

# **FY 2011–13 Triennial Performance Audit of Eastern Sierra Transit Authority**



October 2014

SUBMITTED TO:

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

SUBMITTED BY:

**PMC<sup>®</sup>**  


# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Section I</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Introduction .....	1
Overview of the Transit System .....	1
<b>Section II</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Operator Compliance Requirements .....	8
<b>Section III</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Prior Triennial Performance Recommendations .....	15
<b>Section IV</b> .....	<b>19</b>
TDA Performance Indicators .....	19
Data Consistency .....	37
<b>Section V</b> .....	<b>38</b>
Review of JPA Formation Documents .....	38
<b>Section VI</b> .....	<b>45</b>
Review of Operator Functions .....	45
Operations .....	45
Maintenance .....	52
Planning .....	53
Marketing .....	55
General Administration and Management .....	56
<b>Section VII</b> .....	<b>60</b>
Findings and Recommendations .....	60

## 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.

The Inyo County and Mono County Local Transportation Commissions (LTCs) jointly engaged PMC to conduct a performance audit of the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA or Authority) covering the most recent triennial period, fiscal years 2010–2011 through 2012–2013. The purpose of the performance audit is to evaluate ESTA's effectiveness and efficiency in its use of TDA funds to provide public transit 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 ESTA's transit functions. From the analysis that has been undertaken, a set of recommendations has been made for the Authority which is intended to improve the performance of its functions.

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, in-person interviews with staff representing both Local Transportation Commissions, a phone interview with the Town of Mammoth Lakes Airport & Transportation Manager, collection and review of documents for ESTA and the 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. The *Transportation Development Act Statutes and California Codes of Regulations* published by Caltrans was also used as a reference where appropriate during the evaluation.

### 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.

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.*

### 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, although beyond the audit period, ESTA started the Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Volunteer Driver Pilot Program that offers non-emergency medical transportation mileage reimbursement services to the transportation-disadvantaged community.

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 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 the Transportation Development Act. 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

---

<sup>1</sup> The one active vanpool ended from lack of continued ridership, but the program is still available.

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.

The Purple Line runs 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. The Gray Line originates at Vons and serves the Mammoth Lakes Campus of Cerro Coso Community College, Mammoth Hospital, and Mammoth Lakes Library and terminates at Juniper Springs Resort. Both routes operate year-round seven days a week from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with stops every 30 minutes. The 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.

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.

Town Trolley Service during the summer schedule makes stops at Snowcreek Athletic Club, Minaret Village Shopping Center, The Village, and Canyon Lodge every 20 minutes. Service is provided from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. from June through November.

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, and Green Line.

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.

Also from late June to early September, 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. ESTA originally entered into a Challenge Cost Share Agreement with the Forest Service in 2009 that describes the cooperation between the parties to operate the shuttle system. In June 2012, ESTA transitioned from that agreement 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 30 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 MAS Bike Shuttle.

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. on weekdays and from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekends (weekend dial-a-ride was discontinued after the audit period). Service is available after 6:00 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. 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.” Fixed-route service in Bishop was discontinued in September 2010 due to budget constraints and to improve efficiencies. To compensate for this change, additional service hours were added and 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, and Joseph’s Market. Check-point dial-a-ride offers a \$1.00 discount off regular dial-a-ride fares.

### 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 3:30 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. 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 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 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.

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. 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.

Intercity service is provided between Bridgeport and Carson City on Wednesdays with one trip in each direction. Stops are provided in Bridgeport, Walker, Coleville, and Carson City. In Carson City, the intercity service provides dial-a-ride service for the 3.5 hours that the vehicle is in Carson City before the return trip.

The June Mountain Express links Mammoth Lakes and the June Mountain Ski Area, with interim stops at June Lake Junction and June Lake. Service is provided from 7:10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. from mid-December through the June Mountain ski season. The link primarily serves as an employee shuttle for the June Mountain Ski Area in which employees use vouchers that cover the ride. The vouchers purchased by the resort guarantee fare payment to ESTA.

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 Reno airport and Lancaster 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. The Reno Route travels between Lone Pine and Reno and runs every weekday except Wednesday. 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 on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and extends from Mammoth Lakes to Lancaster. The service starts in Mammoth Lakes at 7:35 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 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 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, and Pearsonville. Reservations are strongly recommended because of the limited seating for the one round trip per route.

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. A fare increase was instituted in 2011 to maintain service levels and to meet required performance measures including the farebox recovery ratio. This increase was implemented along with route modifications for Eastern Sierra Transit bus services. 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. 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 only with a minimum charge of \$10.00. During the audit period, credit cards were not accepted on the bus. In 2014, which is outside the audit period, 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. The June Mountain Express includes a discounted round-trip fare. 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 multizone 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 71 vehicles. Among the fleet are a few staff vehicles used for staff transportation, and three vans that are used for the vanpool service. The remaining vehicles are used for public transit revenue service and range in age from their acquisitions between 2003 and 2012. 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; the staff transportation vehicles and the vans used for vanpools are not.

Twelve 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 six 2007 Ford E-450 cutaway buses and six 2007 Ford Supreme Trolleys. A significant acquisition by ESTA was delivery of 12 large transit buses in 2012 for use for the Reds Meadow Shuttle service during the summer and for the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area during the winter season.

### 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 gravel lot across from the terminal building. The office houses executive management, administrative staff, operations, and dispatch for the non-Mammoth Lakes services. During the audit period, the Town of Mammoth Lakes expanded a Town-owned facility from which ESTA leases six bays and office space for operations and dispatching of the local Mammoth transit services. ESTA had operated from this facility prior to the audit period and expanded the scope of what is leased. The vehicles used for the local Mammoth service, including the Town-owned vehicles and the new Reds Meadow buses, are also stored at this facility. 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, Tecopa, and Lone Pine. 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, September 2008 (third edition)*, which was developed by the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) 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	Completion/submittal dates based on report copies provided by ESTA:  FY 2011: October 11, 2011 FY 2012: October 16, 2012 FY 2013: October 16, 2013  <b>Conclusion: Complied.</b>
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 extension by the RTPA allowed by law.	Public Utilities Code, Section 99245	Completion/submittal dates based on report copies provided by ESTA:  FY 2011: January 12, 2012 FY 2012: December 1, 2012 FY 2013: June 4, 2014  <b>Conclusion: Partial Compliance</b>
The CHP has, within the 13 months prior to each TDA claim submitted by an operator, certified the operator’s compliance with	Public Utilities Code, Section 99251 B	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.

Table II-1 Operator Compliance Requirements Matrix		
Operator Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
Vehicle Code Section 1808.1 following a CHP inspection of the operator's terminal.		<p>Inspections are conducted at each of five locations where vehicles are stored. Dates applicable to the audit period were:</p> <p>Bishop: September 1, 2010; September 28, 2011; October 17, 2012</p> <p>Mammoth: August 17, 2010; August 24, 2011; June 21, 2012</p> <p>Lone Pine: April 26, 2010; May 2, 2011; June 14, 2012</p> <p>Walker: August 17, 2010; August 24, 2011; May 14, 2012</p> <p>Tecopa: May 19, 2010; May 23, 2011; May 24, 2012</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 with rules and regulations adopted by the RTPA for such claims.	Public Utilities Code, Section 99261	<p>ESTA receives TDA funds from both Mono and Inyo counties. Separate allocations from each LTC are made. 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. In Inyo County, claimants such as ESTA</p>

<b>Table II-1 Operator Compliance Requirements Matrix</b>		
<b>Operator Compliance Requirements</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Compliance Efforts</b>
		<p>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. A resolution is then passed by the LTCs for direct allocation to ESTA. The claims process between 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>
<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.</p>	<p>Public Utilities Code, Section 99270.1</p>	<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>
<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 2011: 5.9%  FY 2012: -5.0%  FY 2013: 45.2%</p> <p>The budget increased significantly in FY 2012–13 and has been reasonably supported in the budget discussion. The budget increase reflects new agreements for services including the MMSA service and the Bishop Paiute Tribe service. Management and administrative staff also increased at the Mammoth Lakes facility, including a new</p>

Table II-1 Operator Compliance Requirements Matrix		
Operator Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
		<p>Mammoth Operations Supervisor and additional clerical and utility worker support.</p> <p>Source: FY 2010–2013 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.</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 percent), if so determined by the RTPA.</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>

<b>Table II-1 Operator Compliance Requirements Matrix</b>		
<b>Operator Compliance Requirements</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Compliance Efforts</b>
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 2011: 24.56% FY 2012: 24.52% FY 2013: 50.74%  <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 8% of their annual covered salary. ESTA is required to contribute the actuarially determined remaining amounts necessary to fund the benefits for its members.  <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 the 5310 competitive grant program, 5311 formula apportionment, 5311(f) intercity bus grants, 5316 JARC funding, and 5320 alternative transportation in parks grant.  FY 2011: \$455,033 (operations) \$123,404 (capital) FY 2012: \$398,958 (operations) \$4,385,144 (capital) FY 2013: \$373,236 (operations) \$49,074 (capital)  Source: FTA National Transit Database for FYs 2011–2013

Table II-1 Operator Compliance Requirements Matrix		
Operator Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
		<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 submission of the annual fiscal audit. In FY 2013, 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 33 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 and the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Prior to providing MMSA transit service in FY 2013, ESTA was active in streamlining services to match available revenue during the tough economic climate including adjusting bus schedules, reducing days of service, and eliminating fixed-route service in Bishop in efforts to improve efficiencies and shift limited resources to other productive services. With the addition of providing MMSA winter transit service as well as stable fare revenues collected from the Reds Meadow Shuttle, the farebox recovery ratio has increased. However, it is important to note that most transit services for which a passenger fare is charged experienced a decline in fare revenue and ridership over the past few years. Because no fare is charged for Mammoth Lakes fixed-route service, the payments made for the service are counted toward the farebox in lieu of direct fare payment by passengers. This was the case for the addition of MMSA that boosted the farebox recovery ratio despite the decline in fare revenue from other routes in the system.
3. ESTA participates in the annual CHP inspections for its five 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. This finding was also made in CHP inspections reported in the prior triennial performance audit. 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. 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 increased by more than 15 percent (the TDA threshold) between FY 2012 and FY 2013. As discussed, the budget increased significantly and has been reasonably supported in the budget discussion provided by ESTA. The budget increase reflects new agreements for services including the MMSA service and the Bishop Paiute Tribe service, as well as increases in personnel benefits costs and maintenance costs. Management and administrative staff also increased at the Mammoth Lakes facility, including a new Mammoth Operations Supervisor and additional clerical and utility worker support to handle the additional MMSA service. Because these new services are fare-free, the revenues are counted as contributions toward farebox recovery, which has increased the systemwide ratio.
5. ESTA continues to utilize rural and innovative federal grant funding in addition to other funding sources including TDA for transit operations. As an example, in FY 2012, ESTA was awarded 11 large buses for the Red Meadows Shuttle through a \$4.4 million grant from the FTA Section 5320 Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands Program. The procurement of the buses was also a key aspect for the service agreement between ESTA and MMSA, with approval from the US Forest Service, to use the same vehicles for town to Mammoth Mountain Ski access during the winter season. The MMSA service was also included in the grant application.

