Transit Ambassador program. The recent update of the ESTA website provides a menu of rider tips and etiquette including information about accessibility and how to make advance reservations.

In its annual TDA claim form, ESTA indicated that implementation of a new volunteer Transit Ambassador project may not be realistic in the small community of Bishop. ESTA staff believes that expansion of existing travel training programs that are presented to senior groups at organizations such as the Bishop Senior Center, Sterling Heights and local churches, as well as to referring agencies such as Kern Regional Center, IMACA, and Inyo County Health and Human Services would be more effective. Staff also developed a new-passenger welcome packet that includes a new rider flyer providing 6 free trips on Bishop Dial-A-Ride for registering during a certain promotional month. This is in conjunction with additional training of dial-a-ride drivers to enable first time passengers to have a positive first experience.

The Transit Analyst continued to work on coordination activities with partners including the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council, County Health and Human Services Departments, Inyo-Mono Association for the Handicapped, and Northern Inyo Hospital in Bishop. A significant recurring issue has been a lack of options for transporting residents to medical appointments. Through a federal grant, ESTA and its partners initiated the non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) mileage reimbursement program in May 2014. The NEMT is available to the transportation disadvantaged community including those persons, who because of physical or mental disability, income status, age, or who for other reasons are unable to transport themselves, or to purchase transportation, and are therefore dependent upon others to obtain access to healthcare. Participants must be residents of Inyo or Mono County and must find their own drivers, most of whom are relatives. The program has grown in terms of monthly trips and mileage reimbursement amounts since its start.

Other related activities include ESTA drivers going out of their way to provide exceptional customer service, and having an automated call made to passengers reminding them of their upcoming ride. These services complement the implementation of trip planning technologies.

### Conclusion

This recommendation has been implemented through other related activities and programs used by ESTA.

### Prior Recommendation 5

Invest in additional technology. (*Implementation Priority: Medium*)



*Background:* Over the past several years, ESTA has invested in transit technology as a means to improve its efficiency and economy of providing transit service over a large service area. Investments have included the NextBus automated customer information system plus automatic vehicle location (AVL), RouteMatch scheduling and dispatch software for Dial-A-Ride, and Google Transit. Each of these investments provides a different method to enhance service and ultimately the riding customer's experience. Additional technology that has proven to further the performance of transit systems include electronic fareboxes, bus cameras/video, and Wi-Fi service on long haul routes. The degree and type of technology available to ESTA is contingent on several conditions, the largest being available funding, as is the case with most other transit agencies. Other conditions include the level of desired improved customer service, automation of manual processes, and schedule of deployment. After the audit period, the ESTA Board requested staff to prepare an analysis of ESTA's capital assets with the intention of beginning to better plan for the administration and replacement funding of ESTA's capital assets. The advancement of technology in the capital asset planning should be considered.

#### Actions Taken by ESTA

Along with the update of the ESTA website during the audit period, the Authority implemented the Swiftly application. Swiftly is a mobile platform that allows for ticket purchases and real-time bus tracking capabilities. Using Swiftly's app and GPS trackers on all ESTA buses, riders can generate real-time information on the location of a bus and its estimated arrival time and details on delays. The Swiftly mobile application is available for download from the Apple App Store for iOS and from Google Play for Android. Other technology upgrades include a trip planner with a Google Maps platform developed by Trillium Solutions.

#### Conclusion

This recommendation has been fully implemented.

## Section IV

### TDA Performance Indicators

This section reviews ESTA operational performance measuring the relative efficiency and effectiveness in providing transit service. TDA requires that at least five specific performance indicators be reported for the transit system, which are contained in the first table. Farebox is not one of the five specific indicators, but is a requirement for continued TDA funding and is also included. A breakdown of service performance by route and comparatively by year is also provided using annual route statistics provided by ESTA and shown in the following tables. Findings from the analysis are contained in the section following the tables and graphs.

Data for the current audit period was obtained from various sources including audited financial statements, State Controller Reports, ESTA annual reports, monthly reports, and internal performance documents.

**Operating Costs** are defined as the annual cost of running a transit operation exclusive of depreciation, capital expenditures, vehicle lease costs, and direct costs of providing charter service. Operating cost data used for the systemwide performance indicators in the table is derived from annual audited financial statements.

**Passenger Counts** are based on the total number of one-way unlinked passenger trips provided by ESTA. Passenger counts were obtained from board summary reports produced by ESTA. Ridership is accounted for by type of passenger (adult, senior, disabled, wheelchair, child, and child under 5) and by route.

**Vehicle Service Hours** are defined as the total annual hours that vehicles operate in revenue service. Travel time to and from storage facilities and other deadhead travel are excluded. Driver manifests completed by drivers verify the separation of revenue and deadhead hours. Vehicle service hours were obtained from the State Controller Report and board summary reports.

**Vehicle Service Miles** are defined as the total annual miles that vehicles operate in revenue service. Travel distance to and from storage facilities and other deadhead travel are excluded. Driver manifests completed by drivers verify the separation of revenue and deadhead hours. Vehicle service miles were also obtained from the State Controller Report and board summary reports.

**Employee Hours** data was obtained from ESTA through a count of annual total pay hours for ESTA staff. Pay hours by fiscal year are:

FY 2013–14: 86,856.45 hours

FY 2014–15: 88,222.84 hours

FY 2015–16: 95,051.06 hours

TDA requires that employees be reported in terms of full-time equivalents (FTEs). This figure is calculated by dividing total annual employee pay hours by 2,000 hours. FTE data contained in the ESTA State Controller Reports during the audit period reflected this definition.

**Annual Fare Revenue** data was obtained from audited financial statements and board summary reports. Fares include cash, credit card payments for advance sales, and discount passes. The table showing annual fare revenue systemwide is audited data, while the table showing revenue by route is unaudited, partially explaining the difference between the two totals. The other explanation is that the audited fare revenue includes the contract payments made by local entities for transit services that do not charge a passenger fare. These services include the MMSA and Town of Mammoth Lakes transit services.

**Table IV-1  
ESTA Systemwide Performance Indicators**

Performance Data and Indicators	Audit Period			% Change FY 2014- 2016
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Operating Cost	\$3,760,107	\$3,938,931	\$4,095,137	<b>8.9%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		5%	4%	
Total Passengers	972,969	975,082	1,141,636	<b>17.3%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		0%	17%	
Vehicle Service Hours	53,380	53,474	56,949	<b>6.7%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		0%	6%	
Vehicle Service Miles	853,019	863,560	911,748	<b>6.9%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		1%	6%	
Employee FTEs <sup>(1)</sup>	43	44	48	<b>9.4%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		2%	8%	
Passenger Fares <sup>(2)</sup>	\$1,776,616	\$1,720,918	\$1,882,113	<b>5.9%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		-3%	9%	
Operating Cost per Passenger	\$3.86	\$4.04	\$3.59	<b>-7.2%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		5%	-11%	
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour	\$70.44	\$73.66	\$71.91	<b>2.1%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		5%	-2%	
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Mile	\$4.41	\$4.56	\$4.49	<b>1.9%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		3%	-2%	
Passengers per Vehicle Service Hour	18.2	18.2	20.0	<b>10.0%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		0%	10%	

Performance Data and Indicators	Audit Period			% Change FY 2014- 2016
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Passengers per Vehicle Service Mile	1.14	1.13	1.25	<b>9.8%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1%	11%	
Vehicle Service Hours per Employee	1,229	1,212	1,198	<b>-2.5%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1%	-1%	
Average Fare per Passenger	\$1.83	\$1.76	\$1.65	<b>-9.7%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		-3%	-7%	
Subsidy per Passenger	\$2.04	\$2.27	\$1.94	<b>-4.9%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		12%	-15%	
Farebox Recovery Ratio	47.25%	43.69%	45.96%	<b>-2.7%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		-8%	5%	
Consumer Price Index (CPI) - California	2.2%	1.3%	2.1%	

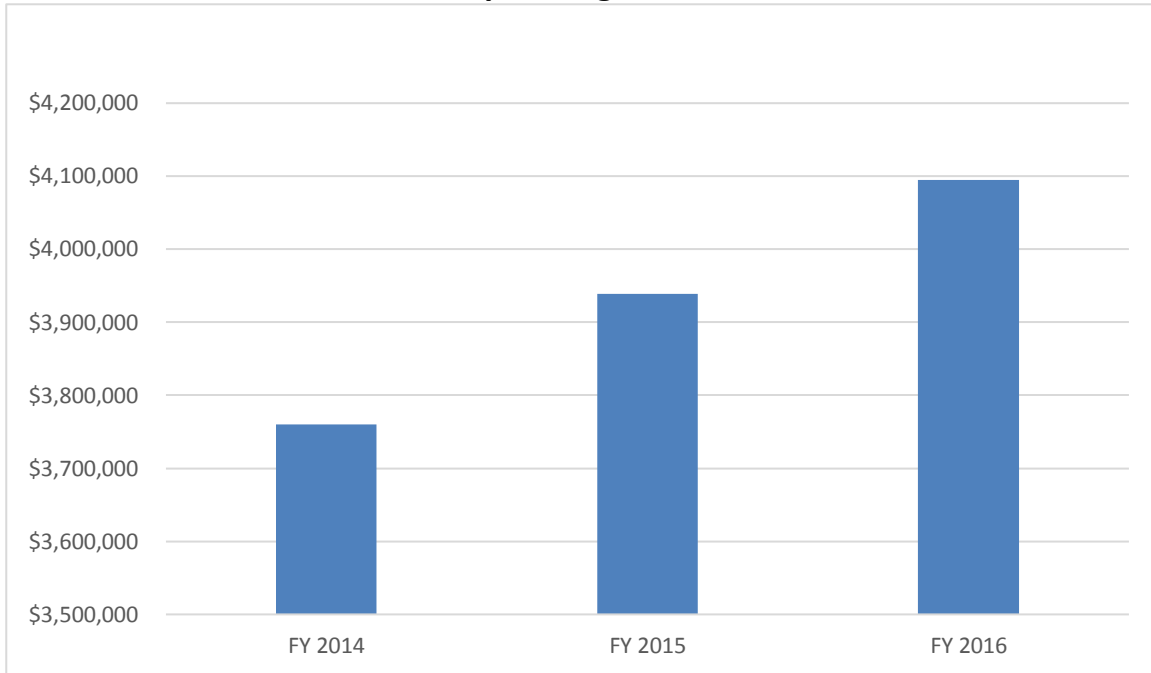
(1) Full-time equivalents is annual total payroll hours divided by 2,000 hours.

(2) Passenger fares reported in the fiscal audit include payments made by contract agencies for ESTA to provide services that do not charge a passenger fare (e.g., Town of Mammoth Lakes, MMSA).

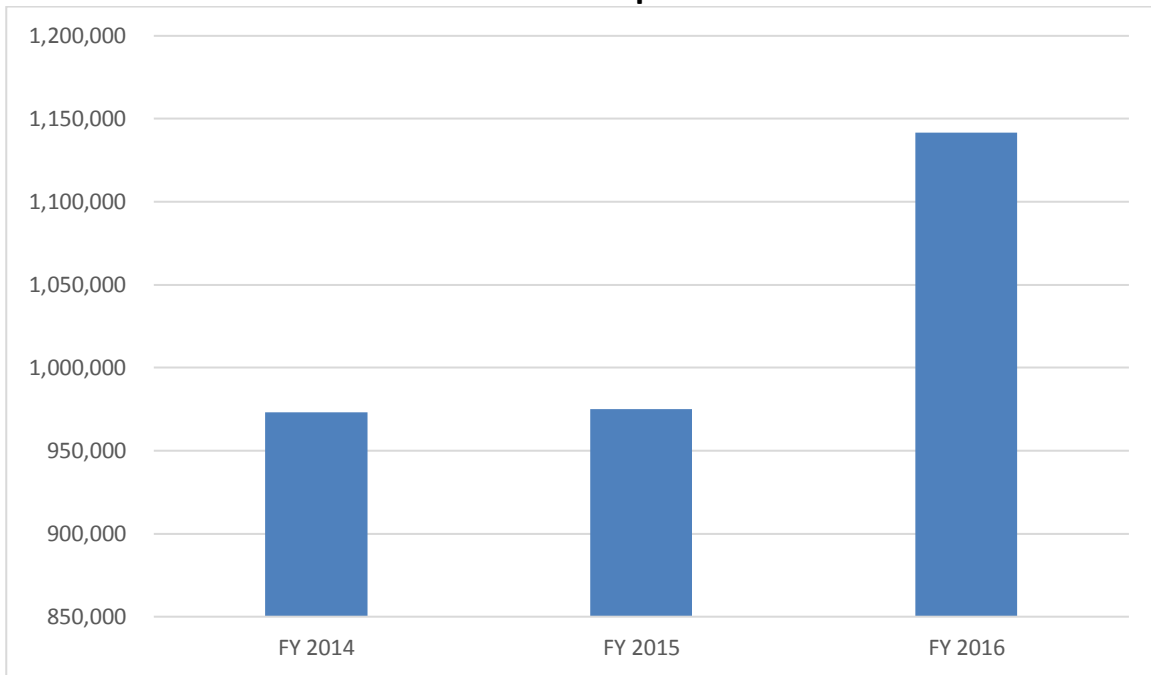
Source: Audited financial reports for cost and fares; ESTA annual performance data by route for passengers, hours, and miles; ESTA payroll hours for FTEs.

Column graphs on the following pages are used to depict the trends for select systemwide performance indicators (Graphs IV-1 through IV-6).

