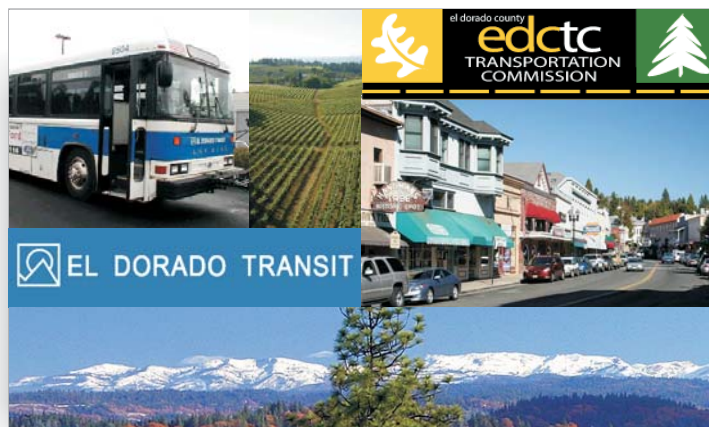


El Dorado County Transportation Commission Triennial Performance Audits for Fiscal Years 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09

Final



Prepared for the

El Dorado County Transportation Commission

Prepared by

LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.

TRIENNIAL PERFORMANCE AUDIT

of the

EL DORADO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

for

FYs 2006-07 through 2008-09

Final

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Chapter 1

Executive Summary

California Public Utilities Code Section 99246 requires that regional transportation planning agencies such as the El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC) conduct Triennial Performance Audits of both their own activities and those of their associated transit operators. This performance audit of the EDCTC covers the three-year period from July 1, 2006, to June 30, 2009. The primary objective of a Triennial Performance Audit (TPA) is to provide the EDCTC with an independent and objective evaluation of its effectiveness, efficiency, and economy in its role as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Western El Dorado County. It should be noted that the TPA for El Dorado Transit Authority (EDCTA) (under separate cover) was conducted for the same three-year period. As required under California Transportation Development Act (TDA) law, the EDCTC will submit this report to Caltrans and certify that the transit operator performance audit was completed.

Auditor findings and recommendations were developed by reviewing the EDCTC documents and manuals, and supplemented by interviews with the EDCTC board members and staff. There is unanimous support among member agencies and associated stakeholders that the EDCTC is managed and operated in an effective, efficient, and economical manner. The EDCTC provides a strong organization that effectively coordinates transportation policy and furthers transportation improvements within El Dorado County.

FINDINGS

- ◆ The EDCTC has complied with the requirements listed in the TDA and other statutes.
- ◆ The EDCTC successfully implemented all of the prior audit recommendations.
- ◆ The filing and archiving of plans and other data is well organized. The majority of information requested for this audit was provided promptly and in electronic formats.
- ◆ During the audit period, the EDCTC updated the Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP). The document implements some of the prior TPA recommendations such as the establishment of service efficiency/effectiveness goals and standards.
- ◆ The EDCTC's committee structure is deemed appropriate and effective by board members as evidenced in the successful completion of transportation planning projects.
- ◆ The EDCTC and the EDCTA have a good working relationship with defined duties that allow for a productive transit system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ The EDCTC's primary standing advisory committee is the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC). This committee is composed of county and city engineers and planners and representatives from Caltrans and the EDCTA. The PAC reviews Board agenda items and

issues eight to nine days prior to the EDCTC meeting. The PAC discusses transportation planning projects and provides direction and recommendations to the board. As members of the PAC provide more technical assistance than policy assistance, it is recommended that the standing advisory committee name be changed to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

- ◆ The auditor was asked to review the EDCTC's committee structure as part of the performance audit process. The practice of having a standing advisory committee such as the PAC mentioned above and ad hoc committees to provide input to a specific project is common. The EDCTC places much importance on developing stakeholder advisory committees (SACs) for significant transportation planning projects. These committees include representatives from interest groups which may be affected by the project. For example, SAC members can include representatives from the chamber of commerce, downtown associations, schools, and winery associations. It is recommended that the EDCTC continue to utilize the existing committee structure. In order to maintain a broad perspective on transportation issues in El Dorado County, the EDCTC staff should make attempts to recruit new representatives from newly developed interest groups as SAC members. Having new stakeholder representatives on SACs will continue to allow for a wide variety of opinions ensuring all positions are understood throughout the community. Additionally, staff should ensure that underrepresented groups are properly represented in SACs.

Chapter 2

Triennial Performance Audit Results

BACKGROUND

This TPA has been prepared in compliance with the requirements of California Public Utilities Code Section 99246, which requires that the EDCTC cause a performance audit to be conducted of its activities every three years. The primary objective of this Audit is to provide the EDCTC with an independent and objective evaluation of its performance as it relates to responsibilities in its role as the RTPA for El Dorado County.