Federal operating grants comprised between 8 and 14 percent of operating revenues for the triennial period, according to the Federal National Transit Database. The lower range is the result of the addition of the MMSA 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, 2010, 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 the ESTA Executive Director. 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

Provide certification of findings of TDA compliance and verification of PTMISEA expenditures in the annual ESTA financial audit.

#### Actions Taken by ESTA

The first part of this recommendation concerns providing certification of the TDA compliance tasks in the annual fiscal audit. In the prior performance audit, examples were shown of the type of certification that should be included in the annual fiscal and compliance audit report prepared by a CPA as required under PUC Section 99245. The certification is made as to the fiscal auditor's findings, calculations, and conclusions for each of the 14 TDA compliance tasks described in the California Code of Regulations, Sections 6664 and 6667. A review of the annual fiscal audits conducted for the current triennial period shows the addition of certifications of the TDA compliance tasks by the independent CPA. Beginning with the FY 2011 fiscal audit, a separate statement regarding testing and compliance with the TDA statute is made in the financial audit.

With regard to the second part of this recommendation about verification of expenditures from the Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA), both the Mono and Inyo LTCs are direct recipients of the PTMISEA funds. The funds are passed through to ESTA for capital expenditures. The verification of expenditures is required to be contained in the annual financial audits of the direct sponsors, which are the LTCs. The ESTA fiscal audit is not required to include the verification, as it is contained in the LTC audits.

#### Conclusion

This recommendation is fully implemented.

## Prior Recommendation 2

ESTA staff should conduct final review of annual State Controller Report prior to on-time submission.

### Actions Taken by ESTA

The previous performance audit found that supplemental operating data in the State Controller Report of transit operations was not complete or was incorrectly filled out. The ESTA fiscal auditor completes the State Controller reports and fills in the supplemental operating data provided by ESTA staff such as ridership, service hours and miles, and full-time equivalents (FTEs). Because of the prior inaccuracies, the prior recommendation suggested a process change for ESTA staff to conduct final review of the information contained in the State Controller report, in particular the supplemental operating data section, prior to submission to the State.

A side-by-side comparison of two sets of performance data for the current triennial period was conducted as a check. As shown below, significant improvements have been made in the consistency between ESTA performance data and that shown in the State Controller reports. A few errors remain, including the ridership for FY 2011–12 and FTEs for FY 2012–13 in the State Controller report. Discussions with the ESTA Executive Director indicated that there can be inadvertent data input errors in the State Controller report. With some ongoing errors in the State Controller reports, ESTA staff should conduct a final review of the information contained in the State Controller report prior to submission to the State.

	FY 2010–11		FY 2011–12		FY 2012–13	
	ESTA Annual Ops Data	State Controller Report	ESTA Annual Ops Data	State Controller Report	ESTA Annual Ops Data	State Controller Report
<b>Supplemental Operations Data</b>						
Total Passengers	610,856	610,856	607,863	560,518	1,131,490	1,131,490
Vehicle Service Hours	48,980	48,980	45,138	45,138	56,739	56,739
Vehicle Service Miles	894,372	894,372	810,233	810,233	936,363	936,396
Employee FTEs	36	35	33	33	45	57

### Conclusion

This recommendation has been partially implemented and is carried forward for full implementation.

### Prior Recommendation 3

Establish a methodology for determining operating cost on a route level.

### Actions Taken by ESTA

The reporting of performance information during the previous triennial period did not include the cost of providing service on a route level, hence the prior recommendation. For the current triennial period, ESTA began conducting a cost analysis on a route level using FY 2012–13 performance data. Preliminary cost data was presented to the ESTA Board in August 2013, with final cost by route presented in February 2014.

The methodology employed by ESTA includes the following process:

<b>Expense Category</b>	<b>Methodology</b>
Vehicle Maintenance	Average maintenance cost per mile based on the vehicle type, multiplied by miles per hour for the route (total miles divided by service hours)
Fuel	Average miles per gallon based on the vehicle type, multiplied by the miles per hour for the route
Administrative Compensation	Total salaries and benefits for management and administrative personnel assigned on a predetermined basis to ESTA's budget units, divided by the service hours for each route
Operating Salaries & Benefits	Total salaries and benefits for each of the budget units minus administrative compensation, divided by service hours for each route
Other Operating Expenses	All other operating expenses assigned to each of the budget units divided by the service hours for the budget unit
Note: Average costs per hour for expenses other than fuel and maintenance are applied to specific routes based on the percentage allocation to each budget unit of the individual routes.	

The cost allocation for each route resulted in route-level performance metrics such as operating cost per service hour and farebox recovery by route. These types of metrics by route are used for more specific analysis and identification of root causes of system performance, leading to more detailed route planning.

### Conclusion

This recommendation has been fully implemented.

### Prior Recommendation 4

Integrate route-level cost performance measures into performance reports.

### Actions Taken by ESTA

Upon development of the cost methodology from the above recommendation, ESTA has formulated cost performance measures for each route such as:

- Maintenance costs per mile
- Maintenance costs per service hour
- Fuel costs per mile
- Fuel costs per service hour
- Administrative compensation costs per service hour
- Operating salaries and benefits per service hour
- Other operating expenses per service hour
- Total operating expenses per service hour
- Farebox recovery ratio

Given the diverse nature of the services provided by ESTA, the addition of these measures is intended to facilitate a more comprehensive review of each route for possible service adjustments that meet transit efficiency and effectiveness goals. ESTA includes performance goals in its biannual reporting to the Board and continues to refine performance targets.

### 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 2010–11: 72,604.47 hours

FY 2011–12: 66,322.02 hours

FY 2012–13: 89,020.91 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 2011– 2013
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Operating Cost	\$3,296,934	\$3,449,656	\$3,998,921	<b>21.3%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		5%	16%	
Total Passengers	610,856	607,863	1,131,490	<b>85.2%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		0%	86%	
Vehicle Service Hours	48,980	45,138	56,739	<b>15.8%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		-8%	26%	
Vehicle Service Miles	894,372	810,233	936,363	<b>4.7%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		-9%	16%	
Employee FTEs <sup>(1)</sup>	36	33	45	<b>22.6%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		-9%	34%	
Passenger Fares <sup>(2)</sup>	\$809,592	\$845,723	\$2,028,963	<b>150.6%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		4%	140%	
Operating Cost per Passenger	\$5.40	\$5.68	\$3.53	<b>-34.5%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		5%	-38%	
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour	\$67.31	\$76.42	\$70.48	<b>4.7%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		14%	-8%	
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Mile	\$3.69	\$4.26	\$4.27	<b>15.9%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		15%	0%	
Passengers per Vehicle Service Hour	12.5	13.5	19.9	<b>59.9%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		8%	48%	

Performance Data and Indicators	Audit Period			% Change FY 2011– 2013
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Passengers per Vehicle Service Mile	0.68	0.75	1.21	<b>76.9%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		10%	61%	
Vehicle Service Hours per Employee	1,349	1,361	1,275	<b>-5.5%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		1%	-6%	
Average Fare per Passenger	\$1.33	\$1.39	\$1.79	<b>35.3%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		5%	29%	
Subsidy per Passenger	\$4.07	\$4.28	\$1.74	<b>-57.2%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		5%	-59%	
Farebox Recovery Ratio	24.56%	24.52%	50.74%	<b>106.6%</b>
<i>Annual Change</i>		0%	107%	
Consumer Price Index (CPI) - California	1.7%	2.4%	2.1%	

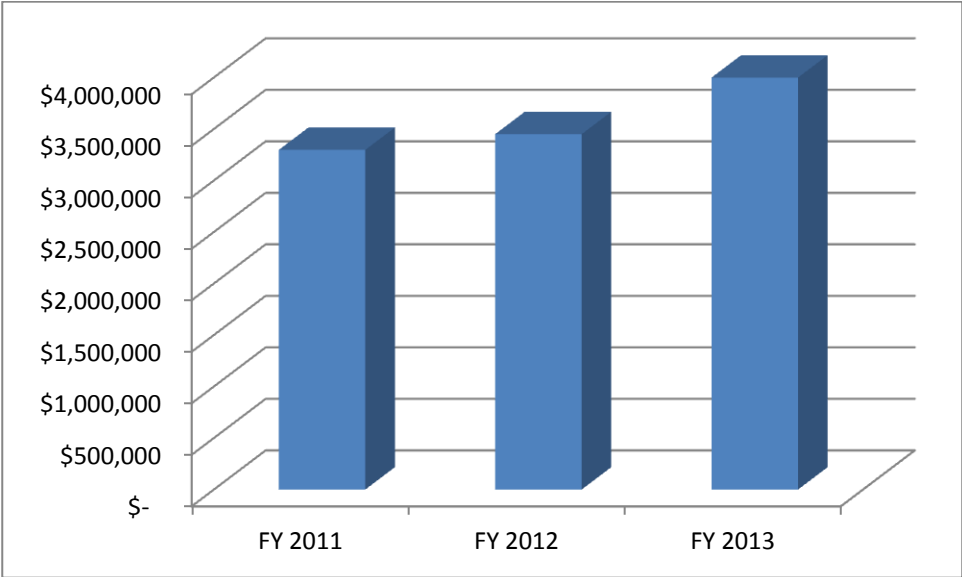
(1) Full-time equivalents is annual total payroll hours divided by 2,000 hours.