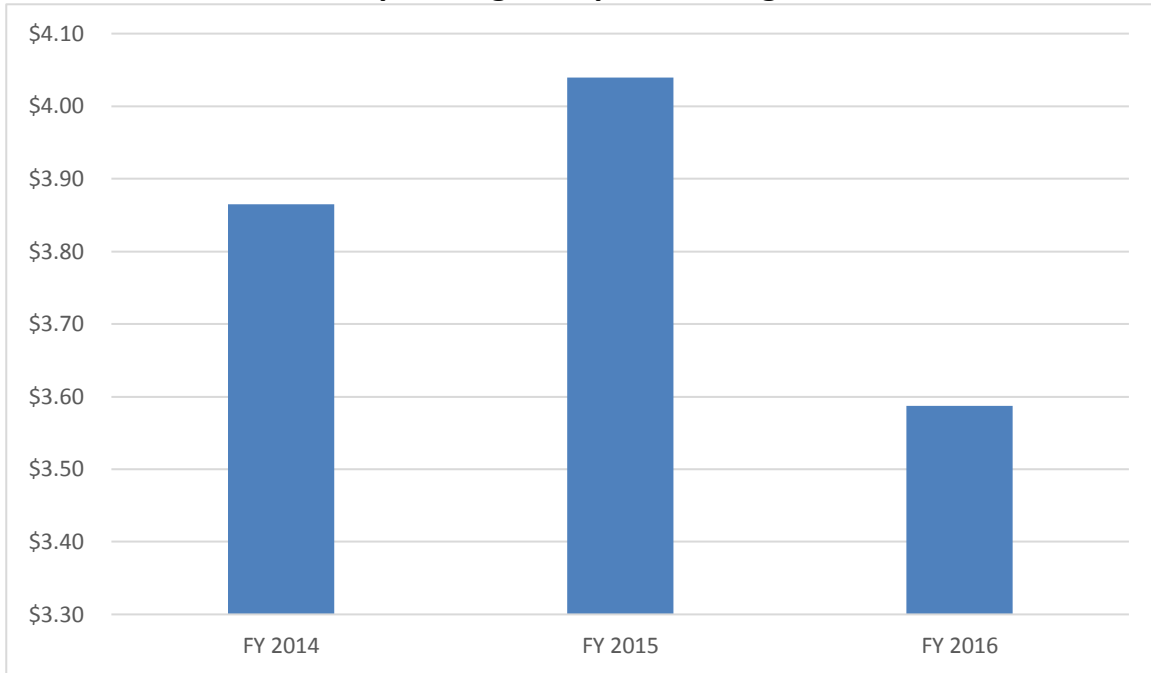
**Graph IV-1  
Operating Costs**



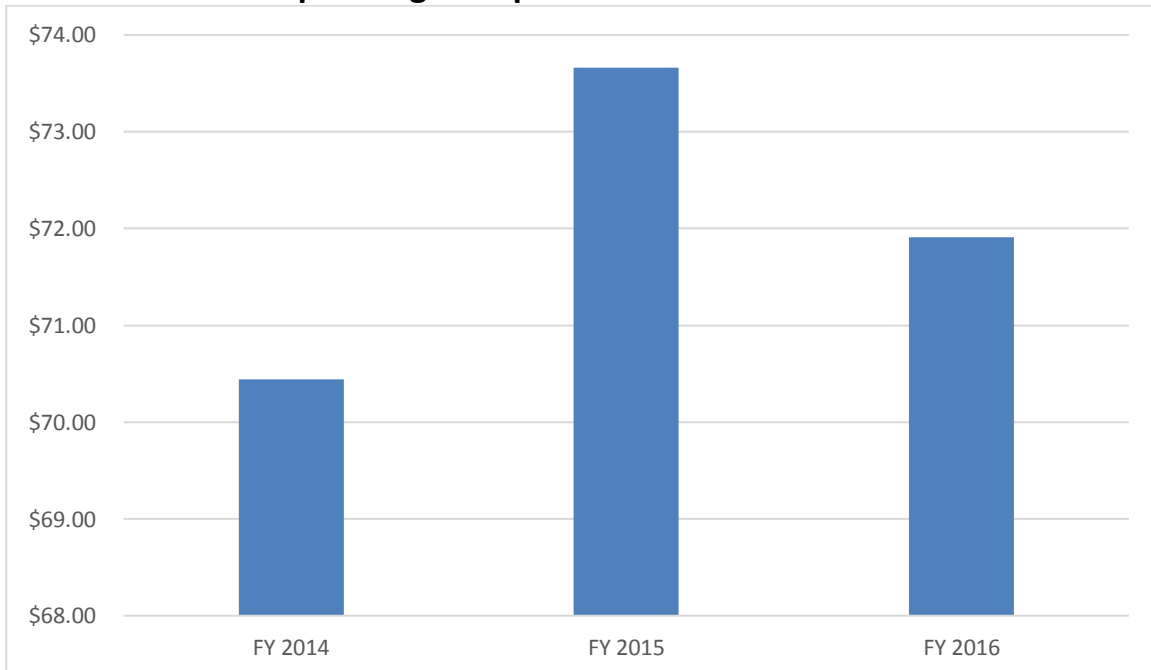
**Graph IV-2  
Ridership**



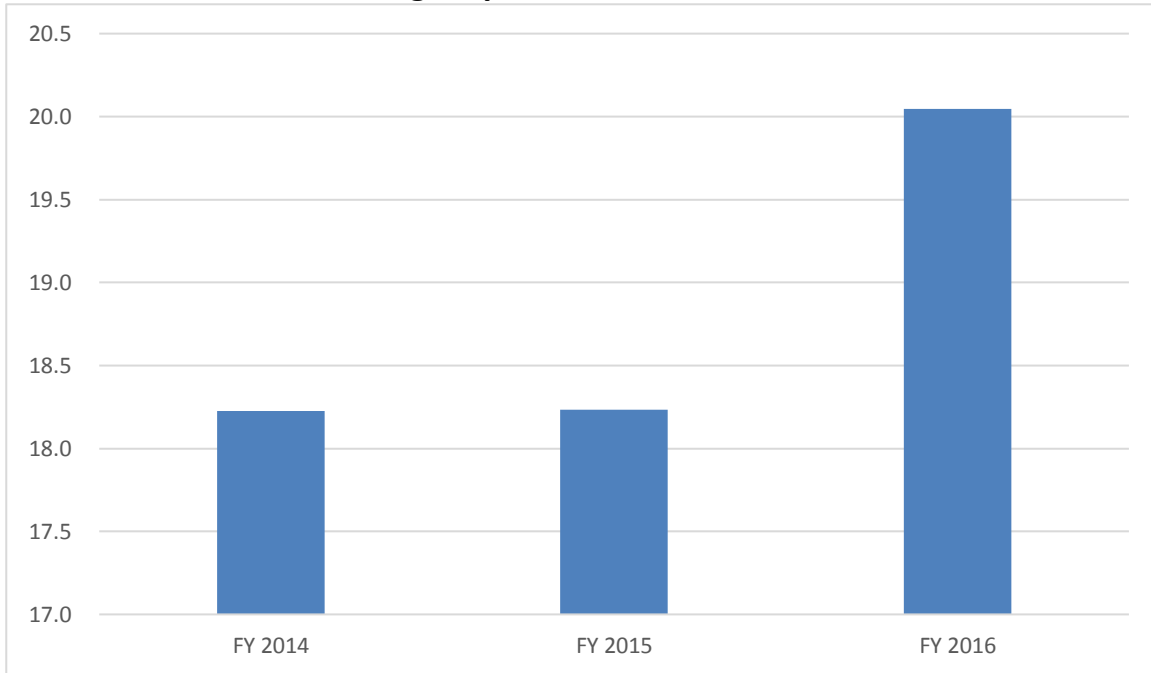
**Graph IV-3**  
**Operating Cost per Passenger**



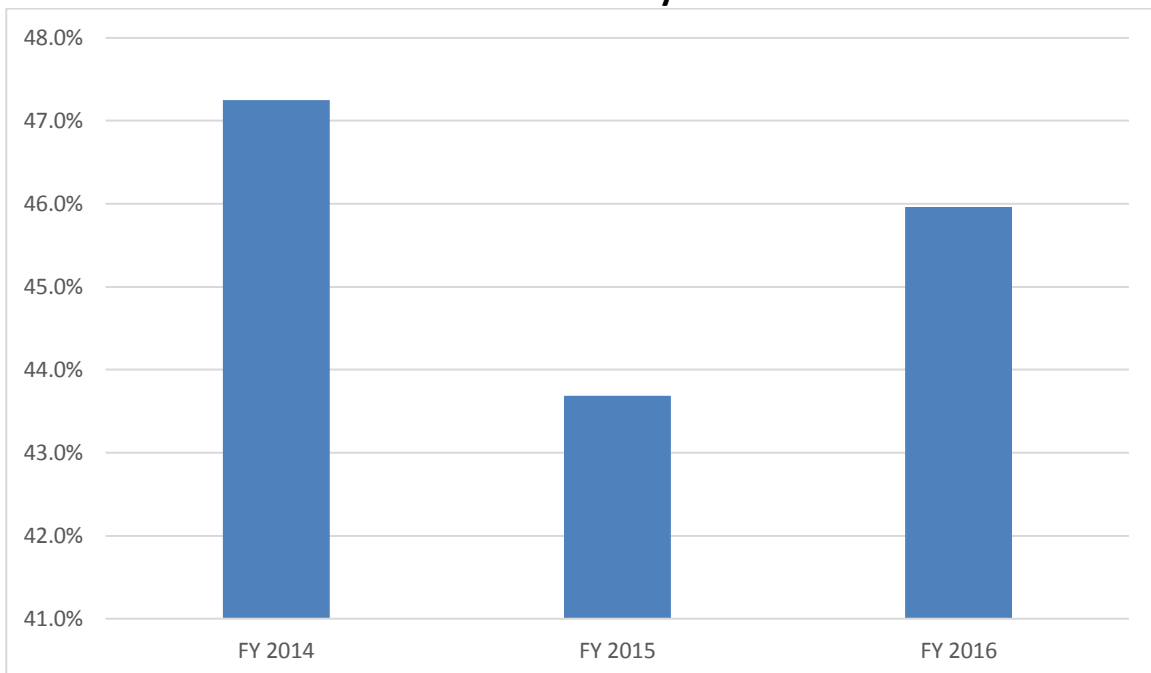
**Graph IV-4**  
**Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour**



**Graph IV-5**  
**Passengers per Vehicle Service Hour**



**Graph IV-6**  
**Farebox Recovery Ratio**



**Table IV-2  
FY 2013–14 Performance Data by Route (Unaudited)**

Route	Fares	Pax	Hours	Miles
Benton to Bishop	\$2,745.70	579	309	9,344
Bishop DAR	\$86,237.30	36,494	10,129	104,883
Bridgeport to Gardnerville	\$3,680.15	529	324	6,891
June Lake Shuttle	\$29,325.00	2,451	408	11,161
Lancaster	\$72,896.25	5,287	1,636	75,810
Lone Pine to Bishop	\$24,722.65	4,883	1,362	58,416
Lone Pine DAR	\$10,361.80	4,179	1,760	14,158
Mammoth FR	\$0.00	369,803	15,218	216,384
Mammoth DAR	\$10,980.49	4,214	2,390	11,137
Mammoth Express	\$17,778.70	3,167	791	34,871
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area	\$0.00	371,292	8,812	112,964
Measure U	\$0.00	8,953	211	2,386
Mule Shuttle	\$487.00	556	59	657
Nite Rider	\$14,630.50	3,718	783	11,985
Other	\$0.00	1,314	45	460
Reds Meadow	\$436,336.00	148,548	4,914	60,347
Reno	\$97,532.05	5,238	2,620	110,860
Tecopa	\$713.00	121	101	1,637
Walker DAR	\$4,374.30	1,643	1,510	8,668
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$812,800.89</b>	<b>972,969</b>	<b>53,380</b>	<b>853,019</b>

Source: ESTA



**Table IV-3  
FY 2014–15 Performance Data by Route (Unaudited)**

<b>Route</b>	<b>Fares</b>	<b>Pax</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Miles</b>
Benton to Bishop	\$4,713	1,053	221	8,519
Bishop DAR	\$87,575	39,466	10,030	108,492
Bridgeport to Gardnerville	\$3,616	525	317	6,739
June Lake Shuttle	\$23,768	2,804	312	9,401
Lancaster	\$72,205	4,943	1,642	75,823
Lone Pine to Bishop	\$23,938	4,546	1,353	58,250
Lone Pine DAR	\$8,659	3,588	1,750	13,811
Mammoth FR	\$0	366,949	15,823	224,915
Mammoth DAR	\$7,199	2,818	2,166	9,466
Mammoth Express	\$16,126	2,963	853	37,030
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area	\$0	355,609	8,633	110,943
Measure U	\$0	11,025	245	2,647
Mule Shuttle	\$307	414	59	550
Nite Rider	\$16,141	4,048	809	12,431
Other	\$253	1,107	62	550
Reds Meadow	\$468,672	165,617	4,980	62,775
Reno	\$114,953	5,451	2,594	110,005
Tecopa	\$763	155	117	1,954
Walker DAR	\$5,487	2,001	1,509	9,259
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$854,375.13</b>	<b>975,082</b>	<b>53,474</b>	<b>863,560</b>

Source: ESTA

**Table IV-4  
FY 2015–16 Performance Data by Route (Unaudited)**

<b>Route</b>	<b>Fares</b>	<b>Pax</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Miles</b>
Benton to Bishop	\$1,570	333	157	7,143
Bishop DAR	\$91,273	41,415	10,413	111,154
Bridgeport to Gardnerville	\$3,632	472	322	6,900
June Lake Shuttle	\$29,508	2,444	500	12,328
Lancaster	\$74,147	4,751	1,600	75,747
Lone Pine to Bishop	\$22,698	4,399	1,365	58,887
Lone Pine DAR	\$8,041	3,225	1,759	14,718
Mammoth FR	\$0	396,397	16,134	225,610
Mammoth DAR	\$7,484	3,056	2269	9,465
Mammoth Express	\$23,173	4,106	1,416	59,932
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area	\$0	489,117	10,769	127,520
Measure U	\$0	9,496	167	2,084
Mule Shuttle	\$413	529	69	659
Nite Rider	\$15,821	4,048	813	12,148
Other	\$270	1,259	67	843
Reds Meadow	\$504,111	167,927	4,819	61,609
Reno	\$135,489	6,047	2,677	111,932
Tecopa	\$601	122	119	1,959
Walker DAR	\$6,914	2,493	1,514	11,110
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$925,143.44</b>	<b>1,141,636</b>	<b>56,949</b>	<b>911,748</b>

