

WESTERN EL DORADO COUNTY SHORT AND LONG-RANGE TRANSIT PLAN Executive Summary

Prepared for the
El Dorado County Transportation Commission
Prepared by
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The El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC) retained LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc., to prepare a 2025 Long Range Transit Plan and a 5-Year Short Range Transit Plan to improve and enhance transit services. This plan has been developed in two time-frames: a short-range plan encompassing Fiscal Years 2003-04 through 2007-08, and a long-range plan extending to 2025.

This plan document first presents and reviews the characteristics of the study area, including demographic factors. A thorough review of existing land use and transportation plans is then presented. The operating history of the transit services provided in the study area is then reviewed, and demand for transit services in the study area evaluated. Finally, a detailed, financially constrained Short Range Transit Plan is presented for the future improvement in El Dorado County Transit Authority (EDCTA) services, as well as a more generalized Long Range Transit Plan.

Study Area

This study considers the portion of El Dorado County to the west of the Sierra Crest. Population of the area was identified by the 2000 U.S. Census as 122,257. Of this total, 18 percent was elderly (age 60 or above), 2.2 percent was mobility-limited, 5.6 percent were low-income, while 3.3 percent of households did not own a private vehicle. Over the 1990s, population grew at 2.2 percent per year. Sacramento Council of Governments (SACOG) projections identify future population growth of 56.0 percent by 2025. The study presents detailed information on travel and commute patterns.

Existing Transit Services

Western El Dorado County transit services are provided through a joint powers agreement between the El Dorado County Transit Authority (EDCTA), County of El Dorado, and City of Placerville. The EDCTA is governed by a five-member Board of Directors. Existing services include local deviated fixed-route services (Hangtown Shuttle, Pollock Pines/Camino, El Dorado/Diamond Springs, Cameron Park, Cosumnes River College Shuttle, and Grizzly Flat), Commuter Services (to downtown Sacramento and to Rancho Cordova), Dial-A-Ride, SAC-MED Non-Emergency Medical Appointment Transportation, and contract services. Systemwide ridership for Fiscal Year 2001-02 on all EDCTA services was 290,629 one-way passenger-trips, an increase of 56.2 percent since Fiscal Year 1992-93.

Other transit providers serving the area consist of the Senior Day Car and Alzheimer's Day Care Resource Center, the Senior Shuttle, the Mother Lode Rehabilitation Enterprises, Inc., All Dorado Taxi and Lightning Taxi, and the Foothill Flyer, The Blue Van, and All Dorado airport shuttle services. The area is also served by Amtrak Thruway.

Key Person Attitudes Toward Transit

A survey of ten key persons in the community was conducted in order to solicit opinions of transit matters. There was a consensus that transit services will be increasingly important in addressing traffic

issues, providing mobility for elderly and disabled, and providing access to work. Expansion of both local and commuter services were seen as important.

Short-Range Plan

Service Plan

- **Convert Hangtown Shuttle to a Fixed Route and Provide Complementary ADA Service** – This will improve on-time performance, meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and increase the usefulness of this service to the community. This will result in an increase of 1,900 annual one-way passenger-trips, and a net increase in required subsidy of \$48,860 per year.
- **Expand Service on Pollock Pines, El Dorado / Diamond Springs, Cosumnes River College and Cameron Park Routes** – Service will be expanded by adding a third bus to the operating plan, allowing hourly service on the El Dorado / Diamond Springs and Pollock Pines routes, while service on the Cameron Park and Cosumnes River College routes will be provided every 90 minutes. This will also improve on-time performance and provide service along Mother Lode Drive. The Pollock Pines Route will be redesigned to serve as an “express bus” across Placerville. Overall, this will generate an increase in ridership of 15,750 one-way passenger-trips per year. A total of \$135,720 in additional annual operating subsidy is required, along with one additional minibus.
- **Provide Transit Service to Planned Light Rail in Folsom in 2005** – Upon the opening of the Sacramento Regional Transit’s light rail service to Folsom (currently scheduled to occur in May 2005), EDCTA will operate one bus on a 90-minute schedule from the Missouri Flat area, beginning at 6:30 A.M. and ending at 6:30 P.M. The schedule will be timed to allow direct transfers from other EDCTA routes serving Placerville, El Dorado, and Pollock Pines. This service is expected to serve 51,710 one-way passenger-trips per year, and a total of \$131,860 in annual operating subsidy will be required.
- **Expand Dial-A-Ride Service** – An additional 8 vehicle service-hours of Dial-A-Ride service will be provided per weekday to meet existing and potential future demand. The daily vehicle service hours will be allocated by operations staff depending upon anticipated needs and observed operating patterns. This will increase ridership by 4,490 one-way passenger-trips per year, and require an increase in annual subsidy of \$105,170. One additional vehicle will be required.
- **Contract for Provision of Weekly Georgetown / Cool / Pilot Hill Service to Auburn** – To serve the public transit needs of the northwestern portion of the county, including the communities of Georgetown, Cool and Pilot Hill, EDCTA will fund services to and from Auburn, so long as financial and institutional issues can be addressed. This service will be operated one day a week initially, with a single morning run and a single afternoon run. Ridership is estimated to equal 1,400 one-way passenger-trips per year, and a subsidy of \$8,320 will be required.
- **Expand Commuter Service to Meet Increasing Demand** – To meet existing and near-term future capacity issues, a new route (Route 14) will be added. The existing bus used for Route 9 service to Rancho Cordova will be replaced by a van (which is more than adequate capacity given the passenger load) and used to provide a new departure from El Dorado Hills at 7:15 AM and a 4:00 PM departure from Sacramento. This is expected to carry 5,500 one-way passenger-trips per year and require an additional \$52,600 in operating subsidy.
- **Revise the Commuter Schedule** – EDCTA will revise the commuter schedules to show the earliest potential eastbound arrival times in El Dorado Hills (with no traffic delays) to ensure that passengers waiting to board the commuter buses for an eastbound trip from El Dorado Hills will not be inconvenienced by buses leaving early.