(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).

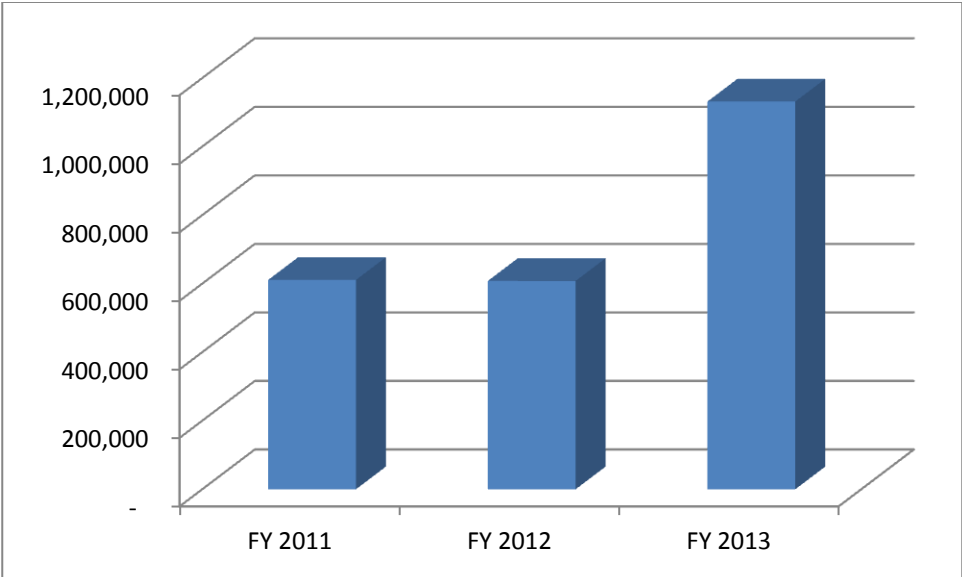
Source: Audited financial reports for cost and fares; ESTA annual performance data by route for passengers, hours, and miles; ESTA payroll hours for FTEs.

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**

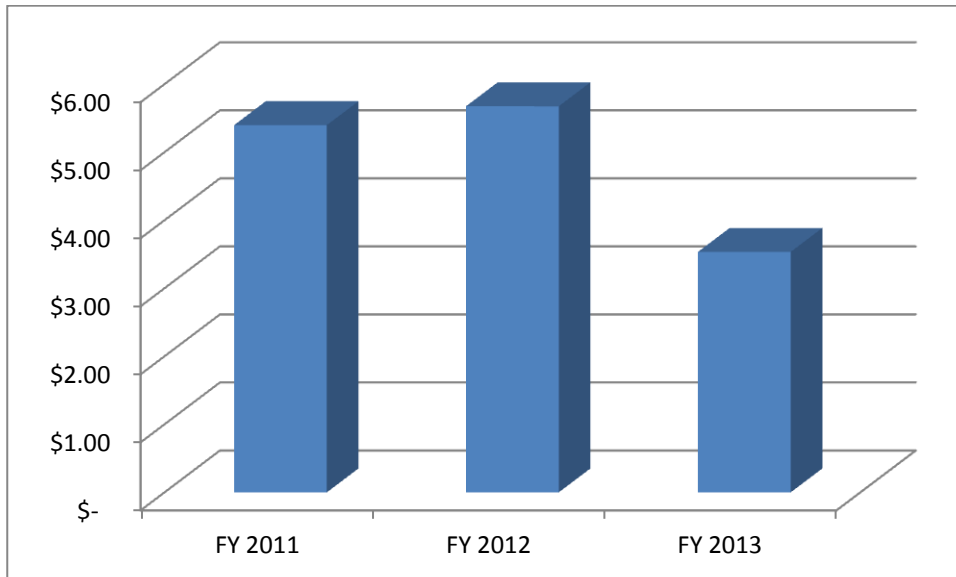


**Graph IV-2  
Ridership**

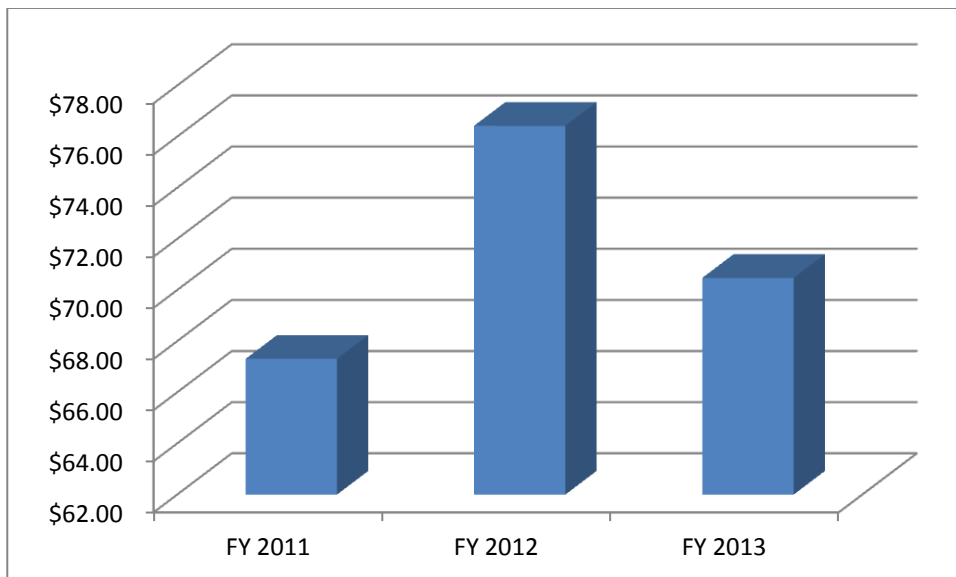




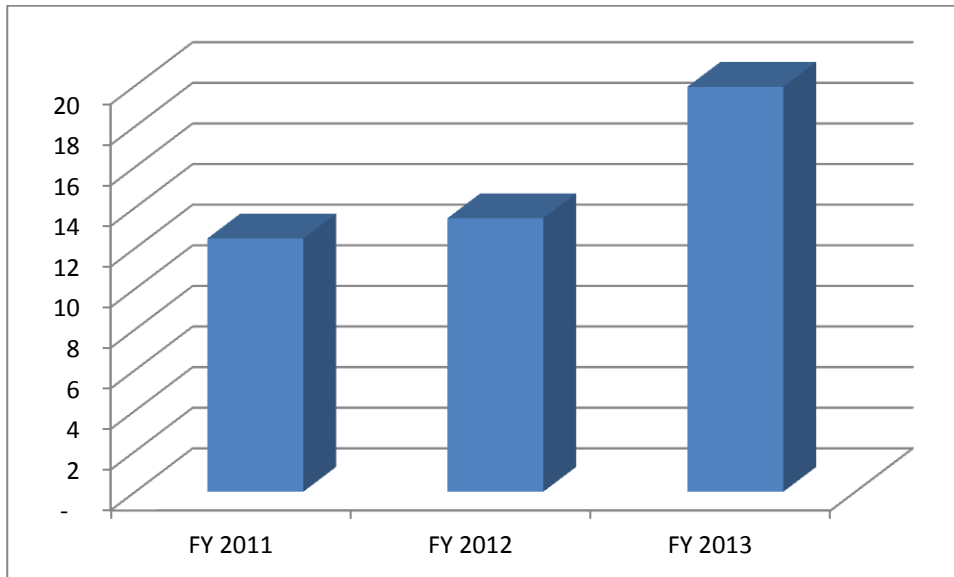
**Graph IV-3  
Operating Cost per Passenger**



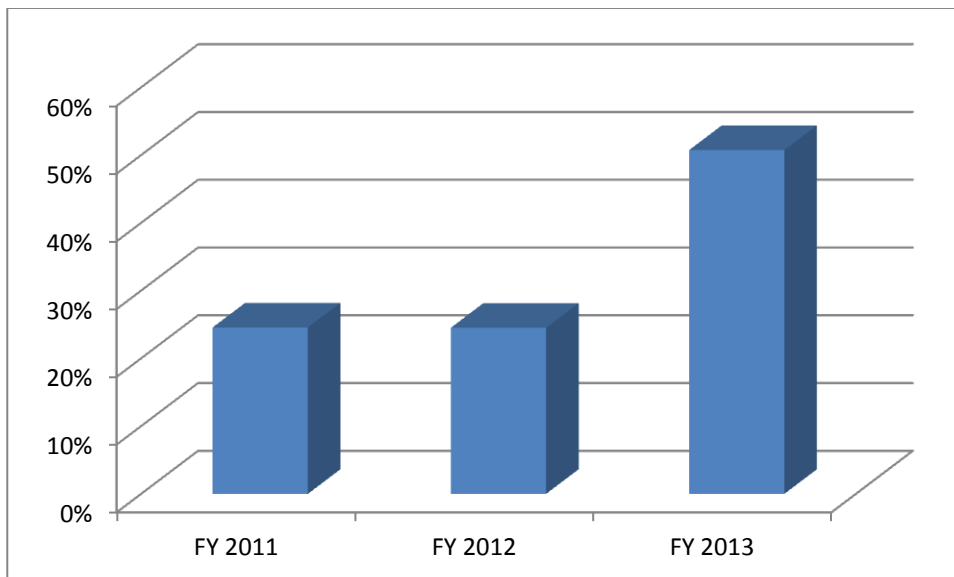
**Graph IV-4  
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour**