Source: ESTA

**Table IV-5  
Fare Revenues by Route by Year (Unaudited)**

Route	Fares			% Change FY 2014-16
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Benton to Bishop	\$2,746	\$4,713	\$1,570	-43%
<i>Annual Change</i>		72%	-67%	
Bishop DAR	\$86,237	\$87,575	\$91,273	6%
<i>Annual Change</i>		2%	4%	
Bridgeport to Gardnerville	\$3,680	\$3,616	\$3,632	-1%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-2%	0%	
June Lake Shuttle	\$29,325	\$23,768	\$29,508	1%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-19%	24%	
Lancaster	\$72,896	\$72,205	\$74,147	2%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1%	3%	
Lone Pine to Bishop	\$24,723	\$23,938	\$22,698	-8%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-3%	0%	
Lone Pine DAR	\$10,362	\$8,659	\$8,041	-22%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-16%	-7%	
Mammoth FR <sup>(1)</sup>	\$0	\$0	\$0	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>		n/a	0%	
Mammoth DAR	\$10,980	\$7,199	\$7,484	-32%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-34%	4%	
Mammoth Express	\$17,779	\$16,126	\$23,173	30%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-9%	44%	
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area <sup>(1)</sup>	\$0	\$0	\$0	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>		n/a	n/a	
Measure U <sup>(1)</sup>	\$0	\$0	\$0	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>		n/a	n/a	
Mule Shuttle	\$487	\$307	\$413	-15%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-37%	34%	
Nite Rider	\$14,631	\$16,141	\$15,821	8%
<i>Annual Change</i>		10%	-2%	
Other	\$0	\$253	\$270	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>		n/a	7%	
Reds Meadow	\$436,336	\$468,672	\$504,111	16%
<i>Annual Change</i>		7%	8%	
Reno	\$97,532	\$114,953	\$135,489	39%
<i>Annual Change</i>		18%	18%	
Tecopa	\$713	\$763	\$601	-16%

Route	Fares			% Change FY 2014-16
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
<i>Annual Change</i>		7%	-21%	
Walker DAR	\$4,374	\$5,487	\$6,914	58%
<i>Annual Change</i>		25%	26%	
Total	\$812,801	\$854,375	\$925,143	14%

(1) Mammoth Lakes fixed route services are fare-free.

**Table IV-6  
Ridership by Route by Year**

Route	Ridership			% Change FY 2014-16
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Benton to Bishop	579	1,053	333	-42%
<i>Annual Change</i>		82%	-68%	
Bishop DAR	36,494	39,466	41,415	13%
<i>Annual Change</i>		8%	5%	
Bridgeport to Gardnerville	529	525	472	-11%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1%	0%	
June Lake Shuttle	2,451	2,804	2,444	0%
<i>Annual Change</i>		14%	-13%	
Lancaster	5,287	4,943	4,751	-10%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-7%	-4%	
Lone Pine to Bishop	4,883	4,546	4,399	-10%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-7%	0%	
Lone Pine DAR	4,179	3,588	3,225	-23%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-14%	-10%	
Mammoth FR (1)	369,803	366,949	396,397	7%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1%	0%	
Mammoth DAR	4,214	2,818	3,056	-27%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-33%	8%	
Mammoth Express	3,167	2,963	4,106	30%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-6%	39%	
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (1)	371,292	355,609	489,117	32%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-4%	38%	
Measure U (1)	8,953	11,025	9,496	6%
<i>Annual Change</i>		23%	-14%	
Mule Shuttle	556	414	529	-5%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-26%	28%	
Nite Rider	3,718	4,048	4,048	9%

Route	Ridership			% Change FY 2014-16
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
<i>Annual Change</i>		9%	0%	
Other	1,314	1,107	1,259	-4%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-16%	14%	
Reds Meadow	148,548	165,617	167,927	13%
<i>Annual Change</i>		11%	1%	
Reno	5,238	5,451	6,047	15%
<i>Annual Change</i>		4%	11%	
Tecopa	121	155	122	1%
<i>Annual Change</i>		28%	-21%	
Walker DAR	1,643	2,001	2,493	52%
<i>Annual Change</i>		22%	25%	
Total	972,969	975,082	1,141,636	17%

(1) Mammoth Lakes fixed route services are fare-free.

**Table IV-7**  
**Revenue Service Hours by Route by Year**

Route	Revenue Hours			% Change FY 2014-16
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Benton to Bishop	309	221	157	-49%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-28%	-29%	
Bishop DAR	10,129	10,030	10,413	3%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1%	4%	
Bridgeport to Gardnerville	324	317	322	-1%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-2%	0%	
June Lake Shuttle	408	312	500	23%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-24%	61%	
Lancaster	1,636	1,642	1,600	-2%
<i>Annual Change</i>		0%	-3%	
Lone Pine to Bishop	1,362	1,353	1,365	0%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1%	0%	
Lone Pine DAR	1,760	1,750	1,759	0%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1%	1%	
Mammoth FR (1)	15,218	15,823	16,134	6%
<i>Annual Change</i>		4%	0%	
Mammoth DAR	2,390	2,166	2,269	-5%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-9%	5%	
Mammoth Express	791	853	1,416	79%

Route	Revenue Hours			% Change FY 2014-16
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
<i>Annual Change</i>		8%	66%	
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (1)	8,812	8,633	10,769	22%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-2%	25%	
Measure U (1)	211	245	167	-21%
<i>Annual Change</i>		16%	-32%	
Mule Shuttle	59	59	69	17%
<i>Annual Change</i>		0%	18%	
Nite Rider	783	809	813	4%
<i>Annual Change</i>		3%	1%	
Other	45	62	67	49%
<i>Annual Change</i>		38%	8%	
Reds Meadow	4,914	4,980	4,819	-2%
<i>Annual Change</i>		1%	-3%	
Reno	2,620	2,594	2,677	2%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1%	3%	
Tecopa	101	117	119	18%
<i>Annual Change</i>		17%	1%	
Walker DAR	1,510	1,509	1,514	0%
<i>Annual Change</i>		0%	0%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,380</b>	<b>53,474</b>	<b>56,949</b>	<b>7%</b>

(1) Mammoth Lakes fixed route services are fare-free.

**Table IV-8  
Revenue Service Miles by Route by Year**

Route	Revenue Miles			% Change FY 2014-16
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Benton to Bishop	9,344	8,519	7,143	-24%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-9%	-16%	
Bishop DAR	104,883	108,492	111,154	6%
<i>Annual Change</i>		3%	2%	
Bridgeport to Gardnerville	6,891	6,739	6,900	0%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-2%	0%	
June Lake Shuttle	11,161	9,401	12,328	10%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-16%	31%	
Lancaster	75,810	75,823	75,747	0%
<i>Annual Change</i>		0%	0%	

Route	Revenue Miles			% Change FY 2014-16
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Lone Pine to Bishop	58,416	58,250	58,887	1%
<i>Annual Change</i>		0%	0%	
Lone Pine DAR	14,158	13,811	14,718	4%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-2%	7%	
Mammoth FR (1)	216,384	224,915	225,610	4%
<i>Annual Change</i>		4%	0%	
Mammoth DAR	11,137	9,466	9,465	-15%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-15%	0%	
Mammoth Express	34,871	37,030	59,932	72%
<i>Annual Change</i>		6%	62%	
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (1)	112,964	110,943	127,520	13%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-2%	15%	
Measure U (1)	2,386	2,647	2,084	-13%
<i>Annual Change</i>		11%	-21%	
Mule Shuttle	657	550	659	0%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-16%	20%	
Nite Rider	11,985	12,431	12,148	1%
<i>Annual Change</i>		4%	-2%	
Other	460	550	843	83%
<i>Annual Change</i>		20%	53%	
Reds Meadow	60,347	62,775	61,609	2%
<i>Annual Change</i>		4%	-2%	
Reno	110,860	110,005	111,932	1%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1%	2%	
Tecopa	1,637	1,954	1,959	20%
<i>Annual Change</i>		19%	0%	
Walker DAR	8,668	9,259	11,110	28%
<i>Annual Change</i>		7%	20%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>853,019</b>	<b>863,560</b>	<b>911,748</b>	<b>7%</b>

(1) Mammoth Lakes fixed route services are fare-free.

**Table IV-9  
Average Fare per Passenger per Route by Year**

Route	Average Fare Per Passenger			% Change FY 2014-16
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Benton to Bishop	\$4.74	\$4.48	\$4.71	-1%
Bishop DAR	\$2.36	\$2.22	\$2.20	-7%
Bridgeport to Gardnerville	\$6.96	\$6.89	\$7.69	11%
June Lake Shuttle	\$11.96	\$8.48	\$12.07	1%
Lancaster	\$13.79	\$14.61	\$15.61	13%
Lone Pine to Bishop	\$5.06	\$5.27	\$5.16	2%
Lone Pine DAR	\$2.48	\$2.41	\$2.49	1%
Mammoth FR <sup>(1)</sup>	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	n/a
Mammoth DAR	\$2.61	\$2.55	\$2.45	-6%
Mammoth Express	\$5.61	\$5.44	\$5.64	1%
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area <sup>(1)</sup>	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	n/a
Measure U <sup>(1)</sup>	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	n/a
Mule Shuttle	\$0.88	\$0.74	\$0.78	-11%
Nite Rider	\$3.94	\$3.99	\$3.91	-1%
Other	\$0.00	\$0.23	\$0.21	n/a
Reds Meadow <sup>(2)</sup>	\$2.94	\$2.83	\$3.00	2%
Reno	\$18.62	\$21.09	\$22.41	20%
Tecopa	\$5.89	\$4.92	\$4.93	-16%
Walker DAR	\$2.66	\$2.74	\$2.77	4%

(1) Mammoth Lakes fixed route services are fare-free.

(2) On the Reds Meadow Shuttle, the adult passenger fare (\$7) and child fare (\$4) are valid for unlimited boarding/deboarding during the day. The average fare is reflective of the various number of boardings by the passengers, whether a minimum of two (in and out) or more per rider while in the valley.

**Table IV-10  
Fare Revenue per Mile by Year**

Route	Fare Revenue Per Mile			% Change FY 2014-16
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Benton to Bishop	\$0.29	\$0.55	\$0.22	-25%
Bishop DAR	\$0.82	\$0.81	\$0.82	0%
Bridgeport to Gardnerville	\$0.53	\$0.54	\$0.53	-1%
June Lake Shuttle	\$2.63	\$2.53	\$2.39	-9%
Lancaster	\$0.96	\$0.95	\$0.98	2%
Lone Pine to Bishop	\$0.42	\$0.41	\$0.39	-9%



Route	Fare Revenue Per Mile			% Change FY 2014-16
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Lone Pine DAR	\$0.73	\$0.63	\$0.55	-25%
Mammoth FR (1)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	n/a
Mammoth DAR	\$0.99	\$0.76	\$0.79	-20%
Mammoth Express	\$0.51	\$0.44	\$0.39	-24%
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (1)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	n/a
Measure U (1)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	n/a
Mule Shuttle	\$0.74	\$0.56	\$0.63	-16%
Nite Rider	\$1.22	\$1.30	\$1.30	7%
Other	\$0.00	\$0.46	\$0.32	n/a
Reds Meadow	\$7.23	\$7.47	\$8.18	13%
Reno	\$0.88	\$1.04	\$1.21	38%
Tecopa	\$0.44	\$0.39	\$0.31	-30%
Walker DAR	\$0.50	\$0.59	\$0.62	23%

(1) Mammoth Lakes fixed route services are fare-free.

**Table IV-11**  
**Passengers per Hour per Route by Year**

Route	Passengers Per Hour			% Change FY 2014-16
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Benton to Bishop	1.9	4.8	2.1	13%
Bishop DAR	3.6	3.9	4.0	10%
Bridgeport to Gardnerville	1.6	1.7	1.5	-10%
June Lake Shuttle	6.0	9.0	4.9	-19%
Lancaster	3.2	3.0	3.0	-8%
Lone Pine to Bishop	3.6	3.4	3.2	-10%
Lone Pine DAR	2.4	2.0	1.8	-23%
Mammoth FR (1)	24.3	23.2	24.6	1%
Mammoth DAR	1.8	1.3	1.3	-24%
Mammoth Express	4.0	3.5	2.9	-28%
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (1)	42.1	41.2	45.4	8%
Measure U (1)	42.4	45.0	56.8	34%
Mule Shuttle	9.4	7.0	7.6	-19%
Nite Rider	4.7	5.0	5.0	5%
Other	29.3	17.9	18.8	-36%
Reds Meadow	30.2	33.3	34.9	15%
Reno	2.0	2.1	2.3	13%
Tecopa	1.2	1.3	1.0	-15%

Route	Passengers Per Hour			% Change FY 2014-16
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Walker DAR	1.1	1.3	1.6	51%

(1) Mammoth Lakes fixed route services are fare-free.