This Audit evaluates the operations of the EDCTC in terms of the efficiency, effectiveness, economy, and the results of its programs. In addition, this Audit includes a review of the EDCTC's implementation of the recommendations contained in the previous Audit report, completed in June 2007. This current Audit covers the three-year period from Fiscal Year (FY) 2006-07 through 2008-09. Finally, this Audit includes a discussion of relevant issues currently facing the organization, based on telephone interviews with El Dorado County and the City of Placerville elected officials and discussions with the EDCTC staff.

PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND REPORT ORGANIZATION

This Audit was prepared in the following steps:

- ◆ A review of pertinent documents, including the Regional Transportation Plan, SRTP, annual Overall Work Programs (OWP), annual fiscal audits and State Controller's Reports, and El Dorado County Transportation Commission agendas, minutes, and supporting staff reports.
- ◆ On-site discussions with the EDCTC staff, including the executive director and associate transportation planner.
- ◆ Telephone interviews with all of the EDCTC members.
- ◆ Review of prior TPA reports.
- ◆ Review of the requirements of the Public Utilities Code, Administrative Code, and other appropriate statutes, followed by an assessment of the EDCTC's compliance with the specified requirements.

EL DORADO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION DESCRIPTION

Agency Function and History

In 1975, the EDCTC was designated as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for El Dorado County (not including the eastern portion of the county within the Tahoe Basin),

pursuant to Title 3, Division 3, Chapter 2, Article 11, Section 29532.1 of the State of California Government Code. Originally the EDCTC shared staff with the El Dorado County Public Works Department. The EDCTC currently operates under a Joint Powers Agreement between the County of El Dorado and the City of Placerville, which was executed in 1995. Historically, the EDCTC has been composed of six voting members: three members appointed by the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors and three members appointed by the Placerville City Council. Representatives from Caltrans and the City of South Lake Tahoe serve as non-voting members. After the introduction of Assembly Bill 1204 (Huber Bill), a Citizens Advisory Committee was formed to review the composition of the EDCTC and ensure that all portions of Western El Dorado County were represented fairly. After an extensive public input process, the EDCTC voted to increase the representation of unincorporated Western El Dorado County to four members, and to provide two seats to all incorporated cities if and when additional incorporations occur within Western El Dorado County.

The EDCTC has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State of California, acting through its Department of Transportation (Caltrans); this MOU enumerates the EDCTC's transportation planning responsibilities in El Dorado County and coordination with Caltrans. As part of the Sacramento Metropolitan Planning Area, defined by the Federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), the EDCTC's geographic planning area must also be incorporated in to the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) planning process. Generally this is limited to SACOG performance of air quality analysis for local projects and development of the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP). As the RTPA for Western El Dorado County, the EDCTC has the following primary responsibilities:

- ◆ Allocation of TDA funds
- ◆ Update the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)
- ◆ Review public transit performance
- ◆ Conduct public outreach as necessary
- ◆ Develop and implement an OWP outlining a comprehensive transportation planning process for the region

In addition to citizen participation activities, the EDCTC is also advised by the following two major advisory committees:

- ◆ Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)
- ◆ Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC)

PAC members include the City of Placerville Public Works director, and selected department heads representing the City of Placerville, the chief administrative officer and selected department heads representing El Dorado County, a representative from the EDCTA, the Caltrans District 3 regional planning liaison, a Caltrans District 3 project manager, and the SACOG liaison. The PAC advises the EDCTC on technical issues and transportation matters that are presented before the Commission.

The SSTAC advises the EDCTC on all matters pertaining to the transportation needs of transit dependent and transit disadvantaged persons. The input of this committee is an integral part of the annual “unmet transit needs” process of the EDCTC. The makeup of the SSTAC is prescribed by the TDA (Public Utilities Code Section 99238). The EDCTC’s SSTAC consists of ten members:

- ◆ A representative of potential transit users who is 60 years of age or older.
- ◆ A representative of potential transit users who is disabled.
- ◆ A representative of potential transit users who is a commuter.
- ◆ Two representatives of local social service providers for seniors.
- ◆ Two representatives of a local social service provider representing disabled persons.
- ◆ A representative of a local social service provider for persons of limited means.
- ◆ Two representatives from the local consolidated transportation service agency, EDCTA.

Just after the end of the Audit period, the EDCTC formed a temporary Citizens Advisory Committee to review the composition of the EDCTC as prompted by Assembly Bill - 1204 Huber. The EDCTC also forms numerous SACs to provide focus and input for many EDCTC projects.

