

Eastern Sierra Transit Authority FY2021-23 STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

Executive Summary

This Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA) FY2021-23 Strategic Business Plan is a guiding document intended to define goals and objectives, and to measure and track ESTA's performance. It is a three fiscal year Plan incorporating both new and revised standards. It is anticipated that this Plan will be reviewed and revised again (as necessary) in mid-2023 to reflect changing conditions.

Background

In February 2020, members of the ESTA Board and ESTA staff held a workshop to craft the elements of the first ESTA Strategic Business Plan. The major components of the Plan are the ESTA Vision Statement, Mission Statement, Business Direction, and Goals and Objectives. Staff uses the Standards of Excellence in the Plan to help guide the organization toward meeting goals and objectives through measurable Key Performance Indicators. The goals and objectives are premised on the following components:

Vision Statement

ESTA is providing high quality regional transportation to the residents and visitors while creating the most enjoyable and productive employment experience possible. All this is accomplished while providing good stewardship of public funds and demonstrating a deep respect for those we serve.

Mission Statement

The Mission of ESTA is to provide safe, reliable, and customer friendly transportation services to the Eastern Sierra Region. This improves and enhances the quality of life for the residents and visitors of the area by reducing greenhouse gases, reducing traffic congestion, providing much needed mobility, supporting the economy, and helping the environment.

Business Conditions

COVID-19, Employee attraction and retention, vehicle maintenance and replacement, and sustainable revenue define the challenges of the current business environment for ESTA in the coming years.

Creating housing for residents and employees has become a critical challenge for community leaders as home prices have risen and available land decreases. Attracting and retaining ESTA employees is directly connected to the scarcity and high cost of housing.

ESTA vehicles are aging at an alarming rate. The majority of our vehicles are beyond their useful life. This means the costs of repair and maintenance will rise, making the accumulation of reserves for vehicle purchasing difficult. Compounding this challenge is California's Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) Rule which requires ESTA to purchase 25% zero emissions vehicles in 2026, and 100% zero emissions vehicles in 2029. Currently, the ICT limits the requirement to vehicles over 14,000 lbs. Only the smallest vans and cutaways are less than 14,000 lbs.

The transit revenue landscape is ever changing and uncertain. Each political administration brings its own values and priorities to the highest office of the nation and the state. Gasoline fuel tax revenues are dropping as vehicles become more efficient and technology introduces new fuel sources to the market. A vehicle miles tax, based on individual road usage, is being discussed as an alternative to inject life back into the much-needed transportation revenue stream. How transit benefits from this new revenue source will be an important mission for transit leaders and voters.

The Bishop Airport commercialization is a big unknown with many leaders in both counties discussing the best plan. Rental cars, rideshare, luxury buses, and shuttles will evolve into a mix of services determined by price and passenger choices. ESTA's role in providing air passengers with ground transportation will need to be considered carefully.

Finally, the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus has decimated transit ridership and it is unknown when the full return of passengers to public transit will occur. New measures to keep vehicles and passengers safe is playing a part in building public confidence. Ultimately, a vaccine would have the greatest positive effect on ridership.

Business Direction

1. Safety

“Safety First” is more than a cliché. Our most valuable asset is our personnel. Second are our investments including vehicles, office equipment, software, security systems, and structures. The preservation of all this is our most important goal.

2. Ridership

Without our passengers we have no business. We will approach our customer service with an attitude of dignity and respect toward all we serve. We will look for opportunities to increase ridership and better serve all the communities within our service area.

3. Image and Partnership

ESTA’s image and reputation is a hard-earned commodity that pays dividends in employment and credibility. This, in turn, supports our partnerships which enable us to conduct our business. Our riders and partners depend on us to deliver services with integrity and respect. Communication is another key aspect of good image and partnership.

4. Finance

Financial responsibility is necessary to achieve all of ESTA’s business goals. Good stewardship of the public funds includes transparency and honesty in every transaction.

5. Fleet and Facility

We will operate and maintain a modern and clean fleet and facilities that will be pleasing to our customers and a source of pride for our employees and our communities.

6. Innovation and Design

Exploring new technologies and accepting new methods of conducting business is critical to growth and being competitive.