**Table IV-12**  
**Passengers per Mile per Route by Year**

Route	Passengers Per Mile			% Change FY 2014-16
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Benton to Bishop	0.06	0.12	0.05	-25%
Bishop DAR	0.35	0.36	0.37	7%
Bridgeport to Gardnerville	0.08	0.08	0.07	-11%
June Lake Shuttle	0.22	0.30	0.20	-10%
Lancaster	0.07	0.07	0.06	-10%
Lone Pine to Bishop	0.08	0.08	0.07	-11%
Lone Pine DAR	0.30	0.26	0.22	-26%
Mammoth FR (1)	1.71	1.63	1.76	3%
Mammoth DAR	0.38	0.30	0.32	-15%
Mammoth Express	0.09	0.08	0.07	-25%
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (1)	3.29	3.21	3.84	17%
Measure U (1)	3.75	4.17	4.56	21%
Mule Shuttle	0.85	0.75	0.80	-5%
Nite Rider	0.31	0.33	0.33	7%
Other	2.86	2.01	1.49	-48%
Reds Meadow	2.46	2.64	2.73	11%
Reno	0.05	0.05	0.05	14%
Tecopa	0.07	0.08	0.06	-16%
Walker DAR	0.19	0.22	0.22	18%

(1) Mammoth Lakes fixed route services are fare-free.

## Findings from Verification of TDA Performance Indicators

1. **Operating cost per vehicle service hour**, an indicator of cost efficiency, increased systemwide by a modest 2.1 percent from \$70.44 in FY 2014 to \$71.91 in FY 2016 as derived from audited financial data. This growth rate is in step with the rate of inflation over the three-year period, which remained historically low. Overall operating costs increased by 8.9 percent during the triennial period, with overall operating hours exhibiting an increase of 6.7 percent. This results in slight growth in the cost per hour trend. The cost reductions and stabilization from schedule adjustments to existing services moved in tangent with the cost per hour trend. Relative to the low rate of inflation, this performance indicator shows ESTA has been relatively cost efficient in relation to the level of service.
2. **Operating cost per passenger**, an indicator of cost effectiveness, decreased by 7.2 percent systemwide from \$3.86 in FY 2014 to \$3.59 in FY 2016. Despite increases in operating costs from increased service, ridership increased at a much faster pace (17.3 percent), which forms a positive trend for this performance indicator. Most of the ridership growth in the past year occurred on the Mammoth Express and MMSA routes as part of ESTA's ridership performance. Additional ridership growth occurred on the Reno and the Reds Meadow Shuttle. Ridership increases from these routes offset the losses on the other ESTA services.
3. **Passengers per vehicle service hour**, which measures the effectiveness of the service delivered, increased by 10 percent systemwide during the triennial period, from 18.2 passengers per hour in FY 2014 to 20 passengers per hour in FY 2016. The combined occurrence of modified services and the addition of MMSA performance metrics has helped the trend for this measure. The likelihood of the increased pattern of the transition of Mammoth Lakes Dial-A-Ride passengers onto local fixed route also helped to increase productivity. In addition, ridership on the Reds Meadow Shuttle contracted to ESTA by the US Forest Service has increased in tandem with the provision of increased service hours. The Reds Meadow Shuttle is mandatory for access to the popular Devils Postpile and Reds Meadow. These increases helped to offset ridership and service hour declines with other ESTA transit routes.
4. **Passengers per vehicle service mile**, another indicator of service effectiveness, increased almost 10 percent systemwide from 1.14 in FY 2014 to 1.25 in FY 2016. This correlates with the passenger per hour indicator showing the effects from ridership growth relative to the levels of service. As vehicle service miles grew modestly, systemwide ridership increased markedly, indicating more passenger boardings for shorter trips. This would be the case for the growing ridership on Mammoth Lakes fixed routes.
5. **Vehicle service hours per employee**, which provides a general measure of labor productivity, decreased 2.5 percent during the audit period, from 1,229 hours in FY 2014 to 1,198 hours in FY 2016. The 9.4 percent growth in full-time equivalent employees, in particular during the last year, exceeds the rate of change in service hours during the same time period. The MMSA contract service contributed significantly to the increased FTE count,

along with fluctuations of seasonal part-time workers hired during peak periods based on the level of services provided for that period. Administrative and management staff operate under lean staffing levels for a service the size of ESTA although several new administrative and management staff were added to address the significant service growth in Mammoth Lakes over the past years.

6. **Farebox recovery** has remained well above the TDA requirement of 10 percent, averaging over 45 percent for the triennial period. Fare revenues, as reported in the annual fiscal audit, include passenger fares paid on routes as well as payment provided by entities for fare-free transit service including MMSA and the Town of Mammoth Lakes. When considering only passenger fares paid on routes, the revenues showed growth over the three-year period. With the MMSA winter transit service as well as stable fare revenues collected from the Reds Meadow Shuttle, the farebox recovery ratio increased. Because no fare is charged for Mammoth Lakes fixed-route service, the payments made to provide service are counted toward the farebox in lieu of direct fare payment by passengers. This was the case for the MMSA and Town funded service that boosted the farebox recovery ratio in addition to overall increases in fare revenue from other routes in the system. Nite Rider fare revenues have experienced some discrepancies and are tracked carefully.

## Data Consistency

In a review of data consistency among data sources, fiscal year-end operations performance data was compared between the annual State Controller Report, annual financial statements, and internal year-end summaries. Performance data reviewed includes operating costs, fare revenue, ridership, vehicle revenue service hours, and vehicle revenue service miles. State Controller Report information submitted to the Controller’s Office is used to publish a statewide annual transit operators transactions report and enables a comparison of ESTA transit performance against equivalent information provided by all other public transit systems in the state. Incomplete or inaccurate data provided to the State Controller by a transit operator does not provide a fair assessment of actual performance compared to other transit systems and the actual use of TDA revenues.

Among the data sources reviewed for consistency, despite some differences that were found, each can be explained. State Controller Reports of ESTA operations are generally prepared and submitted using unaudited data compared to the audited financial statements prepared for the fiscal audit. This often explains the difference in financial data between the two reports. As described in the prior section of this audit, ESTA has improved upon the reporting of supplemental operations data in the State Controller Report. A review of the State Controller Reports submitted to the State by ESTA shows improvement over the years. With passage of AB 1113 in July 2017, the State Controller Reports will now be required to use audited financial data and be more consistent with the financial statements.

	FY 2013-14			FY 2014-15			FY 2015-16		
	ESTA Annual Ops Data	National Transit Database (RU-20)	State Controller Report	ESTA Annual Ops Data	National Transit Database (RU-20)	State Controller Report	ESTA Annual Ops Data	National Transit Database (RU-20)	State Controller Report
Total Passengers	972,969	975,843	972,953	975,082	975,097	986,048	1,141,636	1,141,632	1,141,632
Vehicle Service Hours	53,380	53,875	53,379	53,474	53,477	53,474	56,949	56,948	56,948
Vehicle Service Miles	853,019	871,091	853,019	863,560	863,687	866,200	911,748	911,706	911,706
Employee FTE's	43	42	44	44	42	44	48	46	46

Note: National Transit Database FTE calculation based on payroll hours divided by 2,080; ESTA and SCO use TDA standard of 2,000.

## Section V

### Review of JPA Formation Documents

As part of the project scope for this audit, a special analysis is provided that goes beyond the standard Caltrans Performance Audit Guidelines. In the evaluation of the JPA, a comparison is provided between the operation of the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority and the duties and powers set forth in the Transit Authority Joint Powers Agreement. The JPA formation documents creating the Authority help to define ESTA’s role in service delivery, service planning, reporting, funding, and administration. An amendment to the agreement was finalized in October 2015 regarding Article I, Section 1.2 to permit member entities to fill one of the entity’s two positions on the ESTA Board with a member of the public at large rather than a member of the governing body through June 30, 2017.

We reviewed the Authority’s formation documents in which the JPA includes language specifying the duties and responsibilities granted by the member local jurisdictions. Article provisions specify the powers and duties of the Authority, management, and funding role. These provisions were discussed with the ESTA Executive Director during the interviews, along with supporting documentation to compare against actual operating activities.

A table was developed that presents the comparison of operations against the JPA document. Findings from the comparison are highlighted following the table.

**Table V-1  
Comparison of JPA Document and ESTA Operations**

	JPA Document	Status of ESTA Operations
	<b>Article II, Section 2.3: Powers and Duties of Executive Director</b>	
a.	To lead and coordinate the transit system of the Authority and to be responsible to the Board of Directors for proper administration of all affairs of the Authority.	Compliance. Executive Director performs this function agencywide.
b.	To appoint, assign, direct, supervise, and, subject to the personnel rules adopted by the Board of Directors, discipline or remove Authority employees.	Compliance. Executive Director performs this function agencywide, including being the Authority’s designated representative for negotiations with represented groups. Operations Manager has prime responsibility for drivers and dispatchers. There are separate labor MOUs for operations personnel and the management team.

	<b>JPA Document</b>	<b>Status of ESTA Operations</b>
c.	To supervise and direct the preparation of the annual operating and capital improvement budgets for the Board of Directors and be responsible for their administration after adoption by the Board of Directors.	Compliance. The budget is guided by ESTA budget policies. Budget units are detailed and tracked monthly. Statements of Budgeted Revenues and Expenditures provide several updates of the budget, including adjusted budget, monthly activity, actual year-to-date, actual year-to-date compared to budget, and budget variance.
d.	To formulate and present to the Board of Directors plans for transit facilities and/or services within the Authority and the means to finance them.	Compliance. A biannual service review is conducted in March and September. Route descriptions are provided for the next six-month period that are approved by the ESTA board. Plans for transit facilities have been presented to the board.
e.	To supervise the planning, acquisition, construction, maintenance, and operation of the transit facilities and/or services of the Authority.	Compliance. ESTA leases space at the expanded Town of Mammoth Lakes facility for dispatch and vehicle storage. ESTA coordinated a project with the Town of Mammoth Lakes to expand and pave the vehicle parking area in Mammoth. The vehicle parking area at the ESTA administrative facility at the airport in Bishop was also paved. Lighting and security measures were installed at the Bishop location as well.
f.	To attend all meetings of the Board of Directors and act as secretary of the Board. To cause to be kept minutes of all meetings of the Board of Directors and to cause a copy of the minutes to be forwarded to each member of the Board of Directors and to the member entities, prior to the next regular meeting of the Board of Directors.	Compliance. The ESTA Administrative Analyst/Board Clerk maintains minutes of board meetings.
g.	To establish and maintain fare collection and deposit services.	Compliance. Farebox revenues are locked in a drop box at the ESTA administrative office in Bishop and in Mammoth Lakes. Fares are counted in the presence of the Operations Supervisor. Separate individuals 1) tabulate what the fare revenue should be 2) count the actual fare revenue and, 3) deposit the fare revenue. A report is completed approximately bi-monthly that details variances from expected to actual fare count.
h.	To organize and operate an ongoing transit marketing program, including free-ride events	Compliance. Sample of transit marketing events includes the annual Stuff-A-Bus Food Drive to support the Salvation Army food pantry. During

	JPA Document	Status of ESTA Operations
	and other special promotions selected by the Board of Directors.	the audit period, the food drive was in its 11 <sup>th</sup> year. Mule Shuttles are operated during the Mule Days Celebration in Bishop. ESTA also works with Mammoth Mountain Ski Area and the Town for the Wounded Warriors Project at Mammoth Mountain. Discounted fare promotions for select routes have also been implemented.
i.	To execute transfers within major budget units, in concurrence with the Treasurer Auditor-Controller of the Authority, as long as the total expenditures of each major budget unit remain unchanged.	Compliance. As allowed under the budget policy. As stated in the ESTA financial audit, the Executive Director has authority to transfer funds between line items, not to exceed \$5,000 or 20% for any one line item within the limits of the overall budget. Budget amendments in excess of \$5,000 or 20% of a line item require Board approval.
j.	To purchase or lease items, fixed assets, or services within the levels authorized in the Bylaws.	Compliance, although no bylaws established. ESTA adopted a purchasing policy to establish an efficient procedure for the purchase of equipment, vehicles, furnishings, supplies, materials, and services. ESTA also leases buildings and office facilities under noncancelable operating leases. According to the fiscal audit, total cost for such leases was \$168,000 for the year ending June 30, 2016.
k.	To lease buses, vans, and other transit vehicles on an "as needed" basis from public or private organizations when deemed necessary to assure continued reliability of service.	Compliance. ESTA formerly leased 12 larger transit buses seasonally from Mammoth Mountain Ski Area for use on the Reds Meadow Shuttle. ESTA has since purchased 12 vehicles with a federal transit grant and no longer leases buses.
l.	To perform other such duties as the Board of Directors may require in carrying out the policies and directives of the Board of Directors.	As warranted.
	<b>Article III, Section 3.1: Authority Powers</b>	
a.	To make and enter into contracts and expend funds, providing for transportation services to the public, including special transportation dependent groups, such as the elderly and handicapped, as well as other governmental entities, such as the U.S. Government.	Compliance. Examples include contracts with the US Forest Service for the Reds Meadow Shuttle, the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area for winter service, the Town of Mammoth Lakes for extended transit services, June Mountain Ski Area to transport employees and guests to/from



	JPA Document	Status of ESTA Operations
		Mammoth Lakes, and the Bishop Paiute Tribe for dial-a-ride. The Board has also approved ESTA to pursue federal funding under FTA Sections 5311, 5311(f), 5310, and former 5316 and 5317. In addition, ESTA has transfer agreements with the Tahoe Transportation District (South Shore Services) in Lake Tahoe.
b.	To supervise and oversee the performance of transportation service contracts.	Compliance. ESTA implements, supervises, and monitors transportation service contracts, including those described above.
c.	To provide all service necessary to operate a transportation system.	Compliance.
d.	To acquire, construct, manage, maintain or operate any facilities or improvements.	Compliance. ESTA played a role in managing the construction of the transit facility located in Mammoth Lakes. ESTA also oversees improvements made to its facilities including fencing, lighting, and paving of the transit facility.
e.	To acquire, hold and dispose of property.	Compliance. Per the ESTA purchasing policy and federal and state regulations.
f.	To incur debts, liabilities or obligations, which do not constitute a debt, liability, or obligation of their member entities.	Compliance. The member entities formerly extended to ESTA a line of credit which was renewed on an annual basis by the local jurisdictions. ESTA no longer needs or requests a line of credit funding from the member entities. The last time funds were advanced to ESTA was during FY 2011-12.
g.	To employ personnel.	Compliance. ESTA personnel comprise management and administrative staff, drivers, dispatchers, and utility workers.
h.	To sue and be sued in its own name.	As necessary.
i.	To invest in accordance with the provisions of Section 6509.5 of the Act, money in the treasury of the Authority that is not required for immediate necessities of the Authority.	Compliance. As stated in the ESTA financial audit, the bulk of the Authority's cash and investments are held in an investment pool with the County of Inyo. Such investments are within the state statutes and the Authority's investment policy. Interest earned on ESTA's balance is apportioned to ESTA.
j.	To apply for, accept and utilize funds from any source for public transit purposes, including Transportation Development Act Funds, State Transit Assistance Funds, and Section 5310 and	Compliance. ESTA uses funding from local, state, and federal sources, including Local Transportation Fund, State Transit Assistance, State Proposition 1B (PTMISEA and Transit Security Grant), Low Carbon Transit Operations