The EDCTC’s objectives are outlined in the annual OWP efforts. As the RTPA, the EDCTC’s OWP includes the following elements:

- ◆ **Administration and Intergovernmental Organization** – This element includes the overall administration of day to day activities, coordination with tribal, local, and state agencies. Under this element, the EDCTC ensures that all activities related to programs funded under the TDA are administered and coordinated appropriately.
- ◆ **Multi-Modal Transportation Planning** – This element contains development and adoption of the RTP as well as other planning efforts related to transit, bicycles/pedestrians, and streets/roads.
- ◆ **Project Delivery and Programming** – This element includes the programming of state and federal transportation funding as well as the delivery and oversight of actual projects.
- ◆ **Public Information, Outreach, and Advocacy** – This element incorporates public outreach and consensus building for transportation projects as well as the pursuit of discretionary transportation funding and development of an advocacy program for regional interests.

REVIEW OF COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

As presented in Table 1, following is a review of compliance requirements identified in the TDA and other state statutes:

- ◆ In accordance with Public Utilities Code Section 99231, the EDCTC allows no transportation operators and city or county governments which have responsibility for serving a given area to claim, in total, more than those Local Transportation Fund (LTF) moneys apportioned to that area. The EDCTC annually adopts a resolution approving LTF allocations, and a good system for the apportionment is in place.
- ◆ In reference to Public Utilities Code Sections 99233 and 99234, the EDCTC adopted written rules for the submission of claims for pedestrian and bicycle facilities in September 2007.
- ◆ In accordance with Public Utilities Code Sections 99238 and 99238.5, the EDCTC has established a SSTAC. The EDCTC ensures that there is a citizen participation process that includes at least one annual public hearing. During this audit period, the EDCTC was only required to conduct an unmet needs hearing in FY 2006-07. However, SSTAC meetings are still held and included in the transit planning processes such as the SRTP update. The EDCTC actively recruits members for the SSTAC.
- ◆ In accordance with Public Utilities Code Section 99244, the EDCTC has annually identified, analyzed, and recommended potential transit productivity improvements that could lower the operating cost of those transit operators that operate at least 50 percent of their vehicle service miles within its jurisdiction. During the Audit period, the EDCTC commissioned a SRTP Plan update to review the transit needs of the region and the cost-effectiveness of existing routes. Three of the EDCTC board members also serve on the EDCTA Board. The EDCTA has a Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) which meets bi-monthly to review budgetary and operational issues. The EDCTC is a member of the EDCTA TAC. Additionally the EDCTA executive director submits an Administrative Operations Report to the EDCTC staff every six months.
- ◆ In accordance with Public Utilities Code Section 99245, the EDCTC ensured that all claimants to whom it allocates TDA funds submit to it and to the State Controller an annual certified Fiscal and Compliance Audit within 180 days after end of the fiscal year.
- ◆ In accordance with Public Utilities Code Sections 99246 and 99248, the EDCTC has herein designated an independent entity to conduct a performance audit of operators and itself (for the current and previous TPA periods). Pacific Municipal Consultants (PMC) performed the performance audit for the prior three-year period.
- ◆ In accordance with Public Utilities Code Section 99246(c), the EDCTC has submitted a copy of its TPA to the Director of the California Department of Transportation.

TABLE 1: RTPA Compliance Requirements - EDCTC

Requirement	PUC Reference	In Compliance?	
		Yes	No
(1) All operators and city or county governments, in total, claim no more than those LTF monies apportioned to that area.	99231	X	
(2) The RTPA has adopted rules and regulations delineating procedures for the submission of claims for facilities provided for the exclusive use of pedestrians and bicycles.	99233, 99234	X	
(3) The RTPA has established a social services transportation advisory council. The RTPA must ensure that there is a citizen participation process that includes at least an annual public hearing.	99238, 99238.5	X	
(4) The RTPA has annually identified, analyzed and recommended potential productivity improvements which could lower operating cost of those operators.	99244	X	
(5) The RTPA has ensured that all claimants to whom it allocated TDA funds submit to it and to the state controller an annual certified fiscal and compliance audit within 180 days after the end of the fiscal year.	99245	X	
(6) The RTPA has designated an independent entity to conduct a performance audit of operators and itself. The operator audit included calculation of performance indicators and was transmitted within 12 months. If not transmitted, TDA funds were not allocated to the operator.	99246, 99248	X	
(7) The RTPA has submitted a copy of its performance audit to the Director of the California Department of Transportation.	99246 c	X	
(8) The performance audit of the operator includes verification of performance indicators and includes consideration of the needs and types of passengers being served, employment of part-time drivers and contracting with common carriers.	99246 d	X	
(9) The RTPA has established rules and regulations regarding revenue ratios for transportation operators providing services in urbanized and non-urbanized areas.	99270.1, 99270.2	X	
(10) The RTPA has adopted criteria, rules, and regulations for the evaluation of claims filed under Article 4.5 of the TDA and the determination of the cost effectiveness of the proposed community transit services.	99275.5	X	
(11) State transit assistance funds received by the RTPA allocated only for transportation planning and mass transportation purposes?*	99310.5, 99313.3, Proposition 116	X	
(12) The amount received pursuant to the Public Utilities Code, Section 99314.3; by each RTPA for state transit assistance is allocated to the operators in the area of its jurisdiction as allocated by the State Controllers Office.	99314.3	X	
(13) If TDA funds are allocated for streets and road purposes, the RTPA has annually: Consulted with the SSTAC, identified transit needs, adopted or re-affirmed the definition of "unmet transit needs" and "reasonable to meet", identified the unmet needs or there are no unmet transit needs, or there are unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet.	99401.5	X	
(14) The RTPA has caused a fiscal audit to be performed each year and submit the audit report to the state controller within 12 months of the end of the fiscal year.	6662	X	