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



**Graph IV-6  
Farebox Recovery Ratio**



**Table IV-2  
FY 2010–11 Performance Data by Route (Unaudited)**

<b>Route</b>	<b>Fares</b>	<b>Passengers</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Miles</b>
Mammoth Express	\$40,677	7,581	1,594	70,000
Lone Pine to Bishop	\$35,203	8,374	2,227	93,830
Lone Pine DAR	\$13,033	5,730	1,877	22,694
Tecopa	\$872	249	219	6,227
Walker	\$12,471	2,571	1,949	25,641
Benton to Bishop	\$3,577	848	192	10,206
Bishop DAR	\$97,539	48,691	11,451	142,314
Bishop FR	\$5,116	5,666	1,201	17,737
Nite Rider	\$11,265	3,434	628	11,524
Mammoth FR	\$46,238	373,163	16,662	233,530
Mammoth DAR	\$19,889	9,559	3,622	59,845
Reno Route	\$96,196	2,796	2,064	87,446
Lancaster Route	\$42,766	2,934	1,305	62,603
Reds Meadow	\$364,698	139,260	3,990	50,775
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$789,538</b>	<b>610,856</b>	<b>48,980</b>	<b>894,372</b>

Source: ESTA

**Table IV-3  
FY 2011–12 Performance Data by Route (Unaudited)**

<b>Route</b>	<b>Fares</b>	<b>Passengers</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Miles</b>
Mammoth Express	\$31,582	5,438	1,139	52,827
Lone Pine to Bishop	\$37,118	7,435	2,006	84,279
Lone Pine DAR	\$13,992	5,560	1,697	19,527
Tecopa	\$841	183	173	4,451
Walker	\$11,662	2,300	1,561	20,720
Benton to Bishop	\$4,143	900	351	10,524
Bishop DAR	\$105,633	44,381	9,561	131,195
Bishop FR <sup>(1)</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Nite Rider	\$13,879	3,581	842	12,879
Mammoth FR	\$0	378,254	15,741	218,854
Mammoth DAR	\$20,082	7,368	3,632	31,561
June Mtn Shuttle	\$38,312	1,860	631	17,046
Reno Route	\$85,097	3,060	1,983	86,653
Lancaster Route	\$53,440	3,403	1,327	63,782

Route	Fares	Passengers	Hours	Miles
Reds Meadow	\$409,190	143,685	4,429	55,211
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$825,424</b>	<b>607,863</b>	<b>45,138</b>	<b>810,233</b>

(1) Bishop fixed-route service discontinued in FY 2011–12.

Source: ESTA

**Table IV-4  
FY 2012–13 Performance Data by Route (Unaudited)**

Route	Fares	Passengers	Hours	Miles
Benton to Bishop	\$2,292	497	297	9,198
Bishop DAR	\$99,198	40,960	9,708	139,165
June Mtn Shuttle	\$19,425	1,041	226	6,044
Lancaster	\$57,178	3,889	1,347	62,493
Lone Pine to Bishop	\$38,414	7,442	1,901	83,514
Lone Pine DAR	\$12,831	5,459	1,733	17,966
Mammoth FR	\$0	365,183	14,814	212,895
Mammoth DAR	\$16,438	6,342	3,152	18,562
Measure U	\$0	9,251	199	1,578
MMSA	\$0	529,693	12,843	163,738
Mule Shuttle	\$390	438	56	593
Mammoth Express	\$27,979	4,689	997	47,137
Nite Rider	\$11,430	2,853	739	10,374
Other	\$0	0	0	0
Reds Meadow	\$409,791	148,413	4,858	58,610
Reno	\$82,225	3,109	2,040	85,749
Tecopa	\$582	118	112	3,369
Walker	\$9,417	2,113	1,717	15,378
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$787,591</b>	<b>1,131,490</b>	<b>56,739</b>	<b>936,363</b>

Source: ESTA

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

Route	Fares			% Change FY 2011–13
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Mammoth Express	\$40,677	\$31,582	\$27,979	-31%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-22%	-11%	
Lone Pine to Bishop	\$35,203	\$37,118	\$38,414	9%
<i>Annual Change</i>		5%	3%	
Lone Pine DAR	\$13,033	\$13,992	\$12,831	-2%
<i>Annual Change</i>		7%	0%	
Tecopa	\$872	\$841	\$582	-33%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-4%	-31%	
Walker	\$12,471	\$11,662	\$9,417	-24%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-6%	-19%	
Benton to Bishop	\$3,577	\$4,143	\$2,292	-36%
<i>Annual Change</i>		16%	0%	
Bishop DAR	\$97,539	\$105,633	\$99,198	2%
<i>Annual Change</i>		8%	-6%	
Bishop FR <sup>(1)</sup>	\$5,116	\$0	\$0	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>		-100%	0%	
Nite Rider	\$11,265	\$13,879	\$11,430	1%
<i>Annual Change</i>		23%	-18%	
Mammoth FR <sup>(2)</sup>	\$46,238	\$0	\$0	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>		-100%		
Mammoth DAR	\$19,889	\$20,082	\$16,438	-17%
<i>Annual Change</i>		1%	-18%	
Reno Route	\$96,196	\$85,097	\$82,225	-15%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-12%	-3%	
Lancaster Route	\$42,766	\$53,440	\$57,178	34%
<i>Annual Change</i>		25%	7%	
Reds Meadow	\$364,698	\$409,190	\$409,791	12%
<i>Annual Change</i>		12%	0%	
June Mountain Shuttle		\$38,312	\$19,425	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>			-49%	
Measure U <sup>(2)</sup>			\$0	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>				
MMSA <sup>(2)</sup>			\$0	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>				

Route	Fares			% Change FY 2011–13
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Mule Shuttle			\$390	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$789,538</b>	<b>\$825,424</b>	<b>\$787,591</b>	<b>-0.2%</b>

(1) Bishop fixed-route service discontinued in FY 2011–12.

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

Source: ESTA

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

Route	Ridership			% Change FY 2011–13
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Mammoth Express	7,581	5,438	4,689	-38%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-28%	-14%	
Lone Pine to Bishop	8,374	7,435	7,442	-11%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-11%	0%	
Lone Pine DAR	5,730	5,560	5,459	-5%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-3%	0%	
Tecopa	249	183	118	-53%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-27%	-36%	
Walker	2,571	2,300	2,113	-18%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-11%	-8%	
Benton to Bishop	848	900	497	-41%
<i>Annual Change</i>		6%	0%	
Bishop DAR	48,691	44,381	40,960	-16%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-9%	-8%	
Bishop FR <sup>(1)</sup>	5,666	0	0	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>		-100%	0%	
Nite Rider	3,434	3,581	2,853	-17%
<i>Annual Change</i>		4%	-20%	
Mammoth FR <sup>(2)</sup>	373,163	378,254	365,183	-2%
<i>Annual Change</i>		1%	-3%	
Mammoth DAR	9,559	7,368	6,342	-34%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-23%	-14%	
Reno Route	2,796	3,060	3,109	11%
<i>Annual Change</i>		9%	2%	
Lancaster Route	2,934	3,403	3,889	33%
<i>Annual Change</i>		16%	14%	

Route	Ridership			% Change FY 2011-13
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Reds Meadow	139,260	143,685	148,413	7%
<i>Annual Change</i>		3%	3%	
June Mountain Shuttle		1,860	1,041	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>			-44%	
Measure U <sup>(2)</sup>			9,251	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>				
MMSA <sup>(2)</sup>			529,693	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>				
Mule Shuttle			438	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>610,856</b>	<b>607,863</b>	<b>1,131,490</b>	<b>85%</b>

(1) Bishop fixed-route service discontinued in FY 2011-12.

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

Source: ESTA

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

Route	Revenue Hours			% Change FY 2011-13
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Mammoth Express	1,594	1,139	997	-37%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-29%	-12%	
Lone Pine to Bishop	2,227	2,006	1,901	-15%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-10%	-5%	
Lone Pine DAR	1,877	1,697	1,733	-8%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-10%	0%	
Tecopa	219	173	112	-49%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-21%	-35%	
Walker	1,949	1,561	1,717	-12%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-20%	10%	
Benton to Bishop	192	351	297	54%
<i>Annual Change</i>		82%	0%	
Bishop DAR	11,451	9,561	9,708	-15%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-17%	2%	
Bishop FR <sup>(1)</sup>	1,201	0	0	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>		-100%	0%	
Nite Rider	628	842	739	18%
<i>Annual Change</i>		34%	-12%	

Route	Revenue Hours			% Change FY 2011–13
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Mammoth FR <sup>(2)</sup>	16,662	15,741	14,814	-11%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-6%	-6%	
Mammoth DAR	3,622	3,632	3,152	-13%
<i>Annual Change</i>		0%	-13%	
Reno Route	2,064	1,983	2,040	-1%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-4%	3%	
Lancaster Route	1,305	1,327	1,347	3%
<i>Annual Change</i>		2%	2%	
Reds Meadow	3,990	4,429	4,858	22%
<i>Annual Change</i>		11%	10%	
June Mountain Shuttle		631	226	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>			-64%	
Measure U <sup>(2)</sup>			199	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>				
MMSA <sup>(2)</sup>			12,843	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>				
Mule Shuttle			56	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,980</b>	<b>45,138</b>	<b>56,739</b>	<b>16%</b>

(1) Bishop fixed-route service discontinued in FY 2011–12.