	JPA Document	Status of ESTA Operations
	Section 5311 funds available through the Federal Transit Administration.	Program (LCTOP), State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and FTA Sections 5310, 5311 (including 5311 apportionment, 5311(f)), former 5316 Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), and 5320 alternative transportation in parks grant.
k.	To raise revenue, including the establishment of transportation fares, for transit services.	Compliance. Fares are set by ESTA for transit services. Other revenues raised include contract transportation services, interest income, gain on sale of capital assets, and rental income.
l.	To incur short term indebtedness.	As necessary. ESTA previously drew from a line of credit provided and renewed annually by the member jurisdictions. The Authority has made full repayment with interest.
m.	To own, lease, operate and maintain transportation vehicles and other property or equipment, which is necessary or reasonable to carry out the purpose of this agreement.	Compliance. ESTA owns, operates, and maintains a fleet of vehicles. ESTA also operates vehicles owned by the Town of Mammoth Lakes. ESTA's small fleet of vanpool vehicles are leased to eligible vanpool participants.
n.	All other powers that are necessary and proper for the Authority in order to provide public transportation service.	As warranted.
o.	Provide service to locations outside the jurisdiction and boundaries of any of the member jurisdictions.	Compliance. ESTA serves communities and areas outside the boundaries of the member jurisdictions for the 395 Routes, including in Nevada (Gardnerville, Carson City, and Reno) and Southern California (Inyokern, Mojave, and Lancaster), as well as lifeline service to Pahrump, Nevada.
	<b>Article III, Section 3.2: Authority Duties</b>	
a.	On or before April 1 of each year, it shall cause to be prepared and submitted to the Board of Directors and each of the member entities a proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The proposed budget shall be subject to the provisions of Article IV of this Agreement.	Compliance. ESTA staff draft and present the annual budget during the March board meeting. The Board of Directors have opportunity to provide direction to staff in preparation for the final budget which is approved in June.
b.	The Governing Board of each member entity shall designate the Authority as its nonexclusive agent to prepare and submit claims for funds to the Mono County Local Transportation Commission (MCLTC) and/or	Compliance. ESTA receives TDA funds from both Mono and Inyo counties. Fund allocations and resolutions are made from each LTC. ESTA is a direct claimant of the transit funds in both counties through submission of a direct request

	JPA Document	Status of ESTA Operations
	the Inyo County Local Transportation Commission (ICLTC) in accordance with the Transportation Development Act and its regulation, to receive such funds, and to provide and/or negotiate, prepare contracts, and contract for transportation service.	for TDA funds. ESTA complies with the rules and regulations adopted by each LTC.
c.	The Authority will prepare and submit to the member entities quarterly reports concerning the provision of services by the contracting parties.	Compliance. The ESTA Transit Analyst prepares a monthly operating statistics report including comparisons to the prior year's performance. The report includes analysis of performance measures by route such as ridership by type, fares, service hours, and miles. A separate monthly financial report is prepared and presented summarizing revenues and expenditures against the budget. Operating costs by route are also presented regularly along with performance statistics such as operating cost per service hour and farebox recovery by route.
d.	The Authority shall provide transit services and shall, on or about April 1 of each year, provide a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the services to the member entities.	Compliance. On a monthly basis as described above, ESTA prepares a detailed performance report including ridership, fare revenue, and hours and miles statistics, and comparisons to the prior years. In addition, the monthly report describes other operational information systemwide such as complaints, accidents/incidents, missed runs, roadcalls, and Bishop Dial-A-Ride wait times.
e.	Within 90 days after the close of the fiscal year, the Authority shall prepare and submit an annual report of its operation to the member entities.	Compliance. ESTA staff prepare an annual summary report highlighting the events and activities of the transit system. The annual summary report is prepared and formatted as a public information piece. Within the report are sections containing the Executive Director's Message, Overview of the Authority, listing of Board of Directors, Statement of Revenues and Expenditures, and select Operating Statistics.
	<b>Article IV, Section 4.3: Administrative and Operating Costs</b>	
	The Governing Board of each member entity shall designate the Authority as its nonexclusive agent for purposes of applying for and receiving Transportation Development Act Funds to be used solely for the purposes of	Compliance. See Article III, Authority Duties, letter b above.

	JPA Document	Status of ESTA Operations
	funding the administrative, operating and capital costs to be incurred by the Authority under the provisions of the Transportation Development Act statutes and applicable California Code of Regulations.	
	<b>Article IV, Section 4.6: Assignment of Federal Transportation (FTA) Contracts and Grant Application Authority</b>	
	The Authority Executive Director is hereby authorized to prepare, submit and execute grant applications for the use of FTA operating, planning, and capital funds, as well as other state and federal funds which may become available.	Compliance. The Executive Director and staff prepare state and federal transit grant applications that result in several funding sources, including FTA 5310, 5311(f), former 5316, and 5320. Applications are submitted directly to Caltrans with certifications provided by the LTCs. ESTA also submitted a project list to the LTCs for funding through the state Public Transportation Modernization Improvement and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA), and has received funds through State LCTOP. Further, through the new SB1 program, ESTA is using funds through the State of Good Repair program and will receive additional state transit funds on a formula basis.

**Summary**

The comparison shows that ESTA has been fulfilling its duties and responsibilities contained in the Joint Powers Agreement. ESTA staff provide the administrative and operational manpower to serve an independent entity in the provision of public transportation in Mono and Inyo counties and locations beyond. From engaging in partnerships that result in improved and expanded service to obtaining funding and planning for current and future services while being accountable, the Authority is complying with the duties and responsibilities granted by the member local jurisdictions. Also, ESTA has adopted written policies such as for budgeting, service planning, purchasing, and use of public resources that help guide its activities and decision making.

## Section VI

### Review of Operator Functions

This section provides an in-depth review of various functions within ESTA. The review highlights activities and operational practices that impact performance during the audit period and are based on interviews, data analysis, and observations. The following departments and functions were reviewed consistent with the Caltrans audit guidelines:

- Operations
- Maintenance
- Planning
- Marketing
- General Administration and Management (including grants management)

### Operations

ESTA faces both environmental and economic changes that impact its services. During the audit period, the drought impacted visitorship during ESTA's traditional busy season in the winter which challenged the transit system's ability to attain stable to growing ridership, resulting in greater than normal increases in cost per service hour. On top of this, the eastern sierra, much like other regions of California, has a long term housing shortage for employees. With limited housing supply that is further reduced by trends in short term home rentals such as VRBO, staffing of the agency continues to be of concern.

In spite of these external forces, ESTA continued and refined service expansions that had been implemented in previous years. Specifically, ESTA continued the operation of the Reds Meadow Shuttle and the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area contracted routes in the Mammoth Lakes area. The low snowfall and associated reduction in visitation to Mammoth Lakes continued into a good portion of the audit period, resulting in reductions in the MMSA routes, in particular between FYs 2014 and 2015. MMSA route service levels were reduced by more than 30 percent. The nature of the agreement with MMSA is specifically designed to allow for modifications to the service levels to address variation in demand.

An off-shoot of the low snowfall winters is that the transition to summer service started early in those years. There have been early starts for the Reds Meadow service over Memorial Day weekend as a result of the early spring melt due to the low snow-pack. Smoke from fires in the area early in the audit period constrained ridership slightly, but ridership continued to grow incrementally as visitorship has increased during the shoulder periods. ESTA and the USFS changed the agreement to a special use permit from the challenge cost share agreement which provides more flexibility in the use of the federal funds for service. Increased visitation in summer business, particularly in the Mammoth Lakes area, has also resulted in increased service on the Lakes Basin Trolley route to

accommodate the growing number of riders wishing to access the completed Lakes Basin Bike Path. The increased length of the summer service season has also attracted ridership on the 395 routes to Reno and to Lancaster, as backpackers utilize these routes to access the eastern sierra region. Demand from backpackers needing to reach their vehicles after their hikes throughout the region has spurred a ridership increase from this group. Implementation of mobile credit card payment for fare on the 395 routes helps promote the service and passenger convenience.

Mammoth Lakes bus services have between 15 and 30 minute headways with tripper services inserted at strategic locations along the bus routes to meet surges in demand. As a fair amount of the workforce around the Mammoth area is transient due to the seasonality and tourist nature of the local economy, most bus drivers are seasonal workers hired to work no more than 1,000 hours per year which fit the types of available employees. With a few driver shortages, some overtime is paid to meet all runs. The Mammoth Lakes operations supervisor and dispatcher also drive routes as needed. The operations supervisor has been employed by ESTA/Mammoth Mountain for 10 years. The regional housing shortage caused in part by the short term rental housing trend has caused many drivers, as well as others in similar situations such as employees from Mammoth Resorts, to commute in to the Mammoth facility from relatively far locations including Crowley Lake and Bishop. The operations supervisor looked into an internal vanpool and commute assistance for the ESTA drivers and implemented a program after the audit period.

ESTA hired a new operations supervisor for the Bishop facility in March 2016. Transit services out of the Bishop base serve a different ridership market from Mammoth where the drivers are more permanent and serve a more consistent clientele taking trips for life-line services. Dial-A-Ride service is utilized more from Bishop compared to Mammoth Lakes, with drivers building a relationship with the elderly and disabled riders.

The partnerships that have been developed with the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, and the Bishop Paiute tribe, continue to promote and facilitate the Authority's mission throughout the Eastern Sierra Region. While certain portions of ESTA fixed route and paratransit services experienced stagnant growth including Bishop, Lone Pine, the Antelope Valley, and the Tri-Valley area, more due to their life-line service needs, ridership gains have primarily been made from MMSA winter service, and Reds Meadow Shuttle and Lakes Basin Trolley summer services.

ESTA began fully utilizing the RouteMatch paratransit scheduling and dispatch system for the Bishop dial-a-ride service in FY 2014. This computerized system, which utilizes Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) technology and mobile tablet computers in the bus, allows ESTA dispatchers to constantly monitor the vehicles' locations and to efficiently assign trip requests to the vehicles. The system also provides a wealth of operational and management information to help to improve the effectiveness of the service.

ESTA initiated a new rider information system called Swiftly in FY 2015-16. This web-based app provides real-time information and live maps with vehicle locations to passengers regarding bus arrivals as well as valuable trip planning tools. In addition, the Swiftly mobile app also contains a real-time trip planner to help users compare the travel time and price of a variety of transportation

options, including walking, biking, transit, rideshare, and more. The Swiftly link provides access to route information for buses operating on many of ESTA's fixed routes. Swiftly replaces the prior real-time information system and offering ESTA more functionality that meets the agency's needs including identifying choke points in the fixed route system and being more automated by not requiring manual input by the drivers during service.

Automated vehicle locators are installed on buses for town-to-town and intercity routes that continuously track each vehicle and are viewed on a computer screen at ESTA offices. The technology also enhances the performance of on-time checks. ESTA also began using Twitter social media to provide riders with real-time updates regarding route services. Radio communication is used between the Operations Supervisor and drivers to ensure continued communication protocol for all routes and services. Further, ESTA debuted a re-designed website which has greatly improved the user's experience. Intuitive route mapping information leads to detailed schedule and fare information on the site, allowing individuals to easily plan their travels on ESTA's system.

ESTA implemented a new fare policy at the beginning of the audit period regarding issuing change for cash fares that exceed the ride rate. Rather than providing cash change, ESTA issues coupons valid for payment for future travel on ESTA. Although passenger fare revenues make up a lesser percentage of total fares reported and defined by TDA, cash and coins are deposited in a locked drop box inside ESTA's administrative facility and adjacent to the Executive Director's office. Drivers who end their shifts in Bishop drop off the fare pouches directly. However, for some of the more remote services that do not start or end in Bishop, such as Walker dial-a-ride and Tecopa-Pahrump service, ESTA employs unique methods to collect the fares generated from these services. For the Walker service, the driver meets with the returning bus from Reno and transfers the fares for conveyance to Bishop. For the Tecopa service, in which there is no connecting bus back to Bishop, the driver sends a money order of the fare revenue amount to the ESTA administrative office. In both instances, the account clerk matches the driver manifest to the revenues delivered to verify that the money collected is consistent with the number of passengers.

### ADA Policy

Passenger certification under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for after-hours service on Mammoth dial-a-ride is coordinated by the Administrative Analyst/Board Clerk. An interview is conducted by either the Executive Director or the Operations Supervisor. ESTA has in place an ADA Paratransit Policy describing the process and conditions for receiving certification and service. The Authority utilizes a self-certification process with professional verification. The applicant completes a four-page application form that requests basic transportation information including questions about the applicant's ability to use accessible fixed-route transit. The form requests that the applicant provide the name of a licensed professional who can attest to the validity of the information.