- ◆ In accordance with Public Utilities Code Section 99246(d), the performance audit of the transit operator (under separate cover) shall include, but is not limited to, a verification of the operator's cost per passenger, operating cost per vehicle service hour, passengers per vehicle service mile, and vehicle service hours per employee, as defined in Section 99247. The performance audit shall include, but not be limited to, consideration of the needs and types of passengers being served and the employment of part-time drivers and the contracting with common carriers of persons operating under a franchise or license to provide services during peak hours, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 99260.2.
- ◆ The EDCTC is in the process of adopting formal rules and regulations regarding revenue ratios for transit services as per PUC Sections 99270.1 and 99270.2, reflecting that El Dorado Hills was designated an "urbanized" area in the 2000 Census. The EDCTA must maintain a blended farebox ratio of 11.5 percent.
- ◆ The EDCTC has not adopted criteria, rules, and regulations for the evaluation of claims filed under Article 4.5 of the TDA (as permitted under Public Utilities Code Section 99275.5). However, the use of Article 4.5 funds is not necessary, given the provision of services within the County by a single transit operator. If additional claimants emerge in the future, the EDCTC should consider implementing a policy regarding Article 4.5 funds based on state statutory requirements.
- ◆ In accordance with Public Utilities Code Sections 99310.5 and 99313.3 and Proposition 116, State Transit Assistance (STA) funds received by the EDCTC are allocated only for transit planning, transit capital projects, and transit operations.
- ◆ The amount of STA funds received by the EDCTC pursuant to the Public Utilities Code Section 9314.3 is allocated to the transit operator in the area as allocated by the State Controllers Office. The EDCTC allocates STA funds to the EDCTA using a population and revenue formula allocation per PUC 99313 and 99314.
- ◆ In accordance with Public Utilities Code Section 99401.5, if TDA funds are allocated to purposes not directly related to public or specialized transportation services or facilities for exclusive use of pedestrians and bicycles, the EDCTC is annually required to:
 - Consult with the SSTAC established pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 99238.
 - Identify transit needs, including: groups who are transit-dependent or transit-disadvantaged, adequacy of existing transit services to meet the needs of groups identified, and analysis of potential alternatives to provide transportation services.
 - Adopt or reaffirm a definition of "unmet transit needs" and "reasonable to meet."
 - Identify the unmet transit needs and those needs that are reasonable to meet.

- Adopt a finding that there are no unmet transit needs, that there are no unmet needs that are reasonable to meet, or that there are unmet transit needs including needs that are reasonable to meet.

If a finding is adopted that there are unmet transit needs, these needs must have been funded before an allocation was made for streets and roads. The only year in which TDA funds were allocated for streets and roads purposes during this audit period was FY 2006-07. The EDCTC consulted with the SSTAC and followed the proper unmet needs procedures.

- ◆ In accordance with California Code of Regulations Section 6662, the EDCTC has caused a Fiscal and Compliance Audit of its accounts and records to be performed for each fiscal year by a certified public accountant. The audits were performed in accordance with the Basic Audit Program and Report Guidelines for the California Special Districts prescribed by the State Controller by the firms of Bartig, Basler and Ray and Richardson & Co. The audits include a determination of compliance with the TDA and accompanying rules and regulations. Financial statements do not commingle the STA fund, the LTF, or other revenues or funds of any city, county or other agency. The EDCTC maintains fiscal and accounting records and supporting papers for at least four years following fiscal year close.