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

Source: ESTA

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

Route	Revenue Miles			% Change FY 2011–13
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Mammoth Express	70,000	52,827	47,137	-33%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-25%	-11%	
Lone Pine to Bishop	93,830	84,279	83,514	-11%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-10%	-1%	
Lone Pine DAR	22,694	19,527	17,966	-21%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-14%	0%	
Tecopa	6,227	4,451	3,369	-46%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-29%	-24%	
Walker	25,641	20,720	15,378	-40%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-19%	-26%	



Route	Revenue Miles			% Change FY 2011–13
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Benton to Bishop	10,206	10,524	9,198	-10%
<i>Annual Change</i>		3%	0%	
Bishop DAR	142,314	131,195	139,165	-2%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-8%	6%	
Bishop FR <sup>(1)</sup>	17,737	0	0	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>		-100%	0%	
Nite Rider	11,524	12,879	10,374	-10%
<i>Annual Change</i>		12%	-19%	
Mammoth FR <sup>(2)</sup>	233,530	218,854	212,895	-9%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-6%	-3%	
Mammoth DAR	59,845	31,561	18,562	-69%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-47%	-41%	
Reno Route	87,446	86,653	85,749	-2%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1%	-1%	
Lancaster Route	62,603	63,782	62,493	0%
<i>Annual Change</i>		2%	-2%	
Reds Meadow	50,775	55,211	58,610	15%
<i>Annual Change</i>		9%	6%	
June Mountain Shuttle		17,046	6,044	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>			-65%	
Measure U <sup>(2)</sup>			1,578	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>				
MMSA <sup>(2)</sup>			163,738	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>				
Mule Shuttle			593	n/a
<i>Annual Change</i>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>894,372</b>	<b>810,233</b>	<b>936,363</b>	<b>5%</b>

(1) Bishop fixed-route service discontinued in FY 2011–12.

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

Source: ESTA

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

Route	Average Fare per Passenger			% Change FY 2011–13
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Mammoth Express	\$5.37	\$5.81	\$5.97	11%
Lone Pine to Bishop	\$4.20	\$4.99	\$5.16	23%

Route	Average Fare per Passenger			% Change FY 2011–13
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Lone Pine DAR	\$2.27	\$2.52	\$2.35	3%
Tecopa	\$3.50	\$4.60	\$4.93	41%
Walker	\$4.85	\$5.07	\$4.46	-8%
Benton to Bishop	\$4.22	\$4.60	\$4.61	9%
Bishop DAR	\$2.00	\$2.38	\$2.42	21%
Bishop FR <sup>(1)</sup>	\$0.90	n/a	n/a	n/a
Nite Rider	\$3.28	\$3.88	\$4.01	22%
Mammoth FR <sup>(2)</sup>	\$0.12	\$0.00	\$0.00	n/a
Mammoth DAR	\$2.08	\$2.73	\$2.59	25%
Reno Route	\$34.40	\$27.81	\$26.45	-23%
Lancaster Route	\$14.58	\$15.70	\$14.70	1%
Reds Meadow	\$2.62	\$2.85	\$2.76	5%
June Mountain Shuttle		\$20.60	\$18.66	n/a
Measure U <sup>(2)</sup>			\$0	n/a
MMSA <sup>(2)</sup>			\$0	n/a
Mule Shuttle			\$0	n/a

(1) Bishop fixed-route service discontinued in FY 2011–12.

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

Source: ESTA, PMC

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

Route	Fare Revenue per Mile			% Change FY 2011–13
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Mammoth Express	\$0.58	\$0.60	\$0.59	2%
Lone Pine to Bishop	\$0.38	\$0.44	\$0.46	23%
Lone Pine DAR	\$0.57	\$0.72	\$0.71	24%
Tecopa	\$0.14	\$0.19	\$0.17	23%
Walker	\$0.49	\$0.56	\$0.61	26%
Benton to Bishop	\$0.35	\$0.39	\$0.25	-29%
Bishop DAR	\$0.69	\$0.81	\$0.71	4%
Bishop FR <sup>(1)</sup>	\$0.29	n/a	n/a	n/a
Nite Rider	\$0.98	\$1.08	\$1.10	13%
Mammoth FR <sup>(2)</sup>	\$0.20	\$0.00	\$0.00	n/a
Mammoth DAR	\$0.33	\$0.64	\$0.89	166%
Reno Route	\$1.10	\$0.98	\$0.96	-13%

Route	Fare Revenue per Mile			% Change FY 2011–13
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Lancaster Route	\$0.68	\$0.84	\$0.91	34%
Reds Meadow	\$7.18	\$7.41	\$6.99	-3%
June Mountain Shuttle		\$2.25	\$3.21	n/a
Measure U <sup>(2)</sup>			\$0.00	n/a
MMSA <sup>(2)</sup>			\$0.00	n/a
Mule Shuttle			\$0.66	n/a

(1) Bishop fixed route-service discontinued in FY 2011–12.

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

Source: ESTA, PMC

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

Route	Passengers per Hour			% Change FY 2011–13
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Mammoth Express	4.8	4.8	4.7	-1%
Lone Pine to Bishop	3.8	3.7	3.9	4%
Lone Pine DAR	3.1	3.3	3.2	3%
Tecopa	1.1	1.1	1.1	-7%
Walker	1.3	1.5	1.2	-7%
Benton to Bishop	4.4	2.6	1.7	-62%
Bishop DAR	4.3	4.6	4.2	-1%
Bishop FR <sup>(1)</sup>	4.7	n/a	n/a	n/a
Nite Rider	5.5	4.3	3.9	-29%
Mammoth FR <sup>(2)</sup>	22.4	24.0	24.7	10%
Mammoth DAR	2.6	2.0	2.0	-24%
Reno Route	1.4	1.5	1.5	12%
Lancaster Route	2.2	2.6	2.9	28%
Reds Meadow	34.9	32.4	30.6	-12%
June Mountain Shuttle		2.9	4.6	n/a
Measure U <sup>(2)</sup>			46.5	n/a
MMSA <sup>(2)</sup>			41.2	n/a
Mule Shuttle			7.8	n/a

(1) Bishop fixed-route service discontinued in FY 2011–12.

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

Source: ESTA, PMC

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

Route	Passengers per Mile			% Change FY 2011–13
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Mammoth Express	0.11	0.10	0.10	-8%
Lone Pine to Bishop	0.09	0.09	0.09	0%
Lone Pine DAR	0.25	0.28	0.30	20%
Tecopa	0.04	0.04	0.04	-12%
Walker	0.10	0.11	0.14	37%
Benton to Bishop	0.08	0.09	0.05	-35%
Bishop DAR	0.34	0.34	0.29	-14%
Bishop FR <sup>(1)</sup>	0.32	n/a	n/a	n/a
Nite Rider	0.30	0.28	0.28	-8%
Mammoth FR <sup>(2)</sup>	1.60	1.73	1.72	7%
Mammoth DAR	0.16	0.23	0.34	114%
Reno Route	0.03	0.04	0.04	13%
Lancaster Route	0.05	0.05	0.06	33%
Reds Meadow	2.74	2.60	2.53	-8%
June Mountain Shuttle		0.11	0.17	n/a
Measure U <sup>(2)</sup>			5.86	n/a
MMSA <sup>(2)</sup>			3.24	n/a
Mule Shuttle			0.74	n/a

(1) Bishop fixed-route service discontinued in FY 2011–12.

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

Source: ESTA, PMC

## Findings from Verification of TDA Performance Indicators

1. **Operating cost per vehicle service hour**, an indicator of cost efficiency, increased 4.7 percent systemwide from \$67.31 in FY 2011 to \$70.48 in FY 2013 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 21 percent during the triennial period, with overall operating hours exhibiting an increase of nearly 16 percent. This results in slight growth in the cost per hour trend. The addition of new contract services in Mammoth Lakes, combined with 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 35 percent systemwide from \$5.40 in FY 2011 to \$3.53 in FY 2013. Despite increases in operating costs from increased service, ridership increased at a much faster pace (85 percent), which forms a positive trend for this performance indicator. Most of the ridership growth in the past year occurred on the Mammoth Lakes fixed routes, in particular from the inclusion of MMSA ridership as part of ESTA's ridership performance. Additional ridership growth occurred on the 395 Routes 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 60 percent systemwide during the triennial period, from 12.5 passengers per hour to 19.9 passengers per hour. 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 most other ESTA transit routes.
4. **Passengers per vehicle service mile**, another indicator of service effectiveness, increased almost 77 percent systemwide from 0.68 in FY 2011 to 1.21 in FY 2013. 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 marginally, systemwide ridership increased significantly, 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 6 percent during the audit period, from 1,349 hours in FY 2011 to 1,275 hours in FY 2013. The nearly 23 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 with the significant service growth in Mammoth Lakes.

6. **Farebox recovery** has remained well above the TDA requirement of 10 percent, averaging over 33 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 were flat over the three-year period. Prior to agreeing to provide MMSA transit service in FY 2012–13, ESTA was active in streamlining services to match available revenue during the tough economic climate including adjusting bus schedules, reducing days of service, and eliminating fixed-route service in Bishop in efforts to improve efficiencies and shift limited resources to other productive services. With the addition of providing MMSA winter transit service as well as stable fare revenues collected from the Reds Meadow Shuttle, the farebox recovery ratio has increased. However, it is important to note that most transit services for which a passenger fare is charged experienced a decline in fare revenue and ridership over the past few years. 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 addition of MMSA that boosted the farebox recovery ratio despite the decline in fare revenue from other routes in the system.

## 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 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, in spite of several 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, but data still needs further adjustment and final checks prior to submittal.

## 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 2010 relating to the Treasurer and Auditor-Controller. The amendment enabled the transfer of responsibilities from the Town of Mammoth Lakes to the County of Inyo.