Applicants who are determined eligible for ADA complementary paratransit service are assigned an eligibility category. The eligibility category is consistent with the applicant's ability to use the regular fixed-route service. These categories are Unconditional, Conditional, Trip-by-Trip, and Temporary. Included in the ADA policy, which is described online and in the printed brochure "Eastern Sierra

Transit Dial-A-Ride Riders Guide,” is a no-show and late cancellation policy aimed at preventing abuse of the system that adversely affects performance. Specific actions by ESTA are enforced based on how many no shows/late cancellations occur within a 90-day period. The database of verified ADA applicants has remained small; as such, only a limited number of ADA requested trips are made at night for Mammoth dial-a-ride in which a driver is assigned to provide the trip.

### *Consolidated Transportation Services Agency*

ESTA is the designated Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) for both Mono and Inyo counties. ESTA is allocated Local Transportation Funds by each LTC during the annual TDA allocation process. In Mono County, the Local Transportation Commission provides separate funding to ESTA for CTSA purposes up to 5 percent funding maximum under law. In Inyo County, the LTC allocates a total amount to ESTA for general public service, of which a portion is used for CTSA purposes.

The nature of CTSA services is closely tied to ESTA’s administration of public transportation. In this capacity, ESTA has worked to provide services including joint safety training and wheelchair lift maintenance, drug and alcohol test training, and coordination with health and human service organizations, as well as Spanish language assistance for mobility management. ESTA also conducts outreach to the communities to solicit unmet transit needs. ESTA is an active member of the Inyo County Social Service Transportation Advisory Committees and attends meetings annually. Unmet Transit Needs workshops are held annually in Bishop and in the southern section of the county. In Mono County, ESTA is an active member of the Mono County Social Service Transportation Advisory Committees and attends meetings annually. In addition, ESTA is scheduled annually on the agenda of all Mono County Regional Planning Advisory Committee meetings that are held in Wheeler Crest, Antelope Valley, June Lake, Bridgeport, Crowley Lake, Lee Vining, Benton, and Chalfant in order to solicit transportation needs directly from the community.

Other CTSA activities conducted by ESTA include donating a retired van to the Northern Inyo Hospital for use by volunteer drivers, and working with a local foundation to obtain another van.

The relatively new non-emergency medical transportation mileage reimbursement program that is paid for through a federal 5317 transit grant (now rolled into the 5310 program) is also connected to ESTA’s CTSA administration, as it is a coordinated service that fills a service gap to bring people to medical appointments. These trips would otherwise go unserved. ESTA indicated about 85 percent of drivers are passengers’ relatives. The number of trips has increased since 2014, totaling about 300 trips per year and covering thousands of miles. The goal in the grant application was to serve 27 trips per month, which is on target with actual trips. Mileage reimbursement costs are about \$12,000 per year.

### *Operations Workforce*

Beginning in May 2013, a new employee group represented certain ESTA staff under the MOU including Transit Driver, Lead Transit Driver, Transit Trainer, Transportation Dispatcher, and Account Clerk I. This new employee association came about because the represented employees decertified



their representation by another union, AFSCME. A three-year MOU was developed between ESTA and the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority Employees Association, which expired in May 2016. The pay scale changed for new employees which increased the number of pay steps from 5 to 9 including 3 percent raises. A new MOU was agreed to by the end of the year.

Work shifts are based on seniority, ability, and desire. Some routes require different skill sets than others, such as the 395 Routes, which travel very long distances over one day with a short layover in between the round trips. Drivers for the local Bishop and Mammoth services tend to stay within their service areas and do not interchange due to the different transit services offered as well as the differences between the communities. In this manner, customer service is enhanced by the driver's local knowledge and familiarity with the clientele. While benefited positions have minimal turnover with many drivers having over 10-years' experience with the agency, there has been more turnover of Mammoth drivers which to a degree match the transient nature of the workforce and seasonal fluctuations in service level in Mammoth. ESTA recognizes employee contributions through driver appreciation events (lunches, dinners, etc.) during the course of the year and presentation of a plaque and recognition at an ESTA board meeting on a quarterly basis.

Drivers receive the required ongoing training as a condition of maintaining their certification. Certifications for all drivers include the Class A or B license with passenger endorsement, and Verification of Transit Training (VTT). For dial-a-ride, drivers receive certification for General Public Paratransit Vehicle (GPPV), while drivers of large transit buses receive air brake certification. The Operations Supervisor conducts quarterly safety and defensive driving meetings in Bishop and Mammoth Lakes that consist of various training techniques and materials including videos and classroom discussion. Driver training for new employees include behind the wheel evaluation and a six-month probation period. ESTA is working to conduct regular annual employee evaluations by the Operations Supervisor. Driver turnover occurs for reasons including retirement and medical purposes, while non-voluntary separation (termination) is rare. ESTA prefers to hire drivers that already have obtained a commercial drivers license (CDL); however, ESTA does provide training for applicants without a CDL. Depending on labor market conditions, particularly in recent years, ESTA has increasingly provided new driver training for individuals without a commercial drivers license.

Vacancies are advertised in the local newspapers and posted on on-line job sites. ESTA indicated significant challenges in hiring drivers the last few years, in particular for Mammoth service. Issues discussed in this section including the housing shortage and the transient nature of the workforce contribute to this difficulty.

For an incident involving a vehicle, a vehicle accident report or an accident/incident report is filled out. The nearest police or sheriff's station is notified for vehicle accidents requiring law enforcement response which are checked on by the Operations Supervisor. Minor fender benders are handled with exchange of information. The protocol for drivers involved in accidents includes an immediate drug test for qualifying accidents, per federal transit regulations, and additional defensive driving training.

Dispatch for Bishop dial-a-ride is conducted by the dispatcher at ESTA's main administrative facility. Operational staff located in Mammoth Lakes and Lone Pine handle dispatching, scheduling, and

driving for their respective communities. The implementation of RouteMatch for Bishop dial-a-ride provides electronic automated upgrades in the process of scheduling and recording trips. The dispatcher maintains a log of calls for service. Drivers are no longer required to hand-record the actual pickup/drop-off time on their trip sheets, among other pertinent operations data, which are recorded on the tablet computer.

### *Operations Performance*

Performance indicators for transportation operations were determined using financial reports and annual service data. Operations comprise non-administrative and non-management expenditures minus vehicle maintenance and parts. These indicators are shown in Table VI-1.

Transportation operations costs (total operating expenses excluding depreciation, vehicle maintenance and parts budget line items) increased over the past three years by a little over 6 percent. Operator salaries/wages and benefits, which represent the bulk of operations costs, increased at a larger pace (11.3 percent), and reflect schedule reduction measures due to seasonal service fluctuations in Mammoth during the audit period. Fuel costs significantly decreased over the three years despite systemwide increases in service hours and miles as the price of fuel declined. Performance cost indicators (cost per hour, cost per mile) show efficiencies as operations cost increased in parallel with service hour and mile growth. Cost per passenger decreased significantly due to the large increase in passengers from the expanded MMSA and Red Meadows service, a positive indicator. Deadhead hours and miles which are non-revenue producing make up about 7-8 percent of all hours and miles, respectively. These figures are within reason given the large rural service area and the starting points of many routes. ESTA stages vehicles in various locations distant from Bishop and Mammoth to reduce deadhead service, as well as contracted out remote service (Pahrump).

**Table VI-1  
ESTA Operations Performance Indicators**

Performance Data and Indicators	Audit Review Period			% Change FY 2014– FY 2016
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Cost for Operations *	\$3,334,801	\$3,526,377	\$3,545,605	6.3%
Operator Salaries/Wages & Benefits	\$2,284,562	\$2,464,066	\$2,543,599	11.3%
Cost of Fuel	\$527,293	\$427,268	\$356,116	-32.5%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH) **	53,380	53,474	56,949	6.7%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM) **	853,019	863,560	911,748	6.9%
Total Vehicle Hours	57,219	57,667	61,301	7.1%
Total Vehicle Miles	901,705	922,319	970,632	7.6%
Unlinked Passenger Trips	972,969	975,082	1,141,636	17.3%
Veh Ops Cost per VSH	\$62.47	\$65.95	\$62.26	-0.3%
Veh Ops Cost per VSM	\$3.91	\$4.08	\$3.89	-0.5%
Veh Ops Cost per Psgr Trip	\$3.43	\$3.62	\$3.11	-9.4%
Fuel Cost per VSM	\$0.62	\$0.49	\$0.39	-36.8%
Service Miles per Service Hour	16.0	16.1	16.0	0.2%
Service Hours/Total Hours	93.3%	92.7%	92.9%	-0.4%
Service Miles/Total Miles	94.6%	93.6%	93.9%	-0.7%
Percentage Change Consumer Price Index (CPI-U)	2.2%	1.3%	2.1%	

\* Budgeted operations cost excludes depreciation, vehicle maintenance and parts budget line item.

\*\* ESTA reports service and total hours and miles separately.

Source: ESTA Statement of Revenues, Expenses & Changes in Net Position FYs 2014-2016

Table VI-2 reflects the trends in passenger complaints that are recorded by ESTA. Most complaints are made over the phone. The Operations Supervisor fields the complaints and logs those that are verifiable, meaning the complaint can be tracked and substantiated with enough detail given by the caller. Other complaints that are not verifiable or cannot be tracked are not documented. The logged complaints are reported to the Board as part of the monthly report.

The number of documented complaints decreased between FY 2014 and FY 2016, from 32 to 27, although in FY 2015 there were 39 complaints. When compared to the growing number of riders in the same time frame, the number of complaints is relatively low. This is exemplified by the performance indicator of the number of complaints per 1,000 passengers, which shows a decline from an already low figure. The figures meet ESTA's minimum performance standard of 0.075 complaints per 1,000 passengers.

**Table VI-2**  
**ESTA Passenger Complaints**

<b>Performance Data and Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>	<b>% Change FY 2014–FY 2016</b>
Total Passengers	972,969	975,082	1,141,636	17.3%
Complaints	32	39	27	-15.6%
Complaints per 1,000 Passengers	0.033	0.040	0.024	-28.1%
Minimum Performance Standard	0.075	0.075	0.075	

Source: ESTA

There have been no trip denials on dial-a-ride, as the vehicles do not typically reach full capacity during revenue service. About two-thirds of riders are provided service in real time, meaning they call in when a ride is needed. Also, missed runs for fixed-route service because of weather and reduced visibility and road conditions are reported monthly to the Board.

## **Maintenance**

ESTA does not have an in-house facility or staff for vehicle maintenance. For transit vehicles located in Mammoth Lakes, the Town’s Public Works Department maintains ESTA’s vehicles at a facility near the transit storage facility. Maintenance by Town staff is performed Monday through Friday, leaving no mechanic on site for weekend bus issues. The Town’s maintenance facility is upgrading with maintenance software to digitize work orders and enhance record keeping compared to paper records. The designated Town mechanics for the ESTA vehicles work on the preventive maintenance inspection (PMI) scheduling and sign the pre-trip inspection forms and the PMI sheets. ESTA operators are located at a separate Town facility that is leased across the way from the maintenance yard. The operator facility has available bays to store equipment and vehicles for prepping for pull out. This saves time and resources at pull out during winter weather.

For the remaining vehicles located in Bishop and other locations, ESTA outsources the work to local vendors. Vehicles in Bishop are serviced by various vendors including Britt’s Diesel and Automotive located approximately 7 miles northeast of ESTA’s administrative facility. The vendor provides mobile services for routine maintenance, including oil changes. Warranty repairs are serviced by another local vendor, Bishop Ford.

ESTA employs fleet fuel management as vehicles are fueled at various locations. Mammoth vehicles are fueled at the Town corporation yard and at Commercial Fueling Network (CFN) stations for emergencies. Local fueling in Bishop is provided at both the Chevron gas station and Haycock Petroleum Eastern Sierra Oil Company in Bishop, which are part of the CFN. ESTA no longer fuels at the Bishop Shell Station. The Chevron gas station in Lone Pine is used for vehicles kept at that location. In Mammoth Lakes, ESTA fuels at the Town’s fueling facilities using magnetic card keys and is invoiced by the Town. For the longer-haul 395 Routes, drivers fuel at CFN stations in Reno and Lancaster. As part of the CFN program, drivers are issued a fuel card by ESTA management that requires a PIN and places a limit on how much fuel could be consumed per fill-up.

There have been no serious maintenance infractions during the audit period as determined by the annual CHP inspections conducted at each of the five locations where vehicles are parked. General findings by the CHP inspections on the vehicles include maintenance that occurs past the scheduled intervals. As described in the prior audit recommendation section of this audit, ESTA has reduced the number of such violations when comparing past CHP inspections with more current ones. Communication issues with the maintenance vendor over the recording of inspection completion dates is partly to blame, but is improving. Better record keeping and a new vehicle maintenance scheduling program which integrates with data from the ESTA Operational database has been developed which should provide more timely and accurate information.

With the new database and record keeping, as well as continued improvements to complete the Bishop operations facility, ESTA is investigating the option of having the required 45 day vehicle inspection conducted in-house, rather than the current method of contracting out the service and the challenges of timely inspections. The 45 day inspection requires no fluid changes in the engines which reduces need for additional infrastructure investment. Drivers conduct daily pre-trip inspections and record any issues on an inspection sheet. ESTA strives for zero late maintenance checks to ensure vehicles continue to be properly maintained according to standards. While the latest Short Range Transit Plan Update showed that in-house maintenance would cost substantially more than outsourcing, minor maintenance tasks like those for the 45 day inspection are possible within the Bishop operations facility.

Maintenance Performance

Performance indicators for maintenance were determined using internal budgeted expenditure data. These indicators are shown in Table VI-3.

**Table VI-3  
ESTA Maintenance Performance Indicators**

Performance Data and Indicators	Audit Review Period			% Change FY 2014–FY 2016
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Cost for Maintenance *	\$425,306	\$412,554	\$549,532	29.2%
Total Vehicle Hours	57,219	57,667	61,301	7.1%
Total Vehicle Miles	901,705	922,319	970,632	7.6%
Maintenance Cost per Vehicle Hour	\$7.43	\$7.15	\$8.96	20.6%
Maintenance Cost per Vehicle Mile	\$0.47	\$0.45	\$0.57	20.0%
Percentage Change Consumer Price Index (CPI-U)	2.2%	1.3%	2.1%	

\* Maintenance cost reflects vehicle maintenance and parts budget line item.

