

**Executive Summary**  
**2015 Yuba Sutter Short Range Transit Plan**  
*Prepared by LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.*

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This Short Range Transit Plan (SRTTP) study was conducted to assess transit and related transportation issues in Yuba and Sutter Counties and to provide a “road map” for improvements to the public transit program over the upcoming five years. The study included a review of existing transit operations, public outreach, evaluation of alternatives, and preparation of a comprehensive strategy of short-range service, capital, and institutional improvements with a supporting financial and implementation plan.

**EXISTING COMMUNITY CONDITIONS**

Yuba and Sutter Counties have a combined population estimate of 168,690 (2013). The growth in population in both Yuba and Sutter Counties has outpaced the growth rate in California over the past two decades, and is projected to continue to outpace the statewide growth rate, resulting in a population in 2020 that is 11.5 percent greater than in 2010, and a population in 2035 that is 39.1 percent greater than in 2010. Of the total population, 12.1 percent are youths age 10 to 17, 11.7 percent are elderly age 65 or above, 14.3 percent are persons with disabilities, 18.2 percent are persons living in households below the poverty line, and 6.4 percent are living in households without a vehicle. The elderly population is expected to more than double from 2010 to 2035.

**EXISTING YUBA-SUTTER TRANSIT AUTHORITY SERVICES**

Yuba-Sutter Transit Authority, operating as Yuba-Sutter Transit, provides public transit service in Yuba and Sutter Counties (as well as commuter service to Sacramento) under a joint powers agreement between Sutter and Yuba Counties and the Cities of Marysville and Yuba City. Yuba-Sutter Transit is directed by an eight-member Board of Directors composed of two elected representatives appointed by each of the four member entities. All of Yuba-Sutter Transit’s maintenance and operations are provided through Transdev Services, Inc. under contract with the Yuba-Sutter Transit Authority. Current services can be summarized as follows:

- **Local Fixed Routes** – Six local fixed routes are operated generally from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM Monday through Friday and 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM on Saturday. Three routes provide service every 30 minutes and three routes operate hourly on weekdays, while only two routes provide 30 minute service on Saturdays. There is no Sunday service of any kind. The one-way general public fare is \$1.00 with a 50 percent discount available.
- **Dial-A-Ride** -- Yuba-Sutter Transit provides curb to curb demand response service within the general Yuba City, Marysville, Linda, and Olivehurst area. Priority for DAR service is given to disabled passengers who are unable to use the fixed route as well as to senior passengers. General public passengers traveling to or from locations more than half a mile from a fixed route may use Dial-A-Ride, along with evening service after 6:00 PM. DAR service is offered from 6:30 AM to 9:30 PM on weekdays and 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM on Saturdays. The general public one-way fare is \$4.00 during the day and \$3.00 after 6:00 PM. Seniors, youth (age 5 – 12), passengers with disabilities and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) eligible passengers may ride one-way for \$2.00 during the day

and \$1.50 in the evening. Dial-A-Ride is also the complementary paratransit service for ADA eligible passengers.

- Rural Routes – Three rural route services are provided. The Foothill Route connects the communities of Brownsville, Oregon House, Willow Glen and Loma Rica to Marysville, twice a day every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The Live Oak Route travels between Live Oak and Marysville/Yuba City two times a day on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The Wheatland Route connects Wheatland to Linda and Marysville on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with two round trips per day. The basic one-way fare is \$2.00, or \$1.00 for discount passengers. All three rural routes offer deviation service within ¼ mile of the route with an advance reservation.
- Sacramento Routes -- Yuba-Sutter Transit provides both peak hour commuter service and mid-day transit service to Sacramento via both SR 99 and 70. It operates nine morning runs (6 via SR 99 and 3 via SR 70) to Sacramento and nine afternoon runs from Sacramento (6 via SR 99 and 3 via SR 70) Monday through Friday. Limited “reverse commute” runs are also available. The one-way fare is \$4.00, with a monthly pass available for \$128. Three Mid-day Express round trips are also provided. The general public one-way fare is the same as the commuter service, \$4.00, but a 50 percent discounted fare is available to seniors, youth, and persons with disabilities.

