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# El Dorado County Transportation Commission Triennial Performance Audit

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for Fiscal Years 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18



*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  
Fiscal Years 2015-16 through 2017-18

*Final*

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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, 2015, to June 30, 2018. 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. 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, 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.

## **PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT AND ORGANIZATION**

This Audit followed the steps recommended in the Caltrans Performance Audit Guidebook:

- ◆ A review of pertinent documents such as the Regional Transportation Plan, annual Overall Work Programs (OWP), prior performance audits, annual fiscal audits, and El Dorado County Transportation Commission agendas, minutes, and supporting staff reports.
- ◆ On-site discussions with the EDCTC Executive Director and Executive Assistant.
- ◆ Email correspondence with some EDCTC members.

## **EL DORADO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION DESCRIPTION**

### **Agency Function and History**

The EDCTC is the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for El Dorado County (not including the eastern portion of the county within the Tahoe Basin). The primary responsibilities of an RTPA are to administer and allocate Transportation Development Act funds, develop a long-range transportation plan for the region, and oversee the delivery of State Transportation Improvement Projects.

The EDCTC governing board includes three representatives appointed by the City of Placerville and four representatives appointed by the County of El Dorado. The Board has two non-voting

members: one representative from Caltrans District 3 and one representative from the City of South Lake Tahoe.

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

- Policy Advisory Team (PAT)
- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC)

The EDCTC is currently served by a staff of five.

## **REVIEW OF COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS**

As recommended in the Performance Audit Guidebook, the auditor reviewed EDCTC's compliance with a series of TDA statutes which are related to performance. As shown in Table 1 in Chapter 2, EDCTC was found to be in compliance with all the requirements.

## **STATUS OF PRIOR AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS**

The prior TPA was prepared by LSC Transportation Consultants and contained the following recommendation:

- After the next decennial census or other official adjustments to the Sacramento Urbanized boundary, EDCTC should review the blended farebox ratio requirement to ensure that the ratio accurately represents the proportion of urban and rural areas in western El Dorado County.

As the next decennial census is in 2020, this recommendation has been carried forward in this audit.

## **DETAILED REVIEW OF THE EDCTC FUNCTIONS**

This section of the audit presents a review of the various functions of the EDCTC.

### **Administration and Management**

The EDCTC Governing Board administers transportation policy in an effective and efficient manner. Board meetings occur regularly and all required items are addressed. With the help of EDCTC staff, the Governing Board has access to sufficient information to make appropriate decisions. The EDCTC also serves as the El Dorado County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) and operates a Freeway Service Patrol on US 50.

Staffing levels are sufficient to complete the elements listed in the annual Overall Work Program (OWP) and are comparable to similar RTPAs. In terms of internal planning, the EDCTC

has set forth very clear goals and objectives in the OWP. The EDCTC has been successful in obtaining discretionary funding to facilitate the programming of many types of transportation projects aimed at reducing congestion, enhancing pedestrian/bicycle safety, facilitating goods movement, and improving the efficiency of the overall transportation system.

### **Transportation Planning and Regional Coordination**

The most recent *El Dorado County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)* was adopted in September 2015 and includes all elements required under state guidelines including public and stakeholder participation. The RTP sets forth clear goals and cost estimates for transportation needs in the region. As evidenced in the long list of completed multimodal transportation projects, the El Dorado County RTP has been an effective planning tool with a positive impact on the region. EDCTC maintains a good interregional perspective in terms of transportation planning and understands the importance of intergovernmental coordination as a means to completely address transportation needs in El Dorado County.

### **Claimant Relationships and Oversight**

Staff of both EDCTC and the EDCTC concur that a good working relationship exists between the two organizations. EDCTC provides sufficient oversight of the transit operator while allowing EDCTC to focus on the details of operating a public transit system. EDCTC has been very proactive in obtaining and managing planning grants for specific transit studies, such as the Short Range/Long Range Transit Plan update. During the audit period there was no cause for the EDCTC to withhold TDA funds from the transit operator.

The EDCTC processes TDA claims in an accurate and timely manner. Both the Administrative Services Officer and a Senior Planner review the claims. As per the prior audit recommendation, EDCTC now holds up to three percent of EDCTC's LTF allocation in a contingency fund, in case of an unexpected drop in LTF revenues. This is good practice for maintaining the reliability of public transit service.

### **Marketing and Transportation Alternatives**

The majority of marketing for transit services in El Dorado County are performed by EDCTC staff, although EDCTC is involved in a public outreach process for the on-going Short Range/Long Range Transit Plan update.

EDCTC is very active in promoting alternative and active transportation in western El Dorado County through commissioning planning studies as well as through rideshare and carpool programs. By all accounts, the EDCTC has a strong public information process in place. The EDCTC website is well organized and includes a wealth of information regarding transportation planning in western El Dorado County.