Source: ESTA Statement of Revenues, Expenses & Changes in Net Position FYs 2014-2016

Maintenance costs increased by 29 percent between FYs 2014 and 2016. The vehicle fleet underwent some replacement as many of the Ford cutaway vehicles were replaced in 2014. A number of the older vehicles, including the trolleys, are owned by the Town of Mammoth Lakes and

are included in the ESTA maintenance costs. In prior years, the Town paid directly for those costs. ESTA developed a capital asset replacement plan and policy for the fleet and the agency's assets.

The large number of vehicles in the fleet allows ESTA to rotate new vehicles more readily among the older ones and spread the wear and tear. The procurement of new vehicles through grants and programmed funds, along with previous elimination of some town-to-town services and the local Bishop fixed-route service, enables the rotation of vehicles for the remaining routes. As the vehicle fleet ages, however, maintenance costs on a per hour and per mile basis increased over the three-year period.

## **Planning**

ESTA staff conduct service planning and analysis by route and by jurisdiction. Service hours and miles are divided by route and through an allocation by jurisdiction assignment. For example, Bishop dial-a-ride is shared 40 percent by Inyo County and 60 percent by the City of Bishop. Service hours and miles are allocated to each jurisdiction according to the percentage share. This allocation of service is balanced with the revenue analysis that is also separated by jurisdiction contribution. With a methodology to allocate operating cost on a route level, ESTA has additional performance data to apply toward specific planning tasks.

Ongoing service analysis is driven by ESTA's Service Change Policy. The policy includes a plan for biannual service planning sessions to allow the Board an opportunity to review and approve the services to be operated for the coming six months. The biannual review occurs once in the spring (March) and once in the fall (September) for the upcoming summer and winter schedules. Staff details the specific routes that are planned to be operated and the revenues provided. Planned transit service is impacted by funding limitations and guided by public input, including workshops conducted by the former Town of Mammoth Lakes Mobility Commission, and public hearings on modifications to improve efficiencies. The Mobility Commission, prior to disbandment by the Town Council in early 2013 for cost savings and combined with the Planning and Economic Development Commission, had served as ESTA's primary public forum in Mono County.

In April 2016, ESTA's Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) was completed. The 2015 SRTP update serves as a roadmap to guide improvements to the public transit program for the next five years. In addition to reviewing ESTA's current services, the Plan also made important recommendations regarding future service enhancements which include: expansion of the days of service for the Reno and Lancaster routes, development of a transit hub or hubs in the Town of Mammoth Lakes, expansion of service on the Mammoth Town Trolley route to address a service gap along the Meridian Corridor, and expansion of service to recreational opportunities, specifically the Bishop Creek Recreation Area. The SRTP also identified sustainable funding sources to ensure that existing and expanded service can continue into the future.

## **Performance Standards**

The SRTP establishes performance goals and standards that provide general direction for policies and operation, are value-driven, and provide a long-range perspective. The SRTP established

baseline minimum performance standards that the transit route should meet. It also established a recommended higher minimum performance standard that ESTA should strive to achieve to reach the goal during the next five years.

The SRTP update provided a set of new goals and performance standards for a number of routes to validate existing and potential services. The goals differ from the previous SRTP by using a different unit basis to measure performance. For example, for the 395 routes and the Town-to-Town routes, the standard of number of passengers per hour was not appropriate given the very long trip lengths. Rather, the standard was replaced with number of passenger-miles, reflecting the benefit of these services in carrying passengers long distances. This resulted in a change in standard from passengers per hour (2.5 to 4.0 passengers per hour) to a minimum standard of 100 passenger-miles per vehicle-hour and a target standard of 200 passenger-miles per vehicle hour. The existing 395 routes meet both of these standards, while the Mammoth Express and Lone Pine Express routes meet the minimum standard but not the target standard. Other standards were also changed including from a subsidy per passenger-trip standard to a subsidy per passenger-mile standard for the Town-to-Town and 395 Routes.

Table VI-4 provides a sample comparison of select systemwide performance goals with actuals. The comparison suggests that ESTA has met most of the recommended systemwide targets for performance, including systemwide passengers per hour, farebox recovery, subsidy per passenger, and miles between roadcalls. Other performance measures, including preventable accidents per 100,000 miles, have met the recommended targets for a few years.

**Table VI-4  
Comparison of Performance Goals Against Actuals**

Systemwide	Short Range Transit Plan Goals		Actual		
	Minimum	Target	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Passengers per Hour	8.0	10.0	18.2	18.2	20.0
Farebox Recovery	10%	15%	47%	44%	46%
Subsidy per Passenger	\$6.50	\$5.00	\$2.04	\$2.27	\$1.94
Miles Between Roadcalls	8,000	12,500	284,340	95,951	303,916
Preventable Accidents per 100,000 miles		1.25	1.24	1.09	1.44

Source: ESTA Short Range Transit Plan and monthly performance reports. Michael Baker summed the monthly performance data provided by ESTA by fiscal year to derive annual figures.

## **Marketing**

ESTA developed a uniform brand that has defined the overall system including reflection upon partnerships with the US Forest Service, the National Park Service, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, June Mountain Ski Area, Town of Mammoth Lakes, and the Bishop Paiute Tribe. Improved lighting at ESTA bus stops also serves a marketing objective along with providing security measures.

The Dial-A-Ride Riders Guide serves as a comprehensive resource for riders to understand the policies and services of all ESTA dial-a-ride services. The guide covers the ride experience from beginning to end and explains important policies such as rider etiquette, prohibited items, scheduling and canceling a trip, and available transit services. The guide is available as a printed brochure as well as electronically. A new rider flyer provides 6 free trips on Bishop Dial-A-Ride for registering during a certain promotional month.

ESTA undertakes community functions to promote goodwill and community partnerships with local businesses and service clubs. The Stuff-A-Bus Food Drive is one such successful activity run by ESTA. The annual food drive in November/December generates hundreds of pounds of food that are collected and delivered to the Salvation Army food bank. The Stuff-A-Bus Food Drive is an important source of food for the Salvation Army's Christmas food baskets.

ESTA continues to work with health and human services agencies to receive referrals for service. Upon receiving a referral, ESTA will provide a walk-through of the steps with the customer, and drivers will provide follow up customer service during the ride. ESTA also participates in health fairs to meet with prospective riders.

ESTA supports various venues to communicate with the public. Several printed transit brochures are based on geographic reach (such as service for the Walker-Coleville and Bridgeport areas), single communities (Mammoth Lakes and Bishop), special events, long haul 395 Routes, and combination of town-to-town, intercity, and local services. Targeted prints are developed for special groups such as seniors for dial-a-ride, and sierra hikers that connect among services. An advertisement highlights that commuter routes have bike racks. The Town of Mammoth Lakes schedules have a different format from the other routes. This can be expected as the Mammoth Lakes schedules are developed in partnership with both public agency and private interests and provide a regional marketing piece to attract visitors to use the service. Complementing the print media is ESTA's use of newspaper and broadcast advertising to promote its services. The brochures can be easily viewed on ESTA's website and are readily printable from the website as PDF files.

ESTA has a presence on the Internet through its website that contains information about the transit system, updates, and news (<https://www.estransit.com/news/>). The website has gone through upgrades including the Google Transit trip planner function on ESTA's home site and news and rider alerts. ESTA serves as a pass-through to other rural agencies for funding of Google Transit and has led development of the Rural Statewide Google Transit Implementation Project in association with other rural transit providers. In addition, in a further sign of keeping with new communications technology, ESTA maintains a Facebook page and a Twitter account to further communicate with its riders. Social media is used more often for night services such as the Nite Rider. Radio advertisement also captures the attention of local listeners.

ESTA helps provide travel connections for Sierra hikers heading to and from trails along eastern sierra. To help navigate this, ESTA has pulled together the following information in one handy location on its website. Maps shows Eastern Sierra Transit bus stops that are most relevant to through hikers to connect to different sections of the trails, resupply locations and other services. There are seven main transit stops along US 395 where trail users can easily hop on or hop



off and access the Sierra Nevada backcountry. Also, the most convenient locations to resupply utilizing public transit are along the US 395 corridor in the communities on Lone Pine, Big Pine, Bishop and Mammoth that are serviced by the 395, Mammoth Express and Lone Pine Express routes. Bishop and Mammoth each have large chain grocery store along with smaller grocery and specialty shops. Lone Pine, Big Pine have locally owned grocery stores that are well stocked for resupply needs. Independence has a convenience store that does stock necessities. The 395 Route also serves the communities of Lee Vining and Bridgeport where locally owned grocery store can meet hiker resupply needs.

### **General Administration and Management**

ESTA is directed and managed by an eight member Board of Directors, comprised of two elected representatives from each jurisdiction. In 2015, the JPA was modified to allow one of the seats from each member entity to be filled by a member of the public at large to be appointed by the governing board of the member entity. Since 2015, one of the Mono County seats has been filled by a member of the public at large.

There was turnover among board members for various reasons during the audit period. Most members that helped form ESTA from its former agency more than 10 years ago have left the board. As new members join the board, it has resulted in challenges to reach a quorum on a regular basis. The Executive Director spends more time than in the past on orientation with the board.

ESTA's management and administrative support structure operates under a relatively lean staffing level of six full-time personnel located in the Bishop and Mammoth transit facilities. This is an increase of two full-time employee from the prior triennial period. The Executive Director leads the Authority with administrative management provided by the Operations Supervisor Bishop, Operations Supervisor Mammoth, Transit Analyst, Administrative Analyst/Board Clerk, and Account Clerk. Support services are provided including legal counsel by Inyo County<sup>3</sup> and the Treasurer/Auditor-Controller by Inyo County. Figure VI-1 shows the ESTA organization chart.

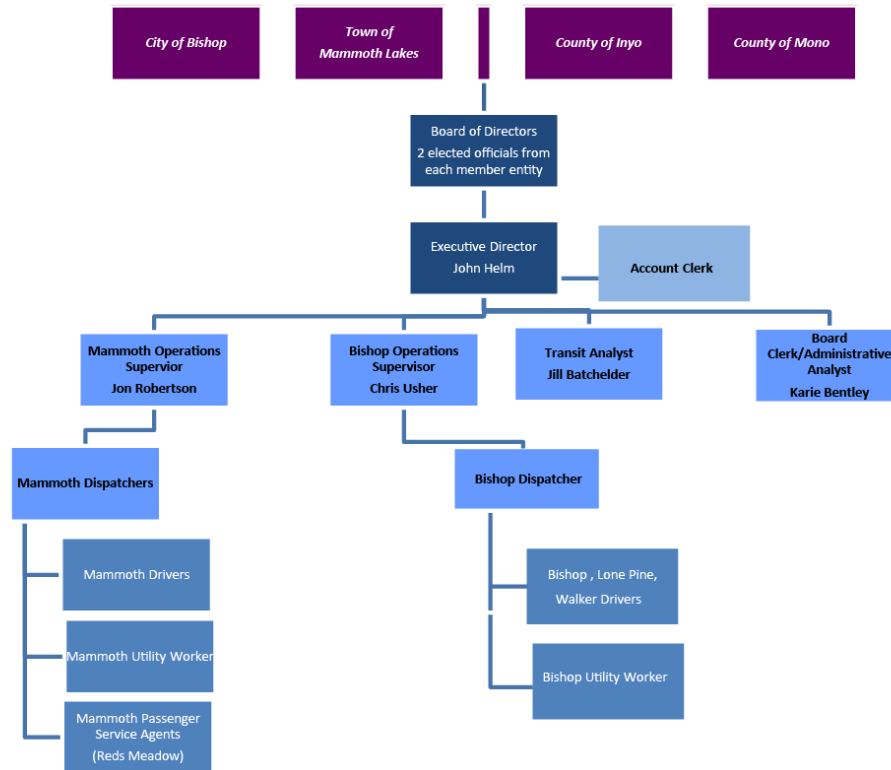
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<sup>3</sup> Legal counsel for ESTA was previously provided by Mono County but it was determined that Mono County could not provide legal services concurrently for both Mono County LTC and ESTA.

**Figure VI-1  
Organization Chart**



**EASTERN SIERRA TRANSIT AUTHORITY**



According to payroll counts for FY 2015–16, there are 95 total employees at ESTA inclusive of administrative and operations personnel. This is an increase from prior years. Employee work benefit status is classified as being full-time benefited, three-quarter-time benefited, half-time benefited, and part time with no benefits. Among the ranks of personnel are seasonal drivers who are hired during peak operations, such as for the Reds Meadow Shuttle for the summer and MMSA for the winter. The driver demographic varies between the Bishop and Mammoth locations, as the Mammoth driver pool is generally younger and drawn from a resort and transient environment, while the Bishop drivers tend to remain in their positions. As a result, there is more driver turnover at the Mammoth location because the service level in Mammoth experiences significant seasonal variation, versus a very static service level in Bishop. Driver shortages have become more common from these factors along with the housing crisis, resulting in growth in driver overtime. From FY 2015 to 2016, the increase in overtime hours was almost 80 percent.

There are two separate Memorandums of Understanding between ESTA and employee union groups that represent the mutual agreement on wages, hours, and other conditions of employment.

One is with the Management & Confidential Employees Association (MCEA)/American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Local 315, AFL-CIO that covers administrative support employees (Transit Analyst, Transportation Operations Supervisor, Transportation Operations Assistants, and Administrative Analyst/Board Clerk). As of the MOU that went into effect August of 2014, the MCEA group decertified their affiliation with AFSCME and became an independent employee association. The other MOU is with the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority Employees Association that covers operations personnel (Transit Driver, Transit Trainer, Transportation Dispatcher, Account Clerk, and Utility Worker).