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: Powers and Duties of Executive Director</b>	
1	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.
2	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>
3	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.
4	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.
5	To supervise the planning, acquisition, construction, maintenance, and operation of the transit facilities and/or services of the Authority.	During the audit period, ESTA leased space at the newly expanded Town of Mammoth Lakes facility for dispatch and vehicle storage. New lighting and security measures were also installed at the Bishop location. In addition, slightly beyond the audit period, ESTA coordinated a project with the Town of Mammoth Lakes to expand and pave the vehicle parking area in Mammoth in the fall of 2013.
6	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.
7	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.
8	To organize and operate an ongoing transit marketing program, including free-ride events and other special promotions selected by the	Compliance. Sample of transit marketing events includes the annual Stuff-A-Bus Food Drive to support the Salvation Army food pantry. The

	<b>JPA Document</b>	<b>Status of ESTA Operations</b>
	Board of Directors.	event has occurred for multiple years. 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.
9	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.
10	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 \$36,133 for the year ending June 30, 2013.
11	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.
12	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.
13	The Executive Director shall be responsible to arrange for secondary support services including legal counsel, general services, office space, fueling services, parking, utilities, administrative support, communications, clerk of the board, payroll and other support services.	Support services are in place to assist in the operations of ESTA. The Executive Director negotiates for support services.

	JPA Document	Status of ESTA Operations
	<b>Article III: Authority Powers</b>	
1	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 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, 5316, and 5317. In addition, ESTA has transfer agreements with the South Tahoe Area Transit Authority (BlueGo transit) in Lake Tahoe.
2	To supervise and oversee the performance of transportation service contracts.	Compliance. ESTA implements, supervises, and monitors transportation service contracts, including those described above.
3	To provide all service necessary to operate a transportation system.	Compliance.
4	To acquire, construct, manage, maintain or operate any facilities or improvements.	Compliance. Although outside the audit period, 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.
5	To acquire, hold and dispose of property.	Compliance. Per the ESTA purchasing policy and federal and state regulations.
6	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.
7	To employ personnel.	Compliance. ESTA personnel comprise management and administrative staff, drivers, dispatchers, and utility workers.
8	To sue and be sued in its own name.	As necessary.
9	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 assets are held in an investment pool with the County of Inyo. Such investments are within the state statutes and the Authority's investment policy.

	<b>JPA Document</b>	<b>Status of ESTA Operations</b>
10	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 Section 5311 funds available through the Federal Transit Administration.	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), State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and FTA Sections 5310, 5311 (including 5311 apportionment, 5311(f)), 5316 Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), and 5320 alternative transportation in parks grant.
11	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.
12	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.
13	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 (one of three vehicles was used during audit period).
14	All other powers that are necessary and proper for the Authority in order to provide public transportation service.	As warranted.
15	Provide service to locations outside the jurisdiction and boundaries of any of the member jurisdictions.	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: Authority Duties</b>	
1	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.	ESTA management indicated that April 1 is too early to prepare a budget for submission to the Board of Directors, as the expected revenue picture is not clear enough at this time. Staff indicated a need to modify the language to a later date for preparation and submission of the budget. Draft budgets are presented in June prior to the start of the budgeted fiscal year.

	<b>JPA Document</b>	<b>Status of ESTA Operations</b>
2	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 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.	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 for TDA funds. ESTA complies with the rules and regulations adopted by each LTC.
3	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 quarterly operating statistics report for the past quarter 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. Comparisons to passengers per hour targets in the Short Range Transit Plan are also made by route. Beginning in FY 2012–13, operating costs by route are also presented along with performance statistics such as operating cost per service hour and farebox recovery by route.
4	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, ESTA prepares a performance report that is more detailed than the quarterly report. The monthly report includes similar data such as 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.
5	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.

	JPA Document	Status of ESTA Operations
	<b>Article IV: Funding</b>	
1	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 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.	Compliance. See Article III, Authority Duties, number 2 above.
2	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), 5316, and 5320. Applications are submitted directly to Caltrans with certifications provided by the LTCs. ESTA also submits a project list to the LTCs for funding through the state Public Transportation Modernization Improvement and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA).

**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

The past three-year period, marked by the lingering effects of the economic recession, brought a number of operational service adjustments and improvements to the public transit system. 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 in Bishop. Over time, ESTA has implemented scheduling changes while addressing continued challenges with funding. Some changes, including an increase in productive services, have resulted largely from new grant-funded projects that were obtained through ESTA's partnership with its local jurisdiction members and other government allies.

In response to tight funding limitations, as part of the budget development for FY 2010–11, ESTA explored cost-saving measures, including holding public hearings regarding service reductions to identify means to attain a balanced budget. ESTA implemented a number of service modifications including local Bishop service transitioning from the provision of fixed route and dial-a-ride to only general public dial-a-ride as a means to increase efficiencies and stabilize performance. To accommodate this transition while offering the convenience of fixed route and the personal service of dial-a-ride, ESTA offers "check-point" service whereby passengers can look for check-point signs at designated locations where the dial-a-ride bus will stop at the departure time. Passengers will then be taken to their desired location within the service area.

ESTA also initiated the vanpool program in November 2010 as an alternative method of transportation. ESTA has available three 14-passenger vans for vanpool, and one was active starting in May 2011 traveling from Bishop to Mammoth Lakes. The single vanpool group recently ended due to possible work schedule changes of the participants, leaving no active vanpools.

According to research prepared by the national Transportation Research Board (TRB),<sup>2</sup> the success of vanpool programs is heavily influenced by the degree of employer support. Also of concern to potential vanpool participants are travel time, cost, convenience, and other tangibles and intangibles. Travel time for vanpooling includes access time, wait time, pickup time or trip circuitry, and line haul time. Information about the vanpool is provided on ESTA's website along with an interest questionnaire. While the vanpools run in the same direction as the Mammoth Express fixed route, thereby raising minor concern, there appeared no correlation between the vanpool initiation and the ridership patterns for the Mammoth Express route during the audit period, which showed declining ridership on the route in spite of a lack of vanpool usage.

Communications between riders and vehicles operating on longer-distance routes, such as 395 Routes, and town-to-town services between Lone Pine and Bishop and between Bishop and Mammoth Lakes, are enhanced through ESTA's investment in NextBus technology. The technology enables riders to obtain bus arrival information electronically on personal devices. 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. Currently, there are no video cameras on the vehicles although fencing and lighting was installed at the transit facilities through the State Proposition 1B Transit Security Grant awarded to the LTCs. Lighting was also installed at bus shelters in Mammoth Lakes.

FY 2012–13 marked a significant service expansion for ESTA, as the Authority entered into a contract with Mammoth Mountain Ski Area for the operation of four fixed-route lines providing service throughout Mammoth Lakes and to the ski area's three base lodge portals. The addition of this service dramatically increased the scope of ESTA's services and resulted in the Authority providing more than 1 million passenger trips for the first time in its history. The impetus for system expansion was delivery of 11 large buses to ESTA in partnership with the US Forest Service for use on the Reds Meadow Shuttle and for Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (MMSA) service. ESTA took delivery of the buses in April 2012 and expanded service during FY 2012–13, allowing the buses to be used for Reds Meadow Shuttle service during the summer and for MMSA during the winter season. The Local Transportation Commissions and ESTA have also worked to program and procure additional bus purchases through state transportation improvement programs.

The increased availability of vehicles coupled with the Town of Mammoth Lakes local funding contributions through its Measure T and Measure U programs have resulted in Mammoth service that goes beyond the service level that ESTA could provide through only Transportation Development Act funding. Seasonal and year-round transit is offered at peak frequencies that reflect services that could be found in areas with larger populations. New bus signage design improvements funded by the Town and MMSA have complemented the visibility of the system.

---

<sup>2</sup> TCRP, Vanpools and Buspools - Traveler Response to Transportation System Changes, Report 95.



With operations of MMSA bus service by ESTA beginning in November 2012, the branding of the entire system has appeared seamless to the customer, which reflects a positive attribute.

In keeping with the momentum of partnership, ESTA formed a new partnership with the Bishop Paiute Tribe through a cooperative funding arrangement whereby federal Tribal Transit funds are provided by the Tribe to ESTA for the operation of transit services in Bishop and the surrounding areas. This funding provides additional availability of the local Bishop Dial-A-Ride service, which provides trips to or from the Bishop Paiute reservation.

The expansion of transit services from partnerships with organizations such as the US Forest Service, the National Park Service, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, and the Bishop Paiute Tribe has served to offset some performance issues with other existing services. The prior section of the audit showed slightly negative trends for town-to-town and dial-a-ride services in terms of ridership decline and reduced fare revenue collection. By broadening the source of revenues to fund its services, especially locally based revenue, ESTA is able to maintain public transit performance that meets key TDA indicators including the farebox recovery ratio for rural areas.

ESTA altered its policy regarding issuing change for cash fares that exceed the ride rate. The policy was approved at the end of FY 2012-13 and implemented at the beginning of the following fiscal year. Rather than cash, ESTA issues ride tickets for future travel on ESTA for cash overages. 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.

In a move to create greater efficiencies and cost-effective service, ESTA purchased a computerized schedule and dispatch system, RouteMatch Software, in April 2013 for the dial-a-ride service in Bishop. This schedule and dispatch system was funded in full through a combination of state and federal transit grants. The RouteMatch Demand Response Software, although not specifically designed for rural agencies, has been adapted and in large part meets the unique needs of the Bishop dial-a-ride service. A few of the features offered with this system include data management and coordination, scheduling and route optimization, and real-time service monitoring. Benefits to ESTA's passengers include easier appointment scheduling, more accurate arrival time information, and a reduction in overall wait times.

The RouteMatch system allows more effective routing of the vehicles through the utilization of tablet computer technology, including an automatic vehicle location system. ESTA's dispatch staff schedule rides more efficiently by being able to view the vehicle locations in real time. Dispatch

and driving staff communicate directly through the tablets which record the trip information, thereby reducing the driver's and dispatcher's administrative tasks. The system includes a built-in safety feature that disables the tablet any time the vehicle is in motion.

### 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. ESTA staff indicated that the town's residents are generally health minded and will find alternative ways to travel about town.

### 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 that are separate from allocations for public transit. The amount of funding for CTSA purposes is a maximum of 5 percent of remaining LTF and following the allocation procedures prescribed by law.

