

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

YUBA-SUTTER TRANSIT AUTHORITY PROPOSED LOCAL & RURAL ROUTE CHANGES

DATE: Thursday, October 16, 2008
TIME: 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Yuba County Board of Supervisors Chambers
Yuba County Government Center
915 8th Street
Marysville, California

The Yuba-Sutter Transit Board of Directors has set a public hearing to receive comments on proposed local and rural route and schedule changes that, if approved, would become effective on or after January 5, 2009. The proposed changes are summarized below and described in detail in the Draft Local & Rural Route Service Plan that is now posted on-line at www.yubasuttertransit.com. Copies of the on-line posting can be requested from the Yuba-Sutter Transit Administrative Office at 2100 B Street, Marysville, CA during normal business hours or call (530) 634-6880 to request one by mail.

- Add half-hour weekday service frequency on Route 2;
- Modify the existing Route 5 service south of Lincoln Road to operate as a clock-wise, one-way loop on Lincoln Road, Garden Highway, Bogue Road, Germaine Drive, Pebble Beach Drive and Walton Avenue eliminating all service west of Germaine Drive and on Railroad Avenue making related schedule and stop changes as necessary;
- Adjust all existing Route 3 schedules by 13 minutes to depart Yuba College at 15 and 45 minutes past the hour making related schedule changes as necessary;
- Adjust all existing Route 4B schedules by 2 minutes;
- Adjust all existing Route 6 schedules by 12 minutes to depart Yuba College at 50 minutes past the hour making related schedule changes as necessary;
- Expand the Live Oak Route to two round trips each service day (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) and set the resulting schedules to allow for half and full day service to Yuba City and Marysville; and,
- Modify the Foothill Route to eliminate the advance reservation requirement; drop direct service to Challenge, Dobbins, Browns Valley and District 10; establish timed bus stops in Brownsville, Oregon House, Willow Glen and Loma Rica; and, make related schedule adjustments to improve connections to other routes in Marysville including service to Sacramento.

Interested persons may submit testimony regarding the proposed changes, either verbally or in writing, before or at the public hearing. Written testimony can be provided by mail to Yuba-Sutter Transit at 2100 B Street, Marysville, CA 95901, by FAX at (530) 634-6888 or by e-mail to the Transit Manager at keith_martin@sbcglobal.net. All written communication must be received either at or prior to the hearing to be considered. Verbal testimony can be provided in person at the hearing or by telephone prior to the hearing. Call (530) 634-6880 for more information.

**YUBA-SUTTER TRANSIT
DRAFT LOCAL & RURAL ROUTE SERVICE PLAN
EFFECTIVE JANUARY 5, 2009**

REVISED SEPTEMBER 8, 2008

1. Half Hour Weekday Service Frequency on Route 2:

The largest component of the draft service plan is the proposed operation of half hour service frequency on Route 2 on weekdays. One of the most important factors in any fixed route system is service frequency – the length of time between buses on the same route. Since 2001, two of the six local fixed routes (Routes 1 and 3) have operated on half hour frequencies each weekday. Half hour Saturday service on these same two routes was added in 2006. All other fixed routes operate on hourly frequencies Monday through Saturday. The operation of half hour weekday service has been planned for Route 2 since the adoption of the 2003 Yuba-Sutter Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) and will finally be possible with the upcoming expansion of the local fixed route fleet.

When half hour weekday service was being considered for Routes 1 and 3 in 2000, ridership on these routes ranged from 18 to 24 passengers per vehicle service hour. Since these routes were not designed to operate with such passenger loads, on-time performance suffered as a result and a supplemental express bus was being operated on Route 1 to provide additional capacity. Saturday ridership on these same routes had reached similar performance levels with the same result prior to the 2006 addition of half hour Saturday service. The conversion of Routes 1 and 3 to half hour service resulted in dramatic increases in ridership approaching 100 percent in some cases indicating that more passengers will ride more often in response to such a significant increase in service quality.