- **Other Potential Future Service Improvements** – Several additional service improvements have been found to be operationally feasible, but financially unconstrained. These consist of skier service to Sierra-At-Tahoe Ski Area, and service to a potential casino in Shingle Springs. Implementation of these additional improvements will be dependent upon obtaining additional financial resources.

Short-Range Capital Plan

- **Fleet Replacement and Expansion** – A total of 33 vehicles will need to be acquired over the coming five years: 30 for replacement of existing vehicles, and 3 for expansion of services. Total cost is estimated to equal \$4,266,000. One bus will be acquired through a lease/purchase (using 5307 funds), while the remainder will be purchased outright. The California Air Resources Board requires that the fleet use ultra-low sulphur diesel fuel. In addition, a vehicle fuel retrofit program (totaling roughly \$15,700) will be implemented.
- **Improvements at the EDCTA's Administration / Maintenance Center** – An on-site fueling facility for low-sulphur diesel fuel will be provided with two fueling positions, a vehicle steam cleaning system, two additional storage bays, a Training Center, and improvements to the front entry area
- **Improve Office Computer Network** – Internal networking, and improved internet connection.
- **Develop an Improved Missouri Flat Transfer Center** – A study will be conducted to identify the optimal site along Missouri Flat Road, focusing on sites near Prospector Plaza and near Wal-Mart. It is estimated that this study will cost on the order of \$25,000. Design, construction and potential land acquisition costs will be determined as part of this next study; for purposes of this plan, an estimate of \$200,000 is assumed.
- **Continue to Improve Bus Stop Amenities** – EDCTA will plan on installing two additional shelters per year over the coming five years, along with four benches per year.
- **Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities** – EDCTA will continue to work with El Dorado County and the other jurisdictions in the region to review construction plans and schedule priorities for pedestrian and bicycle improvements to best coordinate with transit passengers' needs.
- **Expand Park-And-Ride Facilities** – EDCTA will construct a new lot adjacent to the Administration/Maintenance facility. In addition, the Cambridge Road Park-and-Ride construction is scheduled for construction in Fiscal Year 2004-05. EDCTA's future efforts to expand lots will focus on the Cameron Park and (particularly) the El Dorado Hills areas.
- **Implement the Demand Response Dispatching Program** – With improvements to aid administrative functions.
- **Consider Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) Technology** – EDCTA should continue to monitor the maturation of the industry and any future reductions in AVL costs.

Short-Range Institutional and Management Plan

- **Establish and Participate in a US 50 Transit Coordinating Committee** – EDCTA will take an active role in a "US 50 Transit Coordinating Committee," to address the growing interdependency of the US 50 corridor from Sacramento into El Dorado County.