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.

The nature of these services is closely tied to ESTA's administration of public transportation. Beginning in FY 2012–13, Inyo LTC removed the separate CTSA allocation from the county apportionment and instead allocates to ESTA for its public transit service. Mono LTC continues to have a separate allocation for ESTA in apportioning local transportation funds. The TDA statute provides an LTC the option whether to allocate separate funds to a CTSA or find a more suitable use of the revenue.

### Operations Workforce

From the beginning of the audit period (July 1, 2010) through April 2013, ESTA maintained a Memorandum of Understanding with a bargaining group, Inyo County Employees Association/American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Local 315, AFL-CIO. Recognized employees under the MOU include Transit Driver, Lead Transit Driver, Transit Trainer, Transportation Dispatcher, and Account Clerk I. ESTA provides longevity pay increases after 10 years of continuous service. However, employees hired on or after December 1, 2011, are not eligible to receive longevity compensation. Beginning in May 2013, a new employee group represented the above personnel. A three-year MOU was developed between ESTA and the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority Employees Association.

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 position have minimal turnover, there has been more turnover of Mammoth drivers, likely the result of younger drivers operating under different conditions from other ESTA services as well as a result of the seasonal fluctuations in service level in Mammoth. ESTA recognizes employee contributions through the 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. Employee evaluations are conducted by the Operations Supervisor on an annual basis. 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.

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 which are checked on by the Operations Supervisor. 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 recent 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 increased over the past three years by a significant level as explained by the transit service expansion provided in FY 2012–13 through new agreements with local partners. Operator salaries/wages and benefits, which represent the bulk of operations costs, also increased at a relatively rapid rate to account for operations of the expanded services, but also reflect cost efficiencies with Bishop dial-a-ride service and other schedule reduction measures. The price of fuel has generally increased while fuel cost for the fleet was directly related to the systemwide increase in service hours and miles. Performance cost indicators (cost per hour, cost per mile) show growth as operations cost increased at a faster pace than service hours and miles, albeit with the caveat that the operations cost increase in FY 2012–13 is generated by ESTA using a different budget format due to the transition of responsibility from the Town of Mammoth Lakes to Inyo County during the prior fiscal year (FY 2011-12). Cost per passenger decreased significantly due to the large increase in passengers from the expanded MMSA service, a positive indicator. Deadhead hours and miles which are non-revenue producing make up about 10 percent of all hours and miles, respectively, a slight increase from earlier periods. These figures are within reason given the large rural service area and the starting points of many routes.

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

Performance Data and Indicators	Audit Review Period			% Change FY 2011– FY 2013
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Cost for Operations *	\$2,491,569	\$2,277,126	\$3,574,293	43.5%
Operator Salaries/Wages & Benefits	\$1,571,813	\$1,445,248	\$1,815,754	15.5%
Cost of Fuel	\$394,781	\$485,497	\$588,292	49.0%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH) **	48,980	45,138	56,739	15.8%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM) **	864,272	810,233	936,363	8.3%
Total Vehicle Hours	53,451	48,888	63,638	19.1%
Total Vehicle Miles	905,799	859,622	1,025,420	13.2%
Unlinked Passenger Trips	610,856	607,863	1,131,490	85.2%
Veh Ops Cost per VSH	\$50.87	\$50.45	\$63.00	23.8%
Veh Ops Cost per VSM	\$2.79	\$2.81	\$3.82	37.0%
Veh Ops Cost per Psgr Trip	\$4.08	\$3.75	\$3.16	-22.6%
Fuel Cost per VSM	\$0.44	\$0.60	\$0.63	42.3%
Service Miles per Service Hour	18.3	18.0	16.5	-9.6%
Service Hours/Total Hours	91.6%	92.3%	89.2%	-2.7%
Service Miles/Total Miles	95.4%	94.3%	91.3%	-4.3%
Percentage Change Consumer Price Index (CPI-U)	1.7%	2.4%	2.1%	

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

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

Source: ESTA Statement of Budgeted Revenues & Expenditures FYs 2011 & 2012; Final FY 2012/13 Operating Cost by Route; annual operations data

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 increased between FY 2011 and FY 2013, increasing from 17 to 31. 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 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>% Change FY 2011–FY 2013</b>
Total Passengers	610,856	607,863	1,131,490	85.2%
Complaints	17	24	31	82.4%
Complaints per 1,000 Passengers	0.028	0.039	0.027	-1.6%
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. 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. 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. Local fueling is provided at both the Shell gas station and Eastern Sierra Oil Company in Bishop, which are part of the Commercial Fueling Network (CFN). 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. ESTA has reduced the number of such violations when comparing past CHP inspections with more current ones.

**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 2011– FY 2013
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Cost for Maintenance *	\$263,519	\$318,800	\$348,265	32.2%
Total Vehicle Hours	53,451	48,888	63,638	19.1%
Total Vehicle Miles	905,799	859,622	1,025,420	13.2%
Maintenance Cost per Vehicle Hour	\$4.93	\$6.52	\$5.47	11.0%
Maintenance Cost per Vehicle Mile	\$0.29	\$0.37	\$0.34	16.7%
Percentage Change Consumer Price Index (CPI-U)	1.7%	2.4%	2.1%	

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

Source: ESTA Statement of Budgeted Revenues & Expenditures FYs 2011 & 2012; Final FY 2012/13 Operating Cost by Route; annual operations data

Maintenance costs increased by 32 percent between FYs 2011 and 2013. The vehicle fleet has been undergoing replacement within the past few years, as many of the Ford cutaway vehicles were replaced in 2013 and the new large buses were delivered in 2012. Many 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. It is worth noting that after the audit period, the Board directed ESTA to develop a capital asset replacement plan and policy. This policy development is in process.

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. With the new large buses, maintenance costs on a per hour and per mile basis declined between FYs 2012 and 2013. Over the three-year period, however, the overall trend is an increase in these performance indicators.

## **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 new 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, had served as ESTA's primary public forum in Mono County.

ESTA's current Short Range Transit Plan was developed in January 2009. The SRTP was prepared in two volumes, one for the service and financial plan, and the other for the marketing plan. As the SRTP is intended to guide the development of public transportation services in Inyo and Mono counties over the next five-year period, the document is due for an update. ESTA has implemented various recommendations for each type of service based on its current and projected operating and financial conditions. As a guidance document, staff has a resource that should be updated to generate ideas and improve service efficiency and effectiveness. The Authority was awarded a grant to fund the SRTP update which should be completed in FY 2014-15.

### Performance Standards

The SRTP provided a set of goals and performance standards to validate existing and potential services. The goals establish 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. Table VI-4 provides a sample comparison of select performance goals with actuals.

The comparison suggests that ESTA has met several of the recommended targets for performance, including passengers per hour, farebox recovery, subsidy per passenger, and miles between roadcalls. Other performance measures, including miles between accidents, have not 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 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Passengers per Hour	8.0	10.0	12.5	13.5	19.9
Farebox Recovery	10%	15%	25%	25%	51%
Subsidy per Passenger	\$6.50	\$5.00	\$4.07	\$4.28	\$1.74
Miles Between Roadcalls	8,000	12,500	81,307	270,078	117,045
Miles Between Accidents *	100,000	500,000	100,644	95,514	53,969

\* Accidents were not distinguished between preventable and non-preventable in FYs 2011 and 2012.  
Source: ESTA Short Range Transit Plan and monthly performance reports. PMC summed the monthly performance data provided by ESTA by fiscal year to derive annual figures.

**Marketing**

The marketing plan developed for the S RTP recommends consolidation of the logos and development of a uniform brand and systemwide logo that increases the visibility of the service and prevents confusion among the community. With the new agreements and partnerships with the US Forest Service, the National Park Service, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, and the Bishop Paiute Tribe, as well as phasing out older logos for Highway 395 service, ESTA has worked to develop a uniform brand that has defined the overall system. 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.

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 the main source of food for the Salvation Army’s Christmas food baskets.

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), long haul 395 Routes, and combination of town-to-town, intercity, and local 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

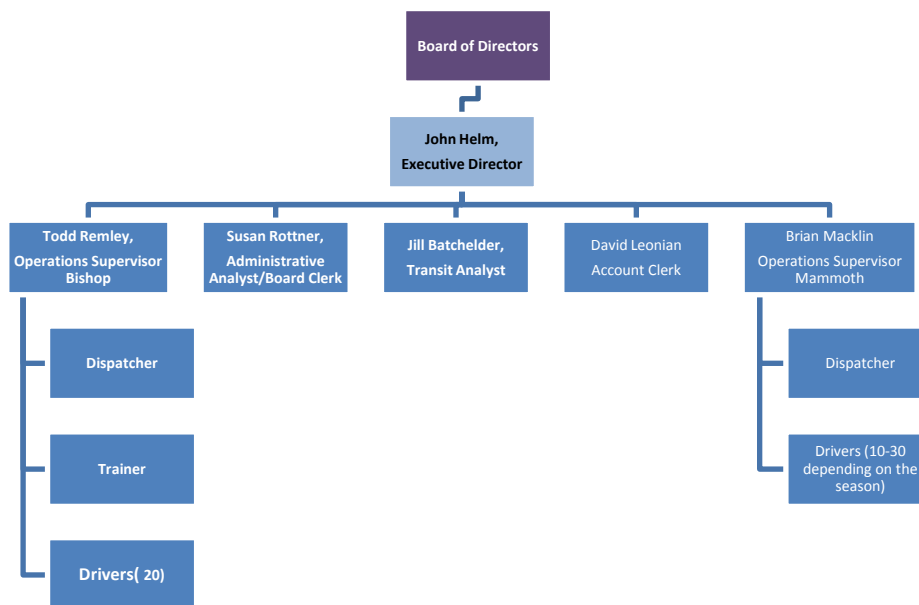
to use the service. Complementing the print media is ESTA’s use of newspaper and broadcast advertising to promote its services. The brochures can be easily viewed on ESTA’s website and are readily printable from the website as PDF files.

