

## 5. Dial-A-Ride Service

Dial-A-Ride (DAR) is an advanced reservation, demand response shared ride service that is provided on a first come, first served basis to eligible passengers.

### Current Service Area

DAR will pick up passengers at the curb and transport passengers to and from any address within the service area (shown on the following page as Figure 5-1).

The service area in several locations extends significantly beyond the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile requirement of the ADA Paratransit guidelines. Drivers will also take passengers a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile beyond the boundaries by special request.

As seen in Figure 5-1, there are several fixed routes that are contiguous with the boundaries of the fixed route system. The boundary needs to be expanded to formally include all areas within the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile limit for ADA eligible passengers only.

### Service Hours

Service hours are provided:

Monday to Friday:	6:30 am to 9:30 pm
Saturday:	8:30 am to 5:30 pm
Sunday/Holidays	No service

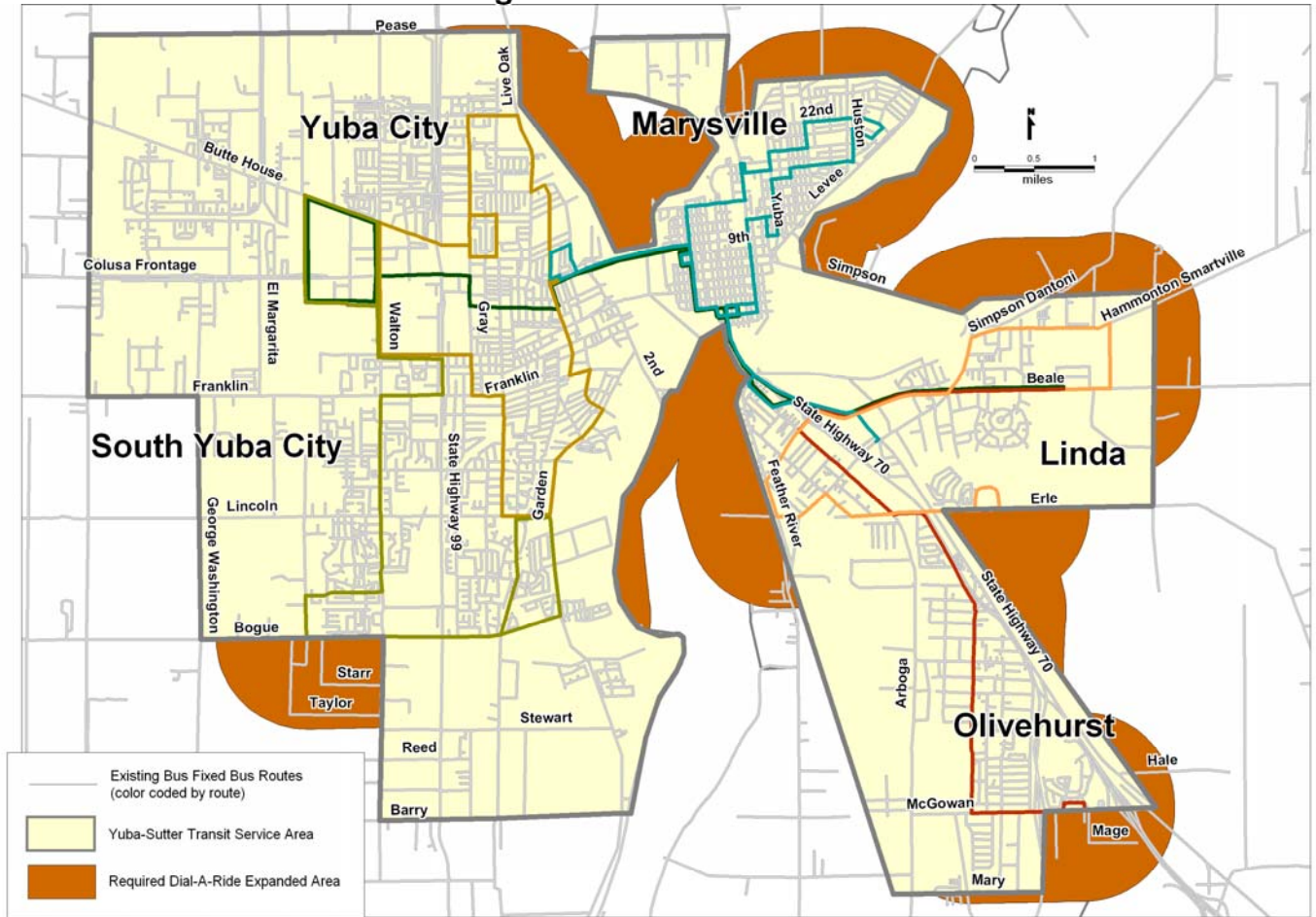
These hours far exceed what is provided by the fixed-route service. On weekdays, the local fixed route services generally stop service at 6:30 pm. The service hours for DAR exceed the requirement of ADA Paratransit service. The dark brown areas show conceptually how the boundaries of Yuba-Sutter Transit should formally be expanded in order to meet ADA regulations.