7. Human Resources

Employees are the heart and soul of ESTA. Professional development,

communication, and adherence to laws and policies is critical to maintaining an excellent workplace.

Focused 2021-23 Strategic Business Plan Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Safety

Objective:

1. Protect ESTA's employees, customers, and assets through careful and safe delivery of services.

Goal 2: Increase Ridership

Objectives:

1. Ensure that persons with disabilities, low income, and seniors have adequate mobility.
2. Implement service alternative recommendations from ESTA's Short Range Transit Plan, the Regional Transportation Plan and other technical studies completed in each region in the Counties.
3. Continue to explore alternative transit routes and modes using emerging technologies to address underperforming and rural needs.
4. Evaluate route scheduling to maximize the convenience of transfers between the various transit services in the region.

Goal 3: Improve Image and Partnership

Objectives:

1. Build ESTA's reputation as a premier employer.
2. Develop a well-executed image-building campaign with a recognizable brand for public transportation.
3. Continue successful partnerships with communities, cities and counties, other public agencies, businesses and schools.
4. Complete an annual Community Survey to address current and

potential customer needs.

5. Complete an annual Employee Survey to address workplace needs.
6. Improve public communications and information about ESTA services, and seek input through public outreach.

Goal 4: Ensure Financial Success

Objectives:

1. Oversee the budget with a constrained and sustainable approach, while maintaining healthy reserves.
2. Secure reliable funding.
3. Secure capital improvements such as facilities and vehicles to insure the long-term viability of ESTA.
4. Ensure fair compensation for employees and communicate ESTA's employment benefits clearly.

Goal 5: Conduct Planning and Improve Efficiency

Objectives:

1. Consolidate and streamline operations and administrative policies to improve efficiency and effectiveness of public transportation throughout the region.
2. Promote public transportation as part of the lifestyle evolution needed to confront climate change.
3. Develop a Short Range Transit Plan that covers the region and addresses transportation issues.
4. Develop a Coordinated Human Services Plan targeting people with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes that addresses any gaps in service or underserved populations.
5. Meet or exceed KPIs that include the following Standards Categories: Service Quality and Efficiency, Resources and Revenue, Safety, Human Resources, Fleet and Facilities, Leadership.

6. Begin the engineering and design phase for a long-term operations facility in Bishop. Secure grant funding and other financing to construct the facility by the Fall of 2021.

Goal 6: Explore Innovation and Design

Objectives:

1. Sustain and continue to improve the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) program to improve service quality and provide efficiencies.
2. Begin planning for a zero emissions fleet at Mammoth, Bishop, Walker, and Lone Pine Bus Yards. Develop site infrastructure plans in coordination with The Town of Mammoth Lakes, Inyo and Mono Counties, and The City of Bishop.
3. Identify and secure funding to sustain and expand the ITS Program.
4. Track and manage zero emission vehicle maintenance, expenses, performance, and replacement.

Goal 7: Improve Operations and Measurement

Objectives:

1. Achieve ESTA Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to improve existing service (On Time Performance, Customer Comments, Service Interruptions, Vehicle Collision Rate, etc.).
2. Continue to analyze data to improve service efficiencies and effectiveness.

Focused 2021-23 Strategic Business Plan

Standards of Excellence

Section 1: Safety

We recognize the tremendous importance of safety in the operation of ESTA service to our customers and communities. Therefore, the safety of our customers and employees will be an organizational priority and we will be proactive in promoting system safety.

Standard 1: Rate of preventable vehicle collisions will not exceed 1.0 per 100,000 miles.

Measurement: Objective.

- Rate shall be tracked monthly and reported quarterly to the ESTA Board.

Standard 2: Address all safety hazards identified by the Safety Committee.

Measurement: Objective.

- List shall be compiled with action items and timelines and reported quarterly by the Executive Director to the Board.

Standard 3: Preventable workers compensation lost-time claims will not exceed 3 annually, and preventable medical-only claims will not exceed 3 annually.

Measurement: Objective.

- All work comp claims shall be duly investigated and immediately reported by the Administration Manager to our carrier. Measured and reported quarterly by the Executive Director to the Board.

Standard 4: Customer and community perception of system safety will be at least 90%.

Measurement: Objective.