STATUS OF PRIOR AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The prior TPA was prepared by PMC and contained the following recommendations:

- ◆ *Develop formal rules and procedures for allocation of Article 3 Local Transportation Funds for Pedestrian and Bicycle Projects.*

Status: Implementation Complete. In September of 2007, the EDCTC adopted formal guidelines for the administration LTF Article 3 bicycle and pedestrian funding. The guidelines were developed in accordance with PUC 99233.3.

- ◆ *Coordinate with the EDCTA on the development of transit performance targets for its commuter, local fixed-route, and Dial-A-Ride services.*

Status: Implementation Complete. The *El Dorado County Short Range Transit Plan* set forth goals, performance measures, and standards for commuter services, local route services, rural services and demand response services. A minimum standard of performance in the areas of service efficiency, service effectiveness, and service quality were set for each category of service.

- ◆ *Review the applicability of developing a blended farebox ratio in light of an urbanized designation for El Dorado Hills.*

Status: Implementation Complete. As part of the SRTP process, a blended farebox ratio of 11.5 percent was developed based on the proportion of population in urban and rural Western El Dorado County. The EDCTC adopted rules and regulations to establish this new blended farebox ratio at the February board meeting. Caltrans approved the blended farebox ratio on February 3, 2010.

- ◆ *Consider developing a written schedule for the LTF and STA claims process.*

Status: Implementation Complete. The EDCTC developed a written Annual Timeline of LTF and STA actions.

- ◆ *Consider developing a written schedule for adoption and submittal of the Federal Program of Projects.*

Status: Implementation Complete. The EDCTC coordinated with the EDCTA to develop a written schedule for the adoption of the Federal Program of Projects.

DETAILED REVIEW OF THE EDCTC FUNCTIONS

There is concurrence within El Dorado County, supported by the auditor's own evaluation, that the EDCTC reflects well researched, proactive policy practices, and that these outcomes have been the result of quality staff work produced by a competent executive director and staff during the Audit period.

This section presents a review of the various functions of the EDCTC. The EDCTC's functions can be divided into the following areas:

- ◆ Administration and Management
- ◆ Transportation Planning and Regional Coordination
- ◆ Claimant Relationships and Oversight
- ◆ Marketing and Transportation Alternatives
- ◆ Grant Applications and Management

Administration and Management

This functional review focuses on internal management of the organization, including:

- ◆ Governing Board Activities
- ◆ Internal Planning and Achievements
- ◆ General Administration
- ◆ Personnel

The EDCTC Board meets on the first Thursday of each month in Placerville. Agenda materials are available to board members at least seven business days in advance and materials are available to the public through the EDCTC's website 72 hours in advance.

The auditor was asked to take a closer look at the EDCTC's committee structure. The EDCTC has two standing advisory committees: the SSTAC and the PAC. The SSTAC meets at least annually as part of the TDA unmet transit needs process and provides input and guidance on related transit studies such as the recent SRTP update in 2007. On occasion, SSTAC meetings have been combined with the EDCTA TAC meetings as part of the transit planning process. TDA law states that the SSTAC meet prior to an allocation of TDA funds for streets and roads purposes. During the last two years of the audit period, a formal unmet needs process was not required (as no allocations were made for streets and road purposes); however, SSTAC meetings are still held annually to obtain input for the transit process.

The EDCTC's other standing committee is the PAC. As mentioned above, PAC members include representatives from the city, county, and regional organizations. The PAC meets eight to nine days before the EDCTC board meeting to discuss and provide direction on board agenda items, including TDA allocations and OWP review. As PAC members include engineering and planning staff from the county, city, and Caltrans, the PAC is more qualified to provide technical guidance rather than policy guidance as the committee name might suggest. Policy decisions are made at the board level. Nevertheless, the PAC provides valuable input on projects and serves as a good forum for coordination between the various jurisdictions.

Some of the on-going issues and/or controversies that face the EDCTC are studied by ad hoc or project specific committees, which endeavor to review the progress, performance or potential impact of particular projects in a focused manner with a broader cross-section of perspectives. The ad hoc/steering committees are composed of staff from representative jurisdictions as well as members of business groups, advocacy agencies, school districts etc. who might be affected by the project. The project specific committees or SACs help to shape the direction of the project and are integral to the public input portion of the project. Findings from committee meetings are incorporated into the EDCTC staff reports and subsequent recommendations.

There is a general consensus among the commissioners that the existing committee system has been an important and an appropriate part of transportation project success. Some commissioners noted that the process can be a bit time consuming and the EDCTC's public input process could be improved if members from the public at large were invited. Recently, the Citizens Advisory Committee, which was formed to examine the structure of the EDCTC board, recommended that the EDCTC continue to use project specific advisory committees or SACs as an effective community participation/public outreach method. Overall, the EDCTC's committee structure is appropriate for the region. However, it is important to ensure that a variety of perspectives are heard. In other words each SAC should not include the same representatives from stakeholder groups for each project. Additionally, particular attention should be paid to underrepresented groups who may be affected by the project.