### Eligibility

There are essentially four types of eligibility provided for DAR services.

1. On weekdays from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm, and on Saturdays from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm, DAR is designed to meet the special needs of seniors age 62 and over and persons with qualifying disabilities, especially those who are unable to use Yuba-Sutter Transit's local fixed route service.
2. On weekdays from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm, and on Saturdays from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm, non-senior, disabled or ADA eligible passengers traveling to or from locations more than one half mile from a fixed route service are eligible to receive DAR service on a space available basis.

Figure 5-1  
Existing Dial-A-Ride Service Area



Required Dial-A-Ride Expanded Area based on 3/4 Mile Buffer Around Existing Fixed Bus Routes

**Please note: the expanded area is only required for ADA eligible passengers. Some of the orange expanded area is in known flood plain areas that would only require service if ADA eligible residents lived in those areas. In several cases, this is very unlikely**

3. On weekday evenings, DAR operates without passenger eligibility restrictions from 6:00 pm to 9:30 pm.
4. Valid senior/disabled/ADA eligible photo ID cards issued by another transit agency are honored up to 21 days from the start of utilizing DAR services.

A certification form is utilized to provide eligibility for the 50% discount fare for seniors (age 62+)/disabled and ADA eligible individuals. The Photo ID is utilized for discount fares on both the DAR and local fixed route services.

Yuba-Sutter Transit far exceeds the eligibility requirement of ADA. Because the service is open to seniors and person with disabilities, Yuba-Sutter Transit has elected not to require ADA Paratransit eligibility certification.

**Fares**

Figure 5-2 shows the existing fare structure of Yuba-Sutter Transit Dial-A-Ride services.

**Figure 5-2  
Dial-A-Ride Fares**

<b>Fare Type</b>	<b>Fare</b>
Basic One-Way Fare	\$4.00
After 6:00 pm	\$3.00
Senior (Age 62+)Disabled/ADA eligible	\$2.00
After 6:00 pm	\$1.50
Youth (Age 5-12)	\$2.00
After 6:00 pm	\$1.50
Children Age 4 and under with adult	Free
Transfers (to a local route)	Free
Discount ticket book (\$12.00 value)	\$10.00

The fare structure is in compliance with Federal Transit Administration and ADA regulations.

**Scheduling**

Passengers can call up to two weeks in advance for a trip. A review of the dispatch logs during a site visit revealed a significant number of standing reservations, commonly called subscription trips. There were plentiful open slots on most scheduled vehicle runs for additional trips to be added the next day. Observations of the dispatch center found that dispatchers were also able to accommodate requests for service for that same day.

Yuba-Sutter Transit provides a very high level of DAR service for the residents of the service area. There were no trip denials of ADA eligible passengers.

**Recent Performance**

The past four fiscal years, the productivity has been quite high for a general public DAR service, and the operating cost per passenger quite low compared to industry standards. As shown in Figure 5-3, the DAR productivity was 3.9 passengers per hour in FY 2005/06, including the evening service. The ridership statistics were aided in the past couple of years by utilizing a commuter bus to transport a large number of developmentally disabled individuals to a workshop. This trip was discontinued and has had a significant impact on overall productivity in the past year.

Visual observations of the dispatch operation and DAR records indicate that a reasonable effort is made to group trips in the manual dispatching system. For the size of the service area, a projected productivity of 3.3 passengers is considered good and is above the minimum threshold of 3 passengers per hour. However, efforts will need to be made to better manage the overlap of shifts when at peak times there are 11 vehicles on the road on some days during shift overlap times, according to the driver logs.

**Figure 5-3  
Recent Performance of Dial-A-Ride**

	<b>FY 2003/04 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004/05 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005/06 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2006/07 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2007/08 Projected**</b>
<b>Base Statistics</b>					
Passengers	68,657	57,920	70,666	69,036	62,868
Revenue Vehicle Hours	18,329	17,452	18,229	18,779	19,069
Revenue Vehicle Miles	271,085	246,379	242,409	235,919	228,542
Operating Cost*	\$ 883,641	\$ 956,021	\$1,048,208	\$1,165,136	\$ 1,196,337
<b>System Performance Indicators</b>					
Operating cost/revenue vehicle hour	\$ 48.21	\$ 54.78	\$ 57.50	\$ 62.04	\$ 62.74
Operating cost/passenger	\$ 12.87	\$ 16.51	\$ 14.83	\$ 16.88	\$ 19.03
Passengers/ revenue vehicle hour	3.7	3.3	3.9	3.7	3.3
Passengers/revenue vehicle mile	0.25	0.24	0.29	0.29	0.28
* Based on performance audit methodology of allocating cost based on revenue service hours					
** Based on the first six months of the year					

On a monthly basis, the DAR contractor provides an evaluation of on-time performance for service. For four sample months reviewed, 99% of the trips are being provided in the 15 minute window.