## Grant Applications and Management

EDCTC has been successful in obtaining FTA planning grants and Active Transportation Program grants to fund transportation studies and active transportation projects. EDCTC also assists EDCTC with preparing FTA 5311 and 5310 grant applications. During the Audit period, no state or federal grant applications were denied in El Dorado County due to errors or omissions.

## FINDINGS

- ◆ The EDCTC has complied with the requirements listed in the TDA and other statutes.
- ◆ The EDCTC has set forth and follows a clear and effective TDA allocation process.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ As evidenced by the long list of completed and in progress transportation projects in western El Dorado County, EDCTC is an effective Regional Transportation Planning Entity.
- ◆ The EDCTC and the EDCTC have a good working relationship with defined duties which allow for a productive transit system.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1:** *After the next decennial census or other official adjustments to the Sacramento Urbanized boundary, EDCTC should review the blended farebox ratio requirement to ensure that the ratio accurately represents the proportion of urban and rural areas in western El Dorado County.*

The blended farebox ratio requirement for El Dorado Transit adopted in June 2014 is based on the proportion of the western El Dorado County population which resides within urban and rural areas. The population of western El Dorado County has been growing at a modest pace since the 2010 Census. Therefore after the 2020 Census, the El Dorado Transit blended farebox ratio calculation should be adjusted to reflect new population figures. Additionally, it is likely that the Sacramento Urbanized Area boundary may expand further, and as a result this will increase the portion of western El Dorado County living in an urban area. It should be noted that according to the farebox ratio methodology approved in 2014, the proportion of EDCTC service area located in the urban areas is not factored into the blended farebox ratio. Therefore, EDCTC service area changes resulting from the on-going Short and Long Range Transit Plan effort will not spur an adjustment to the farebox ratio.

**Recommendation 2:** *After Caltrans develops web accessibility guidelines per AB 434, incorporate these standards into the EDCTC website and review biannually.*

AB 434 stipulates that before July 1, 2019, each state agency post on the homepage of their website a signed certification that the website meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 or the most recent version published by Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium. As a state agency, Caltrans will be subject to these rules. In the next year or so, Caltrans will likely provide requirements and guidance for RTPAs to also meet these internet accessibility standards.

Currently, EDCTC makes an effort to have on line documents accessible for all users. PDFs on the EDCTC website can be accessed as “readable” documents. Web accessibility guidelines are developed by Caltrans, EDCTC should incorporate these standards into the EDCTC website as well as review the guidance biannually to ensure that the newest standards are used.

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## **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 western 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 May 2016. This current Audit covers the three-year period from Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-16 through 2017-18.

El Dorado County extends from Lake Tahoe to the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. According to the US Census American Community Survey, the county has a population of 188,987. El Dorado County is both rural and urban in nature. A portion of El Dorado County is considered part of the Sacramento Urbanized area while communities such as Grizzly Flat have very low populations with limited commercial services. EDCTC is responsible for transportation planning in western El Dorado County, defined as the portion outside of the Tahoe Basin.

## **PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND REPORT ORGANIZATION**

This Audit was prepared in the following steps:

- ◆ A review of pertinent documents, including the Regional Transportation Plan, Short and Long Range Transit 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.
- ◆ Discussions with the EDCTC staff, including the Executive Director and Executive Assistant.
- ◆ Email correspondence with EDCTC Board 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. The governing board includes three representatives appointed by the City of Placerville and four representatives appointed by the County of El Dorado. The Board has two non-voting members: one representative from Caltrans District 3 and one representative from the City of South Lake Tahoe. The EDCTC board composition meets state law and is representative of other rural RTPAs.

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 into 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:

- ◆ Develop and implement an OWP outlining a comprehensive transportation planning process for the region.
- ◆ Develop rules for administering transportation planning and allocating TDA funds.
- ◆ Update the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).
- ◆ Oversee the delivery of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) projects.
- ◆ Work with SACOG to determine air quality conformity of transportation plans, programs, and projects.
- ◆ Administer the El Dorado County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) and related aviation system planning activities.
- ◆ Administer the El Dorado County Freeway Service Patrol (FSP).

- ◆ Conduct public outreach as necessary.

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

- Policy Advisory Team (PAT)
- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC)

PAT members include the City of Placerville Director of Development and Engineering, the El Dorado County Community Development Director, EDCTC Executive Director, EDCTC Executive Director, and the Air Pollution Control Officer from the El Dorado County Air Quality Management District. The PAT provides input to the EDCTC Executive Director and Board on policy level issues related to financing, land use, and intergovernmental cooperation which impact the overall ability to plan, fund, and deliver transportation programs and projects. Meetings are held on a subject driven basis, and the committee has not met since 2014; however the EDCTC Executive Director meets periodically throughout the year with the Directors of other agencies.