Annual one-way passenger trips have increased significantly over the organization’s 40 year history, reaching 1,279,575 in FY 2013-14. Ridership gains have been posted in every year but one since FY 1989-90. Over 80 percent of Yuba-Sutter Transit ridership occurs on the local fixed routes, followed by 12 percent on the commuter routes, 5 percent on Dial-A-Ride, and less than one percent on rural routes. In terms of the proportion of vehicle service hours by service type, fixed route service operates the greatest proportion of hours (56 percent), DAR represents 27 percent, Sacramento Routes represent 15 percent, while two percent of system vehicle service hours are operated on the Rural Routes.

The operating costs for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 equaled \$6,286,800. Operations and maintenance compose the largest element (\$4.4 million) followed by fuel and tires at just under \$1,000,000, administrative costs at \$482,000, insurance expenses at \$242,600, and utilities and supplies cost around \$111,000 annually.

The revenue sources required to support Yuba-Sutter Transit’s administration, operations and maintenance total \$6,320,692 in FY 2013-14. The largest source of income for Yuba-Sutter Transit is Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5307 grant funds for urbanized areas which account for 31.6 percent of the operating budget, followed by Transportation Development Act (TDA) Local Transportation Funds (LTF) funds (29.6 percent of the revenues). Passenger fares account for 22.9 percent of the operating budget, while TDA State Transportation Assistance (STA) accounts for 8.7 percent. Other FTA grant programs such as Section 5311 (for rural areas) and FTA Jobs Access Reverse Commute grant funds compose around 3 percent each of the operating budget. Other operations funding sources include advertising and interest revenues.

While a performance review indicates that the transit services are relatively cost-effective and productive, the SRTP process identified on-time performance as a significant issue. Of all local route runs, 27 percent were found to operate 5 or more minutes behind the published schedule, with the poorest route (Route 5) late 45 percent of the time.

A comparison of Yuba-Sutter Transit with peer systems indicates that the productivity of the Yuba-Sutter Transit local routes is relatively high, productivity on Yuba-Sutter Transit Dial-A-Ride service is also relatively good, the commuter service productivity is relatively low due to the long travel distance and the fact that lower-ridership mid-day service is offered, the farebox return ratio (23 percent) compares well with the peer systems, and the cost per vehicle-hour of service is 6 percent below the peer average.

As of March 2014, the Yuba-Sutter Transit vehicle fleet consisted of 51 revenue vehicles and 7 non-revenue vehicles. The Yuba-Sutter Transit system serves a total of 283 bus stops.

## **OTHER TRANSIT PROVIDERS IN YUBA – SUTTER COUNTIES**

In addition to Yuba-Sutter Transit, there are several other transportation providers serving the region: American Cancer Society Road To Recovery volunteer program, Pride Industries, Easter Seals Adult Day Program & Fine Arts Program, Head Start, and Colusa County Transit. Also, the FREED Center for Independent Living provides vouchers for Yuba-Sutter Transit Dial-A-Ride at discounted prices to persons with disabilities, seniors and low income residents.

## **SURVEYS**

A substantial focus of the study was a series of surveys. **Fixed Route on-board** surveys were conducted to assess ridership patterns and the rider's opinion for each existing Yuba-Sutter Transit existing service. The surveys were distributed onboard as well as available online. All runs were surveyed, resulting in 1,095 valid survey responses. **Yuba College student** surveys were offered online, to consider the transit patterns of student riders as well as their opinion of the service. There were a total of 130 respondents. **Dial-A-Ride onboard surveys** generated responses from 91 individual riders. Onboard surveys were conducted for the **rural routes**, yielding 18 completed surveys. An online **Live Oak** community survey was offered, with 102 residents participating. Finally, a survey for **Sacramento Commuter** riders was conducted online, resulting in a total of 220 respondents.

## **SUMMARY OF TRANSIT DEMAND**

The demand for transit services was evaluated, focusing on commuter demand, college student demand, general public demand, and rural demand. Demand is forecast to increase due to changes in population, fuel price, aging of the population, and growth in transit use among young adults.

## **YUBA-SUTTER SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN**

### **Service Plan**

#### Local Routes

- Revise Route 2 to Improve On-Time Performance – Route 2 should be revised to eliminate the Washington/Clark/Ainsley loop, instead staying on Gray Avenue, in order to improve the current poor on-time performance on Route 2.
- Revise Route 4A to Serve Linda Rather Than Yuba City – Besides providing better connections for a larger proportion of passengers, this will also reduce in-vehicle travel time and enhance access to the Peach Tree Clinic.