Attendance at monthly EDCTC board meetings is strong. The Commission dealt with a long list of key documents and funding decisions during the Audit period, including all of those required or suggested by state law and good RTPA practices. The EDCTC does a good job of posting important documents on its website for public review.

The EDCTC processes TDA claims in an accurate and timely manner. Early in the year, the board approved the Draft Findings of Apportionment of TDA funds. After approval from the EDCTA board, the EDCTA staff submits a claim to the EDCTC for TDA funds. TDA claim packets must include:

- ◆ Project and expenditure plan
- ◆ Status of previously approved projects
- ◆ Statement of Conformance
- ◆ The EDCTA Board Resolution
- ◆ CHP Safety Compliance Report
- ◆ Statement of estimated revenues and expenditures for prior fiscal year
- ◆ Adopted or proposed budget for year of claim
- ◆ Area wide transfer agreement resolution
- ◆ Information establishing eligibility under efficiency criteria
- ◆ Certification that claim is consistent with Capital Improvement Plan

The EDCTC adopts a resolution approving the claim and directing the County Auditor to allocate funds before the end of the fiscal year. Claims are paid in full.

The executive director prepares a report for each board meeting which provides an overview of the current transportation issues, an update on projects and various events/meetings attended. The EDCTA has a very organized process for filing and the retention of pertinent plans and other documents. A reference binder listing documents by type and location is maintained. Depending on the type of plan, documents are kept at least five to ten years.

In terms of internal planning, the EDCTC has set forth very clear goals and objectives. Its achievements in meeting OWP objectives during the Audit period were good, despite the uncertainties involved with state and federal funding in recent years. The EDCTC has been successful in obtaining discretionary funding to facilitate the programming of all types of transportation projects aimed at reducing congestion, enhancing pedestrian/bicycle safety, facilitating goods movement, and improving the efficiency of the overall transportation system. For each year of the audit period, the budget has generally been adequate for funding the EDCTC's activities. The executive director annually sets forth goals, objectives with respect to projects and training for each staff member. These staff level goals serve as performance measures during the annual review process.

The EDCTC staff appears to be held in high regard in the region. The executive director currently serves as chair of the Rural Counties Task Force, a collaborative group whose goal is to provide a voice for California rural counties at the state level. Staffing levels at the EDCTC are appropriate and comparable to similar RTPAs. A total of six full-time staff members are dedicated to the functions of the EDCTC. Work loads appear to be appropriate for the number of staff. The success of obtaining funding and completing projects is a good indication of the effectiveness of the EDCTC staff. During the audit period there was a moderate (but not undue) level of turnover of the administrative services officer position. Staff members receive training related to their responsibilities. Staff members are offered health and retirement benefits through CALPERS. The EDCTC staff members do not receive performance incentive bonuses.

The Auditor attempted to contact each and every EDCTC board member to anonymously discuss transportation issues facing the organization in coming years. Based on interviews completed with the six EDCTC board members, all respondents indicated strong support of the EDCTC staff efforts. In addition, all respondents support the direction that the EDCTC is going in terms of long-term transportation planning in the region and see the EDCTC staff as a good example for other regions. There does not appear to be significant disagreement among board members when it comes to policy direction.

Transportation Planning and Regional Coordination

This functional area covers one of the two major RTPA responsibilities – transportation planning in a regional context and fiscal management, including:

- ◆ RTP Development and Adoption
- ◆ RTP Topics
- ◆ RTP Implementation
- ◆ Information Collection
- ◆ Information Generation and Distribution

The most recent complete update of the El Dorado County RTP occurred in 2005. The EDCTC is in the middle of conducting a 2010 update to the plan per California Transportation Commission guidelines. The RTP, which was adopted in October 2005, set forth clear goals and cost estimates for transportation in the region. Many of the short-term transportation projects identified in the Action Element have been completed or are in progress. The RTP includes all elements required under state guidelines, including a discussion of regional issues. Major issues, such as population growth, are addressed in the Action Element. Using the El Dorado County Department of Transportation, transportation demand model, roadway inefficiencies were identified. Despite the EDCTC’s success in obtaining grant funding, the RTP notes that there is not sufficient funding available to address all transportation needs in El Dorado County, particularly roadway rehabilitation and maintenance projects. This sentiment was echoed in the board member interviews.