- As measured in an annual Community Perception Survey and reported by the Executive Director to the Board.

Section 2: Service Quality and Efficiency

We will deliver dependable, customer focused and efficient transit services to

the communities that we serve. Further, we will look for opportunities to deploy innovative new service within budgetary constraints.

Standard 1: The Productivity (passengers per vehicle service hour) standards are presented below for regularly-scheduled services:

- A. Regional intercity fixed-route services shall be 2.0 or greater.
 - 395 Reno
 - 395 Lancaster
 - Mammoth Express
 - Lone Pine Express

- B. Local fixed-route shall be 17.0 or greater.
 - Mammoth Lakes fixed routes (Summer and Winter)

- C. Dial-a-Ride services will be 3.0 or greater.

- D. Life-Line services will be 4.0 or greater.
 - Tecopa
 - Bridgeport to Carson City
 - Benton to Bishop
 - Walker to Mammoth

- E. Market Development routes will be assessed on a three-year schedule.
 - Year one is to be considered a marketing year with efforts to communicate the existence and purpose of the service.
 - Year two will indicate the potential of the service with ridership either increasing or decreasing from year one.
 - Year three will be the final year of the pilot designation of the service. This year may not be delivered if year two experiences declines in ridership without obvious and significant reasons for the decline.

Measurement: Objective.

- Reviewed monthly and reported quarterly by Executive Director to the Board.

Standard 2: The Service Delivery rate for all regularly-scheduled services shall be 99% or greater.

Measurement: Objective.

- Reviewed monthly and reported quarterly by Executive Director to the Board.

Standard 3: On-Time Performance (OTP) – Where technology is not available for measuring OTP, manual observations may be conducted. “On Time” for Fixed Route (Intercity 395 Routes and Express Routes) is defined as less than one minute early and no later than 6 minutes after any published time.

- Dial-a-Ride services shall be 90% or greater with trips less than 30-minute wait time.
- Express and Intercity Regional Fixed Route services shall be 80% or better.
- Local fixed route services shall be 90% or better.

Measurement: Objective.

- Reviewed monthly and reported quarterly by Executive Director to the Board.

Standard 4: ESTA will make consistent efforts to explore new service and service delivery options as well as work with regional efficiencies in the delivery of transportation to the jurisdictions.

Measurement: Subjective.

- Reported annually by the Executive Director to the Board.

Standard 5: ESTA will measure customer comments taken by phone, email, and verbal report. Compliments will not be included in the ratio, but will be reported separately. The standard is .075 comments per 1,000 boardings.

Measurement: Objective.

- Reviewed monthly and reported quarterly by the Executive Director to the Board.

Section 3: Revenue and Resources

While providing excellent service to our customers and communities, we will do so within the financial resources available to us. The financial health of the organization will not be compromised, and we will work to deliver good value for the taxpayers’ investment in ESTA.

Standard 1: The annual operating budget will be based upon projected revenue and the total operating cost will not exceed the budget adopted by the Board.

Measurement: Objective.

- Tracked monthly in financial statements and reported monthly by the Administrative Manager to the Board.

Standard 2: No significant annual fiscal and compliance audit findings.

Measurement: Objective.

- Administrative Manager will report any negative audit findings to the ESTA Board as they occur and take measures to correct them.

Standard 3: Ensure that all capital procurements provide good value to our customers and our employees.

Measurement: Subjective.

- Evaluated through annual Community Perception Survey, feedback from communities and review of the 5-year capital program by the ESTA Board.

Section 4: Human Resources

Our employees are the foundation of the organization. We will support our employees in achieving excellence through training and development, teamwork, and continuous efforts at effective communication while treating each with integrity and dignity.

Standard 1: Recruit, promote and retain highly qualified employees to achieve our service standards.

Measurement: Subjective.

- Biannual assessment by Administrative Clerk and reported to the Board.

Standard 2: Provide continuous development of skills and capabilities through ongoing training and development programs that foster personal and professional growth. Training plans are developed as part of annual budget-making process, according the following minimum standards:

- A. Utility: 8 Hours per Utility person annually.
- B. Operations Supervisors: 24 Hours annually.
- C. Bus Operators: 8 Hours Annually.
- D. Administration: 24 Hours per employee annually.