- Peak Tripper Bus Service – As one strategy to address the poor on-time performance of the Local Routes, “tripper buses” should be operated on busy ridership days.
- Extend the Service Day One Additional Hour on Weekdays and Saturday – The service day on all local routes should be extended by one hour on weekdays and Saturdays.
- Implement Yuba College Sutter County Center Shuttle Service – A dedicated half-hourly shuttle should be implemented between the Yuba College Sutter County Center and the Walton Terminal, so long as a student fee election (scheduled for spring of 2016) is successful in generating funds for this service improvement.
- Expand Route 1 and 3 to 20 Minute Service Frequency and Modify Routes 3 and 6 – This set of improvements will increase the frequency on Routes 1 and 3 from 30 minutes to 20 minutes on both weekdays and Saturdays, and revise Routes 3 and 6 to provide service to new neighborhoods (including the Edgewater area south of Yuba College and the Olivetree Senior Apartments), reduce running time, improve passenger safety, and improve on-time performance.

Together, these service improvements will substantially increase the quality of transit service throughout the system, particularly in the Olivehurst and Linda areas. Overall, ridership will increase on the order of 150,000 passenger-trips per year.

#### Commuter Service

- Implement Earlier SR 99 PM Commuter Run – An earlier afternoon departure will be added to the SR 99 corridor commuter schedule.

#### Rural Routes

- Expand Live Oak Service to 5 Days per Week and Revise Wheatland Service to 2 Runs per day 3 Days per Week – This will enhance the ability of Live Oak residents to access the Yuba City and Marysville area, expand Wheatland resident’s choices regarding days of travel, and avoid the need to purchase an additional bus.

#### Dial-A-Ride Service

- Expand Dial-A-Ride Service – Annual vehicle-hours should be increased over time by 16 percent, with two additional vans added to peak operations.
- Reduce Dial-A-Ride Service Area – To focus limited resources on those areas that can be most efficiently served, the Dial-A-Ride service area should be reduced (based on a staff review) to exclude areas of low density or that require excessively long trips to serve.
- Gradually Increase the Definition of Senior from 62 to 65 – This will better focus limited resources on passengers with the greatest need. The minimum age will be stepped up in one year increments for each of the next three years.

- Eliminate the General Public Dial-A-Ride Eligibility – Daytime Dial-A-Ride service should be limited to seniors and persons with disabilities only, in order to streamline services and focus them on the populations with greatest need.

### **Additional Service Enhancements for Consideration – 2020 to 2025**

- Half-hourly service on Route 4.
- Additional Commuter Service runs, as needed to address vehicle capacity constraints or changes in commuter demand.
- Additional extension of weekday Local Route service later into the evening.
- Limited Sunday Local Route service.
- Fixed route service to Sutter County Center, replacing the shuttle service.
- Five-day-a-week service on the Foothill Route.
- Rural route service to Plumas Lake.

### **Capital Improvements Plan**

- Transit Fleet Improvements – 18 larger buses and 16 smaller buses will require replacement between 2015 and 2023. In addition, two Dial-A-Ride buses will be purchased for expansion of the program, along with two local fixed route expansion buses. The Dial-A-Ride/Rural Route fleet should be transitioned to low-floor vehicles to improve the ease of entry/exit and to improve passenger and driver safety. In 2017, the Supervisor vehicle (a 1998 model year Dodge Activan) will be replaced.
- Transit Center and Bus Stop Improvements – Key transit centers will be expanded. Focused studies should be conducted to investigate off-street facilities at Alturas/Shasta and North Beale Road. An additional 22 new shelters will be provided at other key bus stops. All bus stops will be provided with new, consistent and attractive signs.
- Transit Operations Facility Improvements -- Ongoing funding of modest improvements to the Transit Operations Facility is included in this plan. This could support installation of solar panels to reduce utility costs and help cut greenhouse gas emissions.
- Advanced Technology -- Real-time Traveler Information systems, Wifi service on Commuter buses, and Computer-Aided Dispatch software.

### **Management Plan**

- Expand Road Supervision -- Additional contractor supervision is recommended to ensure that drivers do not take breaks beyond those required or operate the routes in a manner that adds to on-time performance problems.

- Adopt Updated Goals and Performance Measures -- Revised goals, objectives and standards are recommended for adoption that are more in line with current operating conditions while still providing appropriate incentives to improve services.
- Expand Management Staff by One Position -- One additional staff position is recommended for the management staff, at a junior to mid-range level.