The EDCTC, and particularly its executive director, has done an effective job in laying the planning foundation for transportation improvement projects so that the EDCTC is in a competitive position to obtain non-recurring discretionary funding sources. El Dorado County manages several Traffic Impact Mitigation (TIM) programs to offset the cost of roadway improvements resulting from new development. TIM program funds have been used to share the cost of the EDCTC work elements, such as the Camino Corridor Project Study Report.

As with all EDCTC transportation projects, the 2010 RTP update incorporates an extensive public outreach and consultation program. In fact, the EDCTC received a “Best Practices Award” from CTC for “Consultation with Interested Parties.” An integral part of the El Dorado County RTP update process is to form an advisory committee composed of representatives from jurisdictions, communities, transit operators, tribal governments, bicycle groups, pedestrian advocates, freight/goods movement interests, environmental groups, taxpayer associations, chambers of commerce, and social service agencies. As a rural county, El Dorado

County is not subject to the requirements of SB 375 which sets forth green house gas (GHG) emissions reduction standards, the EDCTC intends to incorporate GHG emissions strategies in the 2010 RTP update that go beyond guidelines for rural counties.

The EDCTC's website is kept up-to-date, with links to El Dorado Transit, local transportation-related information, and various transportation planning documents. The EDCTC prepares quarterly project monitoring reports that are available on the website which discuss the status of on-going transportation projects. EDCTC coordinates with SACOG for data collection but does not sell information to private firms.

A review of the OWP shows that the EDCTC work elements go beyond the basic plans and processes for which RTPA's are responsible. The program includes efforts for coordination with other agencies (Rural Counties Task Force, Intergovernmental Coordination), congestion management and safety (Camino Area Parallel Capacity Study) as well as public outreach and education of the local communities. The EDCTC transportation planning process allows staff to be well informed of transportation issues and conditions in the region while providing the tools for a solution to transportation problems.

Claimant Relationships and Oversight

This section covers the EDCTC's actions regarding TDA claims and subsequent transit operations, including:

- ◆ Productivity Committee Functions
- ◆ Technical and Managerial Assistance to Operators
- ◆ Communication of TDA Rules and Information to Claimants
- ◆ Reports and Information Received by the RTPA
- ◆ TDA Claim Processing

The EDCTC does not have a formal productivity committee to review services and recommend improvements for lower transit costs, although the EDCTA has a TAC which serves that purpose. Additionally, the EDCTA executive director serves on the PAC which reviews all types of matters to go before the EDCTC board including transit issues. An EDCTC staff member also serves on the SSTAC.

The prior TPA recommended developing transit performance targets for the various types of EDCTA services. A series of service efficiency, effectiveness, and quality standards were established through the SRTP process. Every six months the EDCTA executive director prepares an Administrative Operations Report for review by the EDCTA board and the EDCTC staff. This report includes operating statistics, on-time performance review, and performance measures by service including those required by TDA. After the adoption of the SRTP, the EDCTC staff initiated a comparison between SRTP Service Efficiency Goals and actual statistics in a biannual staff report. This comparison presents a good snapshot of EDCTA performance with respect to established goals and objectives and should continue to be reported to the EDCTC board to ensure that the EDCTC is kept abreast of pertinent information.

Staff of both the EDCTA and the EDCTC concur that a good working relationship exists between the two organizations. As noted in the transit operator Audit Report, the EDCTA is well managed and frequently reviews services for improvements. The EDCTA has been responsive to any suggestions that the EDCTC has had with respect to transit. For the most part, the two organizations work independently focusing on their given tasks. The EDCTA reviews the need for service adjustments and performs most marketing efforts. The EDCTC assists with grant writing, commissions planning documents such as the SRTP and provides a degree of oversight and assistance when it comes to TDA matters. This relationship has proved to be an effective strategy for transit services in El Dorado County.

During the Audit period, the EDCTC commissioned fiscal and compliance audits from an independent auditor for the EDCTC and for the EDCTA within the required time period. The fiscal and compliance audits of the transit operator attest that TDA funds were expended in conformance with most applicable laws, regulations, allocation instructions, and resolutions of the EDCTC. During the audit period there was no cause for the EDCTC to withhold TDA funds from the transit operator.

Marketing and Transportation Alternatives

This function involves the outreach activities of an RTPA, including:

- ◆ Marketing and Public Relations
- ◆ Public Information and Transportation Alternatives

The majority of marketing for transit services in El Dorado County are performed by the EDCTA staff. A more detailed review of the EDCTA marketing efforts is performed in the transit operator audit. The EDCTC does make an effort to include transit as a component of all the EDCTC marketing strategies. For example, the EDCTC OWP “Public Education, Outreach and Marketing” element incorporates discussions on transit in regular public outreach presentations as well as other promotional campaigns (such as “Try Transit Week”). The EDCTC also assists the EDCTA with the preparation of press releases for service changes if requested.