**Performance by Time of Day and Day of the Week**

As Figure 5-4 indicates, DAR service is most productive during weekdays, at 3.8 passengers per hour in FY 06-07. On Saturdays, DAR service productivity falls to 2.3 passengers per hour, a normal drop-off in productivity.

The productivity during the weekday evening hours from 6:00 to 9:30 is exemplary at 2.9 passengers per hour.

**Figure 5-4  
Dial-A-Ride Performance By Time of Day**

	Dial-A-Ride FY 06-07			
	Weekday	Saturday	Evening	Total
Vehicle Revenue Hours	15,415	977	2,387	18,779
Vehicle Revenue Miles	192,827	11,041	32,051	235,919
Ridership	59,697	2,225	7,114	69,036
Ridership/Revenue Hour	3.9	2.3	3.0	3.7
Ridership/Revenue Mile	0.31	0.20	0.22	0.29

**QuEST Senior Transportation Program, Medi-Car**

In July 1999, the Medi-Car Non-Emergency Senior Medical Transportation service was transferred to Yuba-Sutter Transit following the sudden closure of Yuba-Sutter Senior Services. The Medi-Car program was transferred to a local non-profit operator, QuEST in July 2001 though Yuba-Sutter Transit remains the registered owner of the single minivan that is used for this service.

The Medi-Car program currently provides non-emergency round trip transportation to senior residents in Yuba and Sutter counties to medical, clinical, dental, and pharmaceutical appointments. This service is currently available from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Thursday. The service is available to those seniors in the service area who are unable to use the current Yuba-Sutter Transit services, due to capacity, physical limitation or because they may live outside of Yuba-Sutter Transit service area.

The individuals utilizing Medi-Car services are unable to afford taxi service. There is no requirement to pay. A donation is suggested for the transportation service provided, and participants contribute what they can afford for the ride. Donations are received in a sealed envelope to ensure complete confidentiality and privacy for the participating senior.

All potential Medi-Car passengers must first register with QuEST before they can begin service. Seniors are screened for age and income level. All appointments are confirmed twenty-four (24) hours in advance of scheduled transportation service.

Area 4 Agency on Aging provides funding in the amount of \$24,936.00 from July 1st, 2007 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Area 4 Agency on Aging funding allocates \$16,195 for Sutter County residents and \$8,741 for Yuba County residents. This funding ensures services three days per week for seniors.

Sutter County Community Service Block Grants awarded QuEST \$10,000 in 2007. These funds were used to expand the Medi-Car service to four days per week. Sutter County Community Service Block Grants awarded QuEST \$11,667.00 for 2008. Yuba County Community Service Block Grants awarded QuEST \$3,876 for 2008. QuEST receives donations from program participants of approximately \$2,500 per year. All grant funds and donations are used to maintain service eight hours per day, four days per week.

In discussing the future transportation needs of its clients, QuEST identified four areas of needs:

1. To provide transportation service five days per week, eight hours per day. Expansion to five days a week is a potential FTA 5317 grant application, which would require a 50% match for operating assistance..
2. To secure a newer, fuel efficient, accessible vehicle. Yuba-Sutter Transit is currently working on a FTA 5310 grant application to meet this need.
3. Use Area 4 Agency on Aging Senior Transportation delivery vehicles to transport seniors that do not require a wheelchair accessible vehicle. The delivery vehicles would be available for afternoon appointments, after meals have been delivered to home bound seniors.
4. Coordinate appointments for seniors living in the same area, to Doctor's appointments, in the same area.

The latter two coordination functions could be handled as part of a Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA) function, enabled by the Transportation Development Act. SACOG has designated Yuba-Sutter Transit as a CTSA, but no funding is provided. Consideration should be given to re-designate the CTSA with QuEST and to provide sufficient funding to provide a coordination function with human service agency transportation.

It is important to note that the demand for non-emergency medical transportation will continue to grow. Equally important is to recognize that Yuba-Sutter Transit is a public transportation provider and cannot meet all of the human service agency transportation

needs. Yuba-Sutter Transit should be a coordination partner, such as providing technical support in procuring a vehicle, but should allow the private, non-profit sector to fill the gaps that cannot be met with public transportation services.