## **Financial Plan**

Operating and administrative costs by the fifth year of the plan will total approximately \$8,538,000, which is 15 percent over the base-case cost of \$7,445,000. By FY 2019/20, ridership is forecast to equal 1,693,000 one-way passenger-trips per year, which is 328,400 trips (24 percent) over the base case forecast of 1,364,500. The capital costs total \$12,591,800 over the five-year period. In addition to passenger fare revenues, this Financial Plan incorporates the following funding sources:

- Yuba College student fees, starting in the Fall 2016 Semester, offset the loss of existing student fares and fund approximately 60 percent of the cost of the Sutter County Center shuttle service.
- Feather River Air Quality Management District funds are used to continue to provide low-cost pass rates.
- FTA 5316 (Jobs Access Reverse Commute) funds are used for operations.
- FTA Section 5307 (Urban Program) is used for operations and the purchase of local route buses.
- FTA Section 5311 (Rural Program) is used for rural operations and the purchase of one commuter bus, reflecting that the Commuter Service serves rural areas.
- FTA Section 5317 (New Freedom) funds are allocated to the North Beale Road improvement program
- FTA 5339 (Formula Capital Program) funds Dial-A-Ride vehicle purchases, along with a portion of the Local Route bus purchases.
- Proposition 1B PTMISEA (Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement Account) Program funds are used for bus purchases.
- Proposition 1B Safety and Security Program funds are used for video monitoring, wifi improvements and bus stop / transit center improvements.
- Low Carbon Transit Operations Program funds are used for transit center and bus stop improvements, along with facility improvements that reduce carbon emissions.
- State Transit Assistance funds are used as funding for transit operations and for bus and van purchases, bus stop improvements, facility improvements, and a new supervisor vehicle.

- Local Transportation Funds are used for transit operation and for budget contingency.

Both the operating financial plan and the capital financial plan are balanced in each of the plan years. While a fare increase is not included in the plan, a fare increase (excluding Commuter Service) may be necessary in FY 2017/18, depending on the results of a student fee election and other financial shifts.

## **Implementation Plan**

### Fiscal Year 2015-16

- Revise Route 2 and Route 4A (September), including preparation of new schedules
- Expand Live Oak Service to five days per week, and revise Wheatland service to three days per week (July)
- Revise Dial-A-Ride program to eliminate general public daytime service, reduce service area, revise age definition of senior, and expand capacity (September)
- Conduct passenger surveys and implement earlier SR 99 PM commuter run (September)
- Define specific proposal for Yuba College student fee and hold election (Spring)
- Implement Connect Card, and closely monitor ridership and fare revenue impacts
- Start implementing bus stop and transit center improvements and bus stop sign replacement
- Expand road supervision to help address on-time performance issues
- Fund the North Beale Road project
- Implement the remainder of the on-board and park-and-ride video system

### Fiscal Year 2016-17

- Assuming a successful Yuba College student fee election, implement Sutter County Center shuttle service and eliminate fares for Yuba College students on local fixed routes, at the beginning of the Fall Semester
- Extend weekday and Saturday Local Route service by one hour, and trim Evening Dial-A-Ride to start at 7:00 PM
- Implement peak tripper service on Local Routes to improve on-time performance
- Continue implementing bus stop and transit center improvements and bus stop sign replacement
- Implement real-time transit information system
- Establish and fill additional administrative position
- Finalize plans for improvements to Routes 1, 3 and 6
- Review the need for a fare increase
- Purchase new Supervisor van
- Conduct a study of a potential new transit center to replace the current stop at Alturas/Shasta

### Fiscal Year 2017-18

- Continue to expand Dial-A-Ride capacity
- Continue implementing bus stop and transit center improvements

- Implement 20-minute service frequency on Routes 1 and 3, along with potential realignment of Routes 3 and 6
- Purchase seven replacement Commuter Service buses
- Conduct study of a potential new transit center at North Beale Road

#### Fiscal Year 2018-19

- Purchase 11 low-floor Dial-A-Ride vans
- Continue to expand Dial-A-Ride capacity
- Continue implementing bus stop and transit center improvements

#### Fiscal Year 2019-20

- Purchase 13 buses for Local Fixed Route Service
- Continue to expand Dial-A-Ride capacity
- Continue implementing bus stop and transit center improvements