The EDCTC is quite involved in transportation planning efforts to promote smart growth, encourage alternative transportation, and reduce traffic congestion and works closely with city and county representatives through the PAC and project advisory committees to develop studies and conduct public outreach. Examples of these efforts include the *Placerville Drive Multi-Modal Corridor Mobility Plan* and the *Elk Grove-Rancho Cordova-El Dorado County Connector Study*. However, no agreement between the EDCTC and its partner agencies requires formal EDCTC input prior to development. Nonetheless, the EDCTC staff remains closely involved through its PAC in staying abreast of development proposals in the region that might result in traffic congestion and other community impacts.

By all accounts, the EDCTC has a strong public information process in place. The EDCTC website lists completed plans and studies along with an archive of commission meeting minutes. An EDCTC annual newsletter and quarterly project monitoring reports are also available on the EDCTC website.

Grant Applications and Management

This section considers the EDCTC's performance in discharging its grant management duties, including:

- ◆ Grant Application Coordination
- ◆ Grant Application Assistance
- ◆ Grant Management and Compliance

Discussion of the organization's functions regarding these duties is largely redundant with previous portions of this functional review. As noted, the EDCTC actively assists its potential claimants in "getting the most for their money." The EDCTC provides assistance with technical writing and data collection from SACOG as necessary.

Much of the generic consideration of this function for RTPAs across the state relates to urban areas with many competing operators and claimants, where the RTPA is expected to sort out conflicts and "ride herd" on activities. That context does not pertain to El Dorado County's relatively straightforward setting, as EDCTA is the only transit operator which receives TDA funding.

During the Audit period, no state or federal grant applications were denied in El Dorado County due to errors or omissions. During the audit period, the EDCTC was productive in obtaining discretionary grants such as Caltrans administered Community-Based Transportation Planning Grants. The EDCTC staff was also effective in distributing special grants such as ARRA and Proposition 1 B funding.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There is unanimous support among member agencies and associated stakeholders that the EDCTC is managed and operated in an effective, efficient, and economical manner. The EDCTC provides a strong organization that effectively pulls together transportation policy within El Dorado County.

The EDCTC board members are considered to be knowledgeable, fair, and effective, and its executive director generally enjoys a strong reputation in the region for knowledge and excellence in performance. All board members interviewed were in agreement that the EDCTC is meeting its goals and objectives. Despite a commendable public input process for transportation projects, some board members noted that certain geographic areas feel underrepresented in the transportation planning process and that increased public outreach to communities such as El Dorado Hills could change this perception. During the Audit period, the EDCTC board was composed of capable and seasoned officials, both elected and appointed, who met regularly, and conducted themselves with efficiency.

FINDINGS

- ◆ The EDCTC has complied with the requirements listed in the TDA and other statutes.
- ◆ The EDCTC successfully implemented all of the prior audit recommendations.
- ◆ The filing and archiving of plans and other data is well organized. The majority of information requested for this audit was provided promptly and in electronic formats.
- ◆ During the audit period, the EDCTC updated the SRTP. The document implements some of the prior TPA recommendations such as the establishment of service efficiency/effectiveness goals and standards.
- ◆ The EDCTC's committee structure is deemed appropriate and effective by board members as evidenced in the successful completion of transportation planning projects.
- ◆ The EDCTC and the EDCTA have a good working relationship with defined duties which allow for a productive transit system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ The EDCTC's primary standing advisory committee is the PAC. This committee is composed of county and city engineers and planners and representatives from Caltrans and the EDCTA. The PAC reviews board agenda items and issues recommendations eight to nine days prior to the EDCTC meeting.

The PAC discusses transportation planning projects and provides direction and recommendations to the board. As members of the PAC provide more technical assistance than policy assistance, it is recommended that the standing advisory committee name be changed to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

- ◆ The auditor was asked to review the EDCTC's committee structure as part of the performance audit process. The practice of having a standing advisory committee such as the TAC mentioned above and ad hoc committees to provide input to a specific project is common. The EDCTC places much importance on developing stakeholder advisory committees (SACs) for significant transportation planning projects. These committees include representatives from interest groups which may be affected by the project. For example, SAC members can include representatives from the chamber of commerce, downtown associations, schools, and winery associations. It is recommended that the EDCTC continue to utilize the existing committee structure. In order to maintain a broad perspective on transportation issues in El Dorado County, the EDCTC staff should make attempts to recruit new representatives from newly developed interest groups as SAC members. Having new stakeholder representatives on SACs will continue to allow for a wide variety of opinions ensuring all positions are understood throughout the community. Additionally, staff should ensure that disadvantaged groups are properly represented in SACs.