- EDCTA Should Continue to Serve as the Consolidated Transportation Service Agency for Western El Dorado County**
- Impact of Expansion in Sacramento Urbanized Area** – The expansion of the Sacramento Urbanized Area to include the El Dorado Hills area has reduced FTA Section 5311 Nonurbanized Area Formula Program grants, while making the agency eligible for a proportion of the FTA Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program funds allocated directly by the Federal government to SACOG. The net effect of this shift is to reduce federal funding available for EDCTA operating purposes. EDCTA will begin to track and report major bus maintenance functions, and will work with other regional transit providers to ensure that the smaller transit organizations receive an equitable share of this key Federal funding source
- Improve Marketing Efforts** – Including improved route maps, changes in schedule format, development of a systemwide service map, and develop and maintain an e-mail list that will be used to notify passengers of service changes or interruptions.
- Improve Service Monitoring**

Short-Range Financial Plan

Local Transportation Funds (LTF) are assumed to increase from the budgeted Fiscal Year 2003-04 amount by 4 percent per year, which is conservatively low in comparison with typical growth over the last ten years. The amount of total local LTF allocated to EDCTA is calculated as the existing proportion plus \$80,000 per year, in order to provide a positive capital fund balance that allows for a reasonable level of contingency. Other funding sources are also assumed to change in a conservative fashion. Considering all operating and capital costs, positive fund balances can be maintained through the plan period for both the Capital Fund and the Section 5307 Fund. The Capital Fund is forecast to have a minimum balance of \$166,700, which is a reasonable level to address short-term funding needs, or changes in state or Federal funding levels.

Long Range Plan

Long Range Service Plan

- Continuation of **Dial-A-Ride services**, as augmented to address increases in population and changing mobility needs of the region.
- Expansion of **Placerville – Folsom LRT** service to a minimum of hourly services between the Silverbrook LRT station and Placerville Station. The span of service (days and hours of service) will expand as warranted to meet ridership demand.
- Continuation of direct **Sacramento Commuter** bus service subsequent to expansion of LRT service, in order to continue providing a high level of service to El Dorado County residents.
- Expansion of local **Hangtown Shuttle, Pollock Pines, and CRC Routes** as warranted by ridership demand, including half-hourly service on busier routes.
- Reconfiguration of the **Cameron Park Route** to coordinate with Folsom LRT service along the US 50 corridor.
- Establishment of an **El Dorado Hills local route**, when demand within El Dorado Hills warrants.

Overall system ridership is forecast to increase by 65 percent between 2002 and 2025. Much of this growth is expected to occur in the next 12 years: ridership is forecast to grow by a full 44 percent by 2010. The largest growth (81,700 annual passenger-trips) is forecast to occur on the local fixed-route services. Accommodating this growth in ridership will require the total level of EDCTA service (as measured in annual vehicle-hours) to grow by 57 percent by 2025, while operating subsidy requirements are forecast to increase by 43 percent.

Long-Range Capital Plan

- By 2025, the **EDCTA fleet** will increase to a minimum of 41 vehicles (excluding non-revenue vehicles). Fifteen additional vehicles will be required: four for expansion of commuter services, seven for expansion of local routes, and four for expansion of Dial-A-Ride and social service transportation. The vehicle fleet will be replaced as necessary in accordance with standard transit industry practice.
- EDCTA will convert to **low-sulphur diesel fuel** as the primary fuel source for the transit fleet. As technology and the availability of alternative fuels in the area change, EDCTA will consider conversion to other fuel technologies.
- Automatic Vehicle Location, Automatic Passenger Counting and advanced passenger fare technologies** will be implemented throughout the EDCTA system as funds are available.
- Park-and-Ride facilities** will be expanded as warranted by changes in travel demand, with a focus on the El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park areas.
- The existing **EDCTA Administrative/Maintenance Facility** will continue to be the operational base for the system, with improvements as needed to accommodate expansion in staff and fleet size. With improvements, this site can accommodate the transit program for at least the next 22 years.
- The primary **passenger facility** for the Local Routes will be the Missouri Flat Transit Center. Placerville Station will also serve as an important facility for the Pollock Pines, Hangtown Shuttle, and extended Folsom/LRT routes, as well as for intercity transit service.
- EDCTA will continue to upgrade **passenger amenities** at bus stops, as warranted by passenger boarding activity.

Long-Range Institutional / Management Plan

- EDCTA will remain the appropriate **institutional form** for provision of transit services.
- EDCTA will actively **coordinate services** with other public transit organizations in the greater Sacramento Region, particularly those services along the US 50 corridor. This will include joint marketing and ticketing of services, and potentially participation in jointly funded services.
- EDCTA will conduct an active **marketing program** to ensure a high level of public awareness regarding transit services.
- EDCTA will regularly **collect and evaluate transit operational data** to provide decision makers with the information needed for effective management and policy making.

The long-range financial plan incorporates existing funding sources. No new local transit funding source (such as local-option sales tax) is forecast to be necessary to achieve this long-range plan.