## **Dial-A-Ride Service Alternatives**

### **Within Existing Dial-A-Ride Boundaries**

1. *Keep total vehicle revenue hours at the same levels.* The limiting of demand would likely lead to the elimination of same day trip scheduling. It might also require reductions in evening DAR service. With the population and employment growth in Yuba and Sutter County, in addition to the aging population, this alternative is not recommended.
2. *Increase weekday revenue vehicle hours by 500 revenue vehicle hours annually, during daytime hours.* This is about a 3% increase over currently levels, which will only partially keep up with population and demographic demands. This would increase DAR availability in the service core, especially for the growing aging population, and growth at the periphery of the service area. However, the expansion would only occur if weekday daytime passengers per revenue vehicle hour exceed 3.5 passengers per hour. This alternative is recommended. In 2008 dollars, the annual increase in revenue vehicle hours would cost approximately \$22,000 per year.
3. *Consider operating Route 1 until 9:30 pm with two vehicles and supplementing it with a minimum of three DAR vehicles.* On a cost per trip basis, the evening DAR service costs approximately \$16.88 per passenger, compared to the average of \$3.89 for local fixed route services. An evening Route 1 fixed route would likely be more like \$7-9 per passenger, but would likely be less than DAR costs. In the short-term this alternative is not recommended.

### **Outside Existing DAR boundaries**

The following are alternatives for providing DAR service to areas outside existing Yuba-Sutter Transit service boundaries.

1. *Maintain the existing boundaries and do not expand DAR services.* New growth areas such as Plumas Lake would be served by rural routes, similar to the Wheatland and Live Oak areas. This policy is consistent with current policies of Yuba-Sutter Transit. The progression of service levels to date has been to provide as little as one day of service with one round trip if there is reservation. DAR service is provided within the rural area, such as done in Wheatland and Live Oak. As demand is demonstrated, the number of days of service would be increased, the number of round trips would be increased, and checkpoint DAR

- service would allow people to access the rural routes without making a reservation. This hybrid of fixed route and fixed schedule with flexible route and fixed schedule (at the checkpoints) encourages efficiency.
2. *Extend the DAR boundaries to provide minimum levels of transit service to growth areas at the fringe of the existing service area.* DAR passengers can travel anywhere from Point A to Point B within the Yuba-Sutter Transit service area although the dispatcher can require an able bodied passenger to utilize a fixed route segment for part of the trip if a longer trip is required. The existing boundaries far exceed what is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, which requires service within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of a fixed route. If a new fixed route is implemented, there would be a requirement to extend the boundary up to  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles from a fixed route. With the growth at the fringe of the Yuba-Sutter Transit service area shown in Chapter 2, Yuba-Sutter Transit management and the Yuba-Sutter Transit Board will receive constant requests to expand the DAR boundaries. It is recommended that the boundaries only be expanded when the boundary is beyond the expansion of fixed route service recommended in Chapter 4.
  3. *Consider the provision DAR for intra- rural community trips in communities that exceed a population of 7,500.* Based on the analysis of transit needs in Chapter 2, the communities of Live Oak, Wheatland, Plumas Lake and South Sutter will all attain this population status by the year 2018. Most of the demand for public transit service will be for connections to medical and shopping opportunities in Marysville and Yuba, with the exception of southern Yuba and Sutter Counties where the demand will likely be to Sacramento destinations. The existing Sacramento Midday Route and the rural route checkpoint services satisfy most of the demand in Wheatland and Live Oak.

At what point, if any, should a rural community such as Wheatland or Live Oak have a DAR vehicle available for weekday service for trips within its community? In many communities across California, a one or two-bus dial-a-ride service is provided for intra-community trips, typically in communities that are over 5,000 in population. It is recommended that Yuba-Sutter Transit evaluate dial-a-ride service in rural communities when they reach 7,500 population threshold. Money is not included in the financial plan for this before FY 2012/13, but could be considered for implementation in FY 2013/2014 or beyond.

## **Fare Policy**

In 2009/2010, the adult cash fare for DAR would increase from \$4.00 to \$5.00, and the cash fare for seniors, disabled, and youth would increase to \$2.00 to \$2.50. The evening DAR fares would remain the same.

In 2011/2012, the adult cash fare would remain at \$5.00, but the cash fare for seniors, disabled and youth would increase from \$2.50 to \$3.00. The evening DAR cash fares would increase from \$3.00 to \$4.00 and the cash fare for seniors, disabled, and youth would increase from \$1.50 to \$2.00.