Route 2 has been operating near and sometimes over 20 passengers per vehicle service hour for some time and has encountered the resulting problems of missed transfers, standing loads and the use of back-up buses. In an effort to maintain the schedule, route miles have been reduced over the years and bus stops have been eliminated, but these conditions have returned making half hour service the next logical step. To make this change possible, twelve new low-floor, fixed route buses are to be delivered in October and November replacing the last of the eight 1995 model fixed route buses and the operating cost for this change was included in the FY 2009 budget.

Implementation Date:	January 5, 2009
Annual Vehicle Service Hours:	6,000
Annual Direct Operating Cost:	\$270,000
Annual Ridership Impact:	90,000 passenger trips (based on a projected net systemwide increase of 15 passenger trips or per additional vehicle service hour)
Annual Operating Subsidy:	\$216,000 (\$108,000 in FY 2009)

- 2. Route 3 Schedule Adjustment: Shift the Yuba College arrival and departure times for all Route 3 schedules by 13 minutes and make related schedule adjustments as necessary to Routes 3, 4B and 6 to improve transfer opportunities at the North Beale Transit Center, better space buses on North Beale Road between Yuba College and Feather River Boulevard; and reduce congestion at the North Beale Transit Center.**

Another SRTP recommendation, the most significant advantage of the proposed Route 3 schedule change will be the improved transfer opportunities between Routes 1 and 3 at the North Beale Transit Center. Routes 1 and 3 are now designed for timed transfers at Yuba College, but passengers intuitively attempt to make this connection at the North Beale Transit Center to avoid the four mile roundtrip out and back from Yuba College. While the resulting connection will still not be an actual timed transfer, passengers will be able to predictably transfer between these routes as both now operate on half-hour frequencies on all service days.

As proposed, the first Route 3 bus would arrive at Yuba College at 7:05 a.m. and the last bus would depart Yuba College at 6:15 p.m. on weekdays. On Saturdays, the first bus would arrive at Yuba College at 9:18 a.m. and the last bus would depart Yuba College at 5:15 p.m. Route 4B schedules would be adjusted by just two minutes to better coordinate with the proposed change to Route 3 for timed transfers to and from the Peach Tree Clinic location. Route 6 buses would need to be adjusted by 12 minutes to maintain the existing timed transfers with Routes 1 and 3 at Yuba College as well as to better coordinate with the Route 4B schedules at the North Beale Transit Center for service to and from the Peach Tree Clinic. As proposed, the first Route 6 bus would arrive at Yuba College at 6:45 a.m. and the last bus would depart Yuba College at 5:50 p.m. on weekdays. On Saturdays, the first bus would arrive at Yuba College at 8:40 a.m. and the last bus would depart Yuba College at 4:50 p.m. The combined impact of the proposed schedule changes would result in a small increase in direct operating costs though it is likely to also result in an unknown increase in ridership due to improved passenger convenience that may ultimately more than off-set the cost increase.

Implementation Date:	January 5, 2009
Annual Vehicle Service Hours:	250
Annual Direct Operating Cost:	\$11,250
Annual Ridership Impact:	Unknown
Annual Operating Subsidy:	\$11,250 (\$5,625 in FY 2009)

3. Modify Route 5 in South Yuba City: Modify Route 5 to eliminate all service on Pebble Beach Drive and Bogue Road west of Germaine Drive and on Railroad Avenue; implement a one way clockwise terminal loop on Lincoln Road between Walton Avenue and Garden Highway, Garden Highway, Bogue Road, Germaine Drive, Pebble Beach Drive and Walton Avenue to Lincoln Road; and, make related stop and schedule adjustments.