Measurement: Objective.

- Supervisor evaluates annually for achievement of training objectives and reporting to the Board.

Standard 3: Support employees through creating a work environment which promotes professional development and encourages performance.

Measurement: Objective.

- Provide annual performance evaluations to administrative staff.
Conduct annual Employee Survey and report to the Board.

Standard 4: Continue to develop ESTA policies, contracts, and procedures.

Measurement: Objective.

- Measured by completion and development of policies, contracts, and procedures. Reported annually by the Executive Director to the Board.

Standard 5: Develop Succession Plan to smooth staff changes and provide cross training for more efficient operations.

Measurement: Objective.

- Measured by development and progress of a Succession Plan.
Reported annually by the Executive Director to the Board.

Section 5: Fleet and Facility

We will operate and maintain a modern and clean fleet and facilities that will be pleasing to our customers and a source of pride for our employees and our communities.

Standard 1: If funding permits, ESTA will replace revenue vehicles when they reach the useful life minimums in terms of service years or miles. We will strive for 75% of the active fleet within their useful life years. Maintain a Five-year Capital Replacement Plan and Transit Asset Management Plan.

Measurement: Objective.

- Measured annually by the Executive Director and reported to the Board.

Standard 2: Road calls will not exceed 3 per 100,000 revenue service miles. A road call is defined as all mechanical or other vehicle-related failures that affect the completion of a scheduled revenue trip or the start of the next scheduled revenue trip, including failures during deadheading and layover.

Measurement: Objective.

- Measured monthly and reported quarterly by the Executive Director to

the Board.

Standard 3: Maintain a clean, attractive fleet. Maintain our facilities so that they are safe and appealing to customers and employees.

Measurement: Subjective.

- Measured annually by Employee and Customer Perception Surveys. Reported annually by the Executive Director to the Board

Standard 4: Achieve all federal and state-mandated maintenance minimums, as well as vendor recommended maintenance schedules, for our fleet and facilities. The following standards apply:

- A. No negative CHP Annual Terminal Inspection or TDA Triennial Performance Audit findings.
- B. Preventative maintenance schedules for all equipment shall be done on a timely basis
 - 3,000-mile intervals or 45 days for GPPV vehicles
 - 5,000-mile/60-day intervals for Mammoth fleet and Bishop Cutaways.

Measurement: Objective.

- As tracked by the Operations Supervisors, and reported quarterly by the Executive Director to the Board.

Standard 5: Optimize fleet size by disposing of excess vehicles as new vehicles are obtained.

Measurement: Objective.

- Reported annually by the Executive Director to the Board.

Section 6: Innovation and Design

Standard 1: Sustain and continue to improve the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) program to improve service quality and provide efficiencies.

Measurement: Subjective.

- Measured by efforts to explore new technologies. Reported annually by the Executive Director to the Board.

Standard 2: Construct a new administration facility in Bishop by fall of 2021.

Measurement: Objective.

- Measured by the completion of the facility. Progress reported quarterly by Executive Director to the Board.

Standard 3: Begin planning for a zero emissions fleet at Mammoth, Bishop, Walker, and Lone Pine Bus Yards. Develop site infrastructure plans in coordination with The Town of Mammoth Lakes, Inyo and Mono Counties, and The City of Bishop.

Measurement: Objective.

- Measured by the completion of the Zero Emissions Plan.

Section 7: Leadership

We will strive to be one of the nation's leading small transit operators. We will work to maintain collaborative relationships within the industry, within our community, and with our stakeholders. We will develop future leaders from within our organization.

Standard 1: Maintain cooperative relationships with federal, state and local funding agencies.

Measurement: Subjective.

- Will be reviewed by staff and ESTA Board through Executive Director's evaluation.

Standard 2: Develop partnerships with stakeholders, community leaders and decision makers, while keeping them well informed of the integral role of ESTA and contributions to the communities that we serve.

Measurement: Subjective.

- Will be reviewed by staff and ESTA Board through Executive Director's evaluation.

Standard 3: Promote effective internal communications and promote the vision, mission, and values of the organization.

Measurement: Subjective.

- Will be reviewed by staff and ESTA Board through Executive Director's evaluation.