ESTA has a presence on the Internet through its website that contains information about the transit system, updates, and news (<http://www.estransit.com/CMS/>). A top stories section headlines the front page of the website and relays current information. The Google Transit trip planner function on ESTA’s home site is also available as an interactive function. 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.

### **General Administration and Management**

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. Operations Assistants located in Mammoth and Lone Pine provide support to the primary Operations Supervisor located in Bishop. Support services are provided including legal counsel by Mono County and the Treasurer/Auditor-Controller by Inyo County. Figure VI-1 shows the ESTA organization chart.

**Figure VI-1  
Organization Chart**



In the spring of 2011, the Treasurer and Auditor-Controller services transitioned from the Town of Mammoth Lakes to separate departments in Inyo County. During the course of development of this agreement between ESTA and Inyo County, the Inyo County Counsel identified that, due to the organizational structure in Inyo County where the Treasurer's Office and the Auditor-Controller's Office are completely separate, it would not be appropriate for the Inyo County Treasurer to be the Treasurer and Auditor-Controller for ESTA. In order to complete an agreement for these services with Inyo County, it was necessary to further amend ESTA's Joint Powers Agreement to define that the Treasurer would be responsible for the duties and functions of the Treasurer, and the Auditor-Controller would be responsible for the duties and functions of the Auditor-Controller.

With the change to Inyo County, ESTA's annual budgeting is conducted using different accounting software from when the Town of Mammoth Lakes provided the service. The software provides financial reports in a different format and no longer captures the distinction between management, administration, and operations cost. Rather, a summarized version of revenues and costs is created from the Inyo County software.

According to payroll counts for FY 2012–13, there are 90 total employees at ESTA inclusive of administrative and operations personnel. Employee work benefit status is classified as being full-time benefited, three-quarter-time benefited, half-time benefited, and part time with no benefits. The percentage of each is as follows: full time is 21 percent, three-quarter is 12 percent, one-half is 3 percent, and part time is 64 percent. 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 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.

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/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). The MOU during the audit period covered a 23-month period from November 2011 through October 2013. The other MOU is with the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority Employees Association effective May 2013 that covers operations personnel (Transit Driver, Transit Trainer, Transportation Dispatcher, Account Clerk, and Utility Worker). Previously, the bargaining group was the Inyo County Employees Association/American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Local 315, AFL-CIO.

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 have been revised and readopted numerous times; the latest dated May 2013 addresses the 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, quarterly, 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. Another example is the quarterly report that compares ridership information to target benchmarks. 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.

### 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 2011–2013
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	
Costs for Administration *	\$552,649	\$548,035	\$668,035	20.9%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	48,980	45,138	56,739	15.8%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	894,372	810,233	936,363	4.7%
Unlinked Passenger Trips	610,856	607,863	1,131,490	85.2%
Admin Cost per VSH	\$11.28	\$12.14	\$11.77	4.3%
Admin Cost per VSM	\$0.62	\$0.68	\$0.71	15.5%
Admin Cost per Passenger Trip	\$0.90	\$0.90	\$0.59	-34.7%
Percentage Change Consumer Price Index (CPI-U)	1.7%	2.4%	2.1%	

\* Administration cost includes management expenditure and administrative support expenditure totals. FY 2013 costs are \$120,000 higher than FY 2012 costs, as assumed in the ESTA budget for new Mammoth Operations Supervisor and clerical and utility support staff.

Source: ESTA Statement of Budgeted Revenues & Expenditures FYs 2011 & 2012; Final FY 2012/13 Operating Cost by Route; annual operations data

Administrative costs increased by close to 21 percent over the three-year period. However, combined with the large increase in ridership, administrative cost per passenger declined by about 35 percent. Administrative cost per service hour was stable as the level of service hours grew at close to the same pace as cost, while administrative cost per service mile increased at a higher rate due to the smaller growth in miles traveled relative to cost increases.

## 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) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). 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. The regional transit facility in Mammoth Lakes was also constructed and completed in FY 2013-14.

ESTA maintains a spreadsheet that tracks active federal grants. The active grants have come from various FTA programs including 5311 apportionment, 5311 (f) intercity bus, and 5316 JARC, Mobility Management, and Medical Transport. ESTA also administers the funding for the Google Transit grant. Closed grants have included purchase of RouteMatch software through FTA 5310 funds, and the Clean Air Projects Program grant. Drawdowns from most grants have occurred for projects such as operations of 395 Routes and town-to-town services, preventive maintenance, mobility management and development of a Dial-A-Ride Riders Guide, and safety/security improvements.

In August 2010, ESTA was approved for a FTA 5311(f) ARRA grant to purchase an automated customer information system. ESTA contracted with NextBus to provide this service in the amount of \$173,350. In December 2010, the FTA announced that ESTA/US Forest Service had been awarded \$2.8 million in additional funding through the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program for the purchase of buses for the Reds Meadow/Devils Postpile shuttle service in the Inyo National Forest. This funding supplements \$1.6 million from a previous grant and allowed the Authority to purchase 11 of the 12 requested buses for the shuttle service. The grant is through the FTA 5320 program and requires no local matching funds. ESTA purchased the vehicles through the CalAct/MBTA Purchasing program. These vehicles play a significant role in ESTA's crafting of the year-round transit program for Mammoth Lakes in partnership with the Town, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, the US Forest Service, and the National Parks Service.

In FY 2012–13, ESTA received a one-time \$47,000 grant from the Great Basin Unified Air Quality Control District Clean Air Projects Program (CAPP grants). The CAPP grants were applied to transit advertisement to increase ridership and to the purchase of vehicle bike racks and automatic tire chain systems.

## Section VII

### Findings and Recommendations

The following material summarizes the major findings obtained from this triennial audit covering FYs 2011 through 2013. 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 submission of the annual fiscal audit. In FY 2013, 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 33 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 and the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Prior to providing MMSA transit service in FY 2012–13, ESTA was active in streamlining services to match available revenue during the tough economic climate including adjusting bus schedules, reducing days of service, and eliminating fixed-route service in Bishop in efforts to improve efficiencies and shift limited resources to other productive services. With the addition of providing MMSA winter transit service as well as stable fare revenues collected from the Reds Meadow Shuttle, the farebox recovery ratio has increased. However, it is important to note that most transit services for which a passenger fare is charged experienced a decline in fare revenue and ridership over the past few years.
3. The annual California Highway Patrol inspections at ESTA's five vehicle storage locations were rated satisfactory. 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. This finding was also made in CHP inspections reported in the prior triennial performance audit. 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 vehicle servicing. 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 budget increased significantly between FY 2012 and FY 2013 and has been reasonably supported in the budget discussion provided by ESTA. The budget increase reflects new service agreements including the MMSA service and the Bishop Paiute Tribe service, as well as increases in personnel benefits costs and maintenance costs. Management and administrative staff also increased at the Mammoth Lakes facility including a new Mammoth Operations

Supervisor and additional clerical and utility worker support to handle the additional MMSA service.

5. Of the four prior performance audit recommendations, ESTA has fully implemented three while one prior recommendation was partially implemented. The prior recommendations implemented include inserting required TDA certifications in the annual fiscal audit, establishing a method for determining operating cost on a route level, and developing route-level performance measures. The prior recommendation partially implemented was improvements in the consistency of data reporting in the annual State Controller Reports. As there were a few data inconsistencies found in the State Controller Reports, ESTA should improve upon the checks of the data prior to submission to the State.
6. Performance indicator trends are mostly positive with the farebox recovery ratio growing consistently over the past few years and well exceeding the TDA minimum ratio of 10 percent. Cost indicators such as operating cost per passenger show a positive trend as does the increase in ridership, in particular in FY 2012–13 from the MMSA transit service, helping to reduce the ratio. Other cost indicators, including operating cost per hour, were relatively stable as the increased operating costs were offset by the commensurate growth in service hours. The subsidy per passenger, which measures the level of non-fare revenue to support each rider, declined as a result of the inclusion of payments by local entities for ESTA contract services in the audited fare revenues. The performance indicators show the impact of several occurrences including reductions in service and ridership on several routes coupled with increases in service and ridership on new local Mammoth routes.
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. ESTA has implemented service changes that have generally improved the performance of the system while addressing continued challenges with funding. 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.
9. 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.

## **Triennial Audit Recommendations**

- 1. ESTA staff should conduct final review of annual State Controller Report prior to on-time submission.**

***Implementation Priority: High***

As a continuation of a prior recommendation, there should be accurate data reporting in the State Controller Report of transit operations. Prior to submission of the report to the State by the ESTA fiscal auditor, ESTA staff should request a copy and conduct final review of the information contained in the report, in particular the supplemental operating data section. Although improvements have been made to the consistency of the supplemental operating data during the current triennial period, more accurate data provides the State and other reviewers of the information a better understanding of ESTA operations and comparability to ESTA's peer transit systems.

- 2. Ensure vehicle maintenance is conducted within maintenance parameters.**

***Implementation Priority: High***

In each year of the 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, ESTA should strive for zero late maintenance checks to ensure vehicles continue to be properly maintained according to standards. The rate of vehicle roadcalls has been kept to a minimum for the three-year period, which is quite positive given the relatively harsh operating environment in ESTA's service area.

- 3. Update the Short Range Transit Plan.**

***Implementation Priority: High***

A typical schedule for an update of the Short Range Transit Plan is every five years. The current SRTP for ESTA was approved in January 2009. With declines in services and the reduction in ridership for many routes, an update to the SRTP is timely and could provide planning research and analysis of the routes, ride checks, and passenger surveys. Performance standards and targets were included in the current SRTP, and the update should 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, there should 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.



#### **4. Consider Transit Ambassadors to enhance ridership.**

***Implementation Priority: Medium***

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. 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.

#### **5. Invest in additional technology.**

***Implementation Priority: Medium***

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.