Route 5 is by far the longest of the six local fixed routes at 16.5 miles and it chronically operates well behind schedule throughout the day due to its length and regular traffic congestion at key locations along the route. As a result, the 2008 SRTP recommended that it be significantly reduced in length specifically in those areas where this low performing route is most unproductive assuming that a reliable route will attract more ridership as a result. The SRTP consultant recommended one of four options to accomplish this task and staff is recommending the same option because it preserves the most productive portions of the route, eliminates the most route miles, and provides service to the currently underserved area of Lincoln Road between Highway 99 and Railroad Avenue.

The most sensitive area where service would be removed under the proposed route change is on Sanborn Road between Bogue Road and Pebble Beach Drive. Route 5 service to this location was extended several years ago at the request of representatives of the nearby Guru Nanak Sikh Temple, but ridership

has never grown to a level that justifies the one mile out-of-direction travel twice an hour at a cost of four or five minutes per loop. In a recent one week survey of all activity at both the northbound and southbound Sanborn Road and Bogue Road stops, except for an occasional summer field trip by an area pre-school group, there was no activity (boardings or alightings) in either direction on three days and only limited activity in the northbound direction on three other days. Except for two pre-school field trips, there was only one southbound boarding all week and only a handful of southbound alightings on the same day.

In the same one week survey, Route 5 buses were frequently behind schedule by 10 or more minutes and it was not unusual for buses to operate as much as 15 to 20 minutes behind schedule. The recommended service change will reduce the route length by 4.6 miles and is expected to save approximately 13.5 minutes in running time – the most of any of the four alternatives considered – and this should allow Route 5 to operate on schedule in most cases while allowing for future ridership growth. Because many of the passengers on this route are transferring to and from other routes, on-time performance is essential if ridership is to grow on Route 5.

As proposed, existing Route 5 service south of Lincoln Road would be changed to a large clockwise one-way loop from Walton Avenue on Lincoln Road, Garden Highway, Bogue Road, Germaine Drive, Pebble Beach Drive and Walton Avenue. All service west of Germaine Drive (including Sanborn Road) and all service on Railroad Avenue would be eliminated. New stops would be added at Lincoln and Phillips Road; at Lincoln and Jones Road; and, at Germaine & Pebble Beach near Happy Park. Based on the proposed schedule change, the first Route 5 bus would arrive at the Walton Terminal at 6:47 a.m. and the last bus would depart the same location at 5:54 p.m. each weekday. On Saturdays, the first Route 5 bus would arrive at the Walton Terminal at 8:44 a.m. and the last bus would depart the same location at 4:54 p.m. each weekday. The resulting schedule change would result in only a slight increase in direct operating costs only on Saturdays though it is likely to ultimately result in an overall increase in ridership due to improved reliability that may more than off-set this cost increase.

Implementation Date:	January 5, 2009
Annual Vehicle Service Hours:	8 (Saturdays only)
Annual Direct Operating Cost:	\$360 (except for the cost of adding and removing some bus stop poles and signs)
Annual Ridership Impact:	Unknown (possibly a slight immediate loss followed by some unknown future increase with improved reliability)
Annual Operating Subsidy:	\$360 (\$180 in FY 2009)

4. Expand the Live Oak Rural Route Service: Expand this route from one round trip three days a week to two round trips three days a week and make related schedule changes.

The 2008 SRTP recommended expansion of the Live Oak Route from one to two round trips each service day (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) would significantly improve the attractiveness of this service by offering both half and full-day trip opportunities. As proposed, the Live Oak schedules would be set to arrive at the Yuba County Government Center in Marysville by 7:45 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. each service day with Marysville departures set for 11:30 a.m. and 5:15 p.m. Such a change would represent an increase of approximately 75 percent in the amount of service provided on this limited rural route.

The cost of the Live Oak service is fully recovered through a service agreement between the City of Live Oak and Yuba-Sutter Transit and the expansion of this service was anticipated when the agreement was last modified in November 2007. Live Oak ridership was up by nearly 30 percent in FY 2008 and staff has received several recent requests for improved Live Oak service consistent with the planned service increase.