Accounts payables are processed through the Inyo County integrated financial accounting system. This is conducted by ESTA staff using a county-issued computer. Payroll is processed through ADP solutions. Staff responsible for the in-house operational database was developing modules capable of importing the administrative data into the database for interconnectivity with other agency information. A set of desktop procedures was being evaluated for production as administrative tasks were being streamlined.

ESTA established personnel rules and regulations that provide an equitable system of personnel management. The purpose of these rules includes administration of the merit system, classification of positions, compensation of employees, recruitment and qualifications of applicants, appointment of employees, evaluation of performance, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees, standards for attendance and leaves, and policies for services and records. The personnel rules and regulations are revised and readopted as necessary to address changes in personnel rules followed by both labor agreements.

Management follows the provisions of the Joint Powers Agreement in developing performance reports for the ESTA Board on a regular basis. Reports are provided at regular monthly and annual intervals. A review of such reports shows that ESTA makes incremental improvements to the reports over time to provide additional pertinent information or additional summaries of activities. For example, the monthly reports consist of a seven- or eight-page report highlighting both performance and operational data trends from different areas of operations. Operating cost on a route level and ensuing performance measures by route that are generated by ESTA adds to the level of detailed analysis presented to the Board. In addition to presenting information to the Board, staff also regularly attend the LTC meetings and provide monthly and quarterly updates to the LTC directors. Staff reports are prepared and distributed to the respective agencies for review.

While outside the audit period, it is worth noting that ESTA retained consultant services to review and assess ESTA's current organizational structure, operational functions and levels of staffing. No assessment of ESTA's organizational structure has been conducted since a business plan was prepared at the time of the Authority's founding in 2007, although the Authority has grown significantly since that time. The report will make recommendations that will enhance the organizational operations for current and future needs. The results will be in alignment with ESTA's strategic goals.

Administrative Performance

Quantitative trends for ESTA administrative functions are shown in Table VI-5.

**Table VI-5  
ESTA Administrative Performance Indicators**

Performance Data and Indicators	Audit Review Period			% Change FY 2014–2016
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Costs for Administration *	\$590,558	\$482,692	\$746,000	26.3%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	53,380	53,474	56,949	6.7%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	853,019	863,560	911,748	6.9%
Unlinked Passenger Trips	972,969	975,082	1,141,636	17.3%
Admin Cost per VSH	\$11.06	\$9.03	\$13.10	18.4%
Admin Cost per VSM	\$0.69	\$0.56	\$0.82	18.2%
Admin Cost per Passenger Trip	\$0.61	\$0.50	\$0.65	7.7%
Percentage Change				
Consumer Price Index (CPI-U)	2.2%	1.3%	2.1%	

\* Administration cost includes compensation totals by route.

Source: ESTA Cost by Route Analysis FY 2014-2016

Administrative costs increased by 26 percent over the three-year period. However, combined with the large increase in ridership by the last audit year, administrative cost per passenger increased modestly. Administrative cost per service hour and per service mile increased at about the same rate as cost grew faster than the change in levels of service. The increase in administration compensation using the cost by route calculations was the result in a change in the way administration compensation costs were allocated. A change was made in 2016 that allocated the dispatchers' compensation to administration, whereas it had previously been allocated to operations salaries and benefits.

For several years, the Authority's financial position has strengthened such that the annual advances from the JPA member entities, which were required to supplement operating cash flow to allow payment of ongoing expenses such as payroll and fuel, have not been needed. Strong financial performance from operational cost savings due to continued low fuel prices and vehicle maintenance costs resulted in a surplus of \$467,000 in FY 2015-16 and used by the Authority to weather potentially uncertain future economic times.

Grant Administration and Funding

ESTA staff have been active in pursuing funding opportunities, including competitive grants. ESTA is eligible for state funding through the Proposition 1B Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement & Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA), State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and Low Carbon Transportation Operations Program (LCTOP). Through programming and budgeting the funds in partnership with the Mono and Inyo LTCs, as well as grant partnerships with local and federal entities, vehicle purchases were made to update the fleet, and capital projects were funded that make transit facilities and bus stops more safe and secure. Transit

security grant program allocations were made to fund solar real-time route information signs, as well as security cameras for transit facilities and on some large buses. The new Bishop operations facility is being constructed with various fund sources from the LTCs including the state PTMISEA.

ESTA maintains a spreadsheet that tracks active federal grants. The active grants have come from various FTA programs including 5310 discretionary (for JARC, Mobility Management, and Medical Transport), 5311 apportionment, and 5311 (f) intercity bus. Drawdowns from grants have occurred for projects such as operations of 395 Routes and town-to-town services, preventive maintenance, mobility management and development of the non-emergency medical transportation reimbursement program, and safety/security improvements.

ESTA and Mono County submitted a successful LCTOP grant application for fare reduction on multi-ride 10-Punch passes on the Mammoth Express routes. The approved LCTOP funds are to decrease greenhouse gas emissions by increasing use of public transportation by offering a 50 percent fare reduction on the multi-ride 10-Punch passes. The new fares went into effect July 1, 2016 and has continued.

The largest grant funded project the last several years has been the construction of an Operations and Administration Facility at the Bishop Airport. Inyo County LTC and Mono County LTC have programmed PTMISEA funds through ESTA since FY 2011 for this facility. ESTA applied for a FTA 5339 bus facilities grant through a competitive application process but was unsuccessful. Expenditures to date include construction of the parking facility. ESTA maintains a running spreadsheet to track funding and expenditures by each LTC. Contractor invoices are tracked in the spreadsheet for status of payment schedules.

## Section VII

### Findings and Recommendations

The following material summarizes the major findings obtained from this triennial audit covering FYs 2014 through 2016. A set of recommendations is then provided.

#### Triennial Audit Findings

1. Of the compliance requirements pertaining to ESTA, the Authority fully complied with eight of the nine applicable requirements. Two additional compliance requirements did not apply to ESTA (e.g., urban and blended farebox recovery ratios). A requirement that was partially met relates to the timely submission of the Transit Operators Financial Transactions Report to the State Controller. In FY 2016, the submittal date was past the statutory timeline, the only one of the three that was late during the audit period.
2. Based on the annual fiscal audits, ESTA complied with the TDA farebox recovery ratio. The farebox ratio was relatively strong compared to the TDA threshold, averaging over 45 percent during the audit period compared to the minimum statutory requirement of 10 percent. Fare revenues, as reported in the annual fiscal audit, include passenger fares paid on routes as well as payments provided by entities for fare-free transit service including MMSA, June Lake Mountain, and the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Based on unaudited data, passenger fare revenues alone resulted in farebox ratios of about 23 percent, still well above the minimum standard.
3. ESTA participates in the annual CHP inspections for its three vehicle storage locations, and received satisfactory ratings at each of its locations. Minor violations were found for some of the inspections including that vehicles were behind on their maintenance program checks referenced by either time or miles. Subsequent inspections during this audit period did not report as severe maintenance schedule issues, indicating that ESTA has improved its maintenance scheduling practice. Since ESTA does not have its own vehicle maintenance facility, the Authority relies on outside vendors for the service and has to coordinate the servicing of the vehicles. ESTA indicated communication break-downs have resulted in maintenance dates that are not recorded properly by the vendor when, in fact, maintenance inspections were performed within the timeline. ESTA is working with the vendor to improve protocols for dating inspections. ESTA strives for zero late maintenance checks to ensure vehicles continue to be properly maintained according to standards.
4. The operating budget exhibited modest increases during the three year period, growing an average of less than 2 percent annually which mirrored the low inflation. This trend follows a period of past significant budget increases that reflected new service agreements and increases in personnel benefits costs and maintenance costs.
5. Of the five prior performance audit recommendations, ESTA has fully implemented four while one prior recommendation was partially implemented. The prior recommendations

implemented include conducting final review of transit financial reports submitted to the State, updating the Short Range Transit Plan, engaging in activities to promote ridership, and investing in additional technology. The recommendation partially implemented is ensuring vehicle maintenance is conducted within maintenance parameters. This recommendation is forwarded in this audit for full implementation.

6. Performance indicator trends are mostly positive including farebox recovery, passengers carried per service hour, and cost metrics. Operating cost per hour was relatively consistent for the three years as the increased costs were offset by the commensurate growth in service hours. Cost per passenger declined as passenger ridership increased at a much faster pace than cost, resulting in a positive trend. The subsidy per passenger, which measures the level of non-fare revenue to support each rider, declined in a favorable trend as a result of the inclusion of payments by local entities for ESTA contract services in the audited fare revenues.
7. Based on a comparative review of the Joint Powers Agreement establishing ESTA and the status of its operations, the Authority has been fulfilling its duties and responsibilities contained in the agreement. From engaging in partnerships that result in improved and expanded service to obtaining funding and planning for current and future services while being accountable, ESTA is complying with the duties and responsibilities granted by the member local jurisdictions. Also, ESTA has existing policies that guide budgeting, service planning, purchasing, and use of public resources that help guide its activities and decision making.
8. Core transit services have remained largely intact, including intercity and town-to-town services along Highway 395, rural transportation, and local service in Mammoth Lakes and Bishop. The Authority has been aggressive to retain and attract riders through such efforts as fare promotions, building its relationship with both public and private sector partners, and accounting for public input and transit needs. New technology interfaces such as the Swiftly mobile app were launched to enhance passenger experience with transit.
9. ESTA faces both environmental and economic changes that impact its services. Drought conditions impact visitorship during ESTA's traditional busy season in the winter. In addition, much like other regions of California, the service area has a long term housing shortage for employees. With limited housing supply that is further reduced by trends in short term home rentals such as VRBO, staffing of the agency continues to be of concern.
10. ESTA has been active in pursuing funding opportunities including competitive grants. In partnership with the Mono and Inyo LTCs, the Authority is eligible for state and federal funds that have been used for an array of projects including for operations, preventive maintenance, vehicle procurement, and facility and bus stop security. Construction of the new Bishop operations facility is an example of the partnerships to obtain funding including programmed state funds by the LTCs.

## **Triennial Audit Recommendations**

1. Ensure vehicle maintenance is conducted within maintenance parameters. (High Priority)

This recommendation is carried forward from prior performance audits for full implementation. Since ESTA does not have its own vehicle maintenance facility, the Authority relies on outside vendors for the service and must coordinate the servicing of the vehicles. ESTA indicated communication break-downs have resulted in maintenance dates that are not recorded properly by the vendor when, in fact, maintenance inspections were performed within the timeline. Inspection dates are shown as the date of the invoice supplied by the vendor rather than the actual service inspection date. ESTA has improved its maintenance scheduling practice, including having satisfactory CHP inspection ratings at each of its vehicle storage locations. An operations database developed in-house to track performance and scheduling has also helped with tracking maintenance. ESTA is working with the vendor to improve protocols for dating inspections. ESTA should continue working with the maintenance vendors to ensure that there are no late inspections cited on the CHP reports.

2. Study feasibility of bringing 45-day vehicle inspections in-house. (Medium Priority)

ESTA is investigating the option of having the 45-day (3,000 mile) vehicle inspection conducted in-house, rather than currently contracting out the service. The new Bishop operations facility might enable such efforts. The cost and operational feasibility to bring this service in-house should be further evaluated given issues with timely recording of maintenance inspections. The recent update to the Short Range Transit Plan analyzed the cost of in-house maintenance, and despite a finding that it was not cost effective to conduct major maintenance in-house, minor maintenance tasks could be considered for an expanded ESTA staff once the Bishop operations facility improvements are completed.

3. Include comparison of performance against new standards in the monthly operations report. (Medium Priority)

The current monthly performance reports presented to the ESTA Board and to the LTCs include a number of performance standards that are compared to actual data. Standards are shown for indicators such as roadcalls, preventable accidents, complaints and Bishop dial-a-ride service. The Short Range Transit Plan update provided a set of new goals and performance standards for several routes to validate existing and potential services. The goals differ from the previous SRTP by using a different unit basis to measure performance. For example, for the 395 routes and the Town-to-Town routes, the standard of number of passengers per hour was replaced with number of passenger-miles. This resulted in a change in standard from passengers per hour (2.5 to 4.0 passengers per hour) to a minimum standard of 100 passenger-miles per vehicle-hour and a target standard of 200 passenger-miles per vehicle hour. Other standards were also changed including from a subsidy per passenger-trip to a subsidy per passenger-mile standard for the Town-to-Town and 395 Routes. The monthly performance reports to the Board and LTCs should



compare the new standards approved in the SRTP to the actual data to determine a basis for showing improvements from ESTA services.

4. Continue working with Mono and Inyo LTCs and Caltrans to procure additional on-board video cameras for the bus fleet. (Medium Priority)

Some of the larger ESTA buses have on-board cameras procured through transit security grants in partnership with Mono and Inyo LTCs. On-board cameras are common on buses and provide a multitude of benefits, including driver monitoring; identification and remediation of risky driving behaviors such as distracted driving and drowsiness; passenger monitoring especially to address vandalism, theft, passenger disturbances and general security; enhanced collision review and analysis; and providing a means of increasing security and limiting liability from false liability claims and suits. ESTA indicated that additional procurement of on-board cameras is contingent on an update to a Caltrans District 9/10 Intelligent Transportation System Architecture and Deployment Plan document. The previous ITS plan was developed many years ago, and an update has been underway by Caltrans District 9/10 to add and modify projects. This document is mandated and serves as a framework where various electronics, communications, information processing systems, and hardware devices can be deployed to improve the safety and efficiency of the county's surface transportation system.

Existing technology procured by ESTA have been in previous ITS rural/small urban statewide plans such as real-time information, automatic vehicle location system, and transit traveler information. ESTA should continue working with the LTCs and Caltrans to complete the ITS deployment plan and procure additional on-board video cameras for its fleet. The advancement of on-board cameras in ESTA capital asset planning should be considered.