

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FRESNO, CALIFORNIA IN SUPPORT OF FRESNO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS OR FRESNO COUNTY TO PROVIDE AND RESTORE YOSEMITE AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEM (YARTS) FUNDING FOR CONTINUATION OF TEMPORARY TRIAL SERVICE AND TO RESTORE YARTS FOR THE 2023 SEASON AND ENGAGE IN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY DISCUSSIONS FOR PERMANENT SERVICE ON THE SR 41 ROUTE

WHEREAS, since 2015, Yosemite Area Regional Transit System (YARTS) has provided a transportation link to Yosemite National Park with scheduled transit service from Sonora, Merced, Mammoth Lakes, and Fresno; and

WHEREAS, the YARTS SR 41 Route from Fresno started in May 2015 with initial service operating year-round; and at some point, transitioned to seasonal service (May – September) serving Fresno three times daily making stops at Fresno Yosemite International Airport (FAT), Fresno Amtrak/Greyhound, and North Fresno, Chukchansi, Coarsegold, Oakhurst, Tenaya Lodge, Mariposa Grove, Wawona Store, and the Yosemite Valley Visitors Center; and

WHEREAS, YARTS serving FAT as the regional airport that serves as the gateway to Yosemite National Park promotes the region's tourism starting and ending point; and

WHEREAS, Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funding has been provided through Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) to support YARTS runs along the Highway 41 corridor; and

WHEREAS, Fresno COG funding through a CMAQ grant expired at the end of the season in September 2022 resulting in no service commencing this season which

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Date Adopted:

Date Approved:

Effective Date:

City Attorney Approval: 

Resolution No. _____

operates May – September 2023 and creating a void for access to Yosemite National Park for City of Fresno residents and visitors while other routes from remaining valley communities served by YARTS will not be affected as these routes are supported by their respective counties; and

WHEREAS, to continue with runs from Fresno along the Highway 41 corridor, a financial commitment is needed from Fresno COG or Fresno County that may be identified from funding sources other than the expired CMAQ funding; and

WHEREAS, continuation of a temporary trial service for the 2023 season to restore the Highway 41 route from Fresno with one daily connecting in Oakhurst and continuing to Yosemite National Park is estimated at \$75,000 to operate the 2023 season; and

WHEREAS, potential funding improvements in service could offset total funding required to being reduced; a potential cost sharing agreement with Chukchansi; and a potential base fare increase; and

WHEREAS, YARTS provides environmentally friendly and sustainable access for Fresno residents and visitors to access Yosemite National Park as an alternative to driving into the park; and

WHEREAS, YARTS as an alternative to driving is especially important during the periods when a reservation and parking fee is required to access the park or when vehicles within the park are restricted; and

WHEREAS, while YARTS continued to operate service during the pandemic, ridership took a substantial hit yet gradually returned during the 2022 summer season, with 2,106 seasonal riders boarding YARTS in Fresno including FAT, Amtrak/Greyhound, and North Fresno; and

WHEREAS, YARTS service from FAT provides a ground transportation link for travelers coming to the region specifically to visit Yosemite National Park with one airline partner's baggage policy a popular option the hiking community possibly shifting the airport of choice to Fresno from Sacramento and the Bay Area for arrival and departure for the park; and

WHEREAS, there is value for the City of Fresno and Fresno County in the continuation of service that provides access to one of the nation's most beautiful national parks; and

WHEREAS, YARTS provides convenient, affordable, and sustainable transportation to Yosemite National Park and was a growing alternative, its true value has not been realized because it was not promoted in a manner that would encourage ridership of both city of Fresno residents and visitors to the region; and

WHEREAS, without the continuation of YARTS service from Fresno, the city of Fresno will be the only major city on the existing route that will not be served with a direct transit and environmentally friendly option to experience Yosemite National Park.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Fresno as follows:

1. The Fresno City Council support a Resolution in support of a financial commitment from Fresno Council of Governments and/or Fresno County for an estimated \$75,000 to continue operation of the trial service providing YARTS Highway 41 Route for the 2023 seasonal service to/from Fresno.

2. The City of Fresno encourages Fresno County to engage in participation on the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) with surrounding counties, including Madera, Mariposa, Tuolumne, Sonora, Merced, and Mammoth Lakes.

3. Request Fresno County engage the City of Fresno/COG on the level of transit needed for the Hwy 41 YARTS route for the 2024 Summer Schedule and forward.

4. This resolution shall be effective upon final approval.

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF FRESNO) ss.
CITY OF FRESNO)

I, TODD STERMER, City Clerk of the City of Fresno, certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Council of the City of Fresno, at a regular meeting held on the _____ day of _____ 2023.

AYES :
NOES :
ABSENT :
ABSTAIN :

Mayor Approval: _____, 2023
Mayor Approval/No Return: _____, 2023
Mayor Veto: _____, 2023
Council Override Vote: _____, 2023

TODD STERMER, CMC
City Clerk

By: _____
Deputy Date

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
ANDREW JANZ
City Attorney

By: _____
Brandon M. Collet Date
Supervising Deputy City Attorney