Implementation Date:	January 5, 2009
Annual Vehicle Service Hours:	250
Annual Direct Operating Cost:	\$11,250
Annual Ridership Impact:	750 passenger trips (based on a projected net systemwide increase of 3.0 passenger trips per additional vehicle service hour)
Annual Operating Subsidy:	\$10,100 (\$5,050 in FY 2009, but the fully allocated subsidy accrues to Live Oak)

5. Modify the Foothill Rural Route Service: Establish a rural checkpoint service on the Foothill Route; eliminate the trip reservation requirement for established stops; reduce the number of route options, overall route length and travel time by eliminating service to Challenge, Dobbins and Browns Valley; and, make related schedule and stop changes to improve schedule reliability and transfer opportunities.

The 2008 SRTP recommended that the Foothill Route be converted to a rural checkpoint service similar to what is now provided on the Wheatland and Live Oak rural routes. The Foothill Route now operates two round trips three days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday), but service is provided only by reservation. If there are no reservations for a particular schedule by 6:00 p.m. on the preceding day, that schedule will not operate on the following day.

As proposed, the Foothill Route would be the last of the three rural routes to be converted from reservation-only to a combination known as a route deviation service. Four scheduled bus stops would be established along the route where passengers could catch the bus without reservation in Brownsville, Oregon House, Willow Glen and Loma Rica. The bus would continue to stop at other safe locations along the newly defined route within the existing ¼ mile route deviation policy.

In addition to this policy change, it is also proposed that the number of route options, overall route length and travel time be reduced including dropping direct service to Challenge, Dobbins, Browns Valley and District 10. Except for Dobbins, these other locations are only lightly used and Dobbins is within reasonable driving distance access to the Oregon House stop. Based on an analysis of a recent three month service period, the proposed changes would have provided direct service for 77 percent of the passenger trips while more than 80 percent of the remaining trips would be no more than three miles from the next closest stop. As a result, the proposed route changes would have relatively minimal impact on existing passengers while significantly reducing travel time, improving schedule reliability and reducing direct operating cost. In addition, these changes are expected to make the service more attractive to new passengers with improved transfer opportunities to other services in Marysville most notably for same-day service to and from Sacramento.

	<u>Existing</u>		<u>Proposed</u>	
Brownsville Departures	6:50 AM	12:35 PM	6:45 AM	12:45 PM
Marysville Arrivals	8:15 AM	2:00 PM	7:45 AM	1:45 PM
Marysville Departures	11:00 AM	5:00 PM	11:35 AM	5:15 PM
Brownsville Arrivals	12:25 PM	6:25 PM	12:35 AM	6:15 PM

Due to a substantial increase in ridership on the Foothill Route over the last two years (up 38 percent in FY 2008 following a 17 percent increase in FY 2007), nearly all schedules are now being operated each service day making the reservation system less valuable as a cost savings tool and more of a hindrance to continued ridership growth. In addition, the proposed reduction in the length of each schedule is expected to more than off-set any increase in service hours due to the elimination of the reservation requirement. As a result, this service change is expected to add less than 100 annual vehicle service hours to the Foothill Route which operated less than 850 service hours in FY 2008.

The combined impact of the proposed Foothill route, schedule and policy changes would result in a small increase in direct operating costs. While these changes may result in a small immediate loss of ridership due to the reduced number of stops, they are expected to ultimately result in an unknown increase in ridership due to improved reliability and passenger convenience to off-set at least some portion of the increased operating cost. If ridership drops in the future to the point where many trips are operating without passengers, this service model would have to be reevaluated.

Implementation Date:	January 6, 2009 (first Tuesday in January)
Annual Vehicle Service Hours:	100
Annual Direct Operating Cost:	\$4,500
Annual Ridership Impact:	Unknown (possibly a slight immediate loss followed by some unknown future increase with improved reliability and convenience)
Annual Operating Subsidy:	\$4,500 (\$2,250 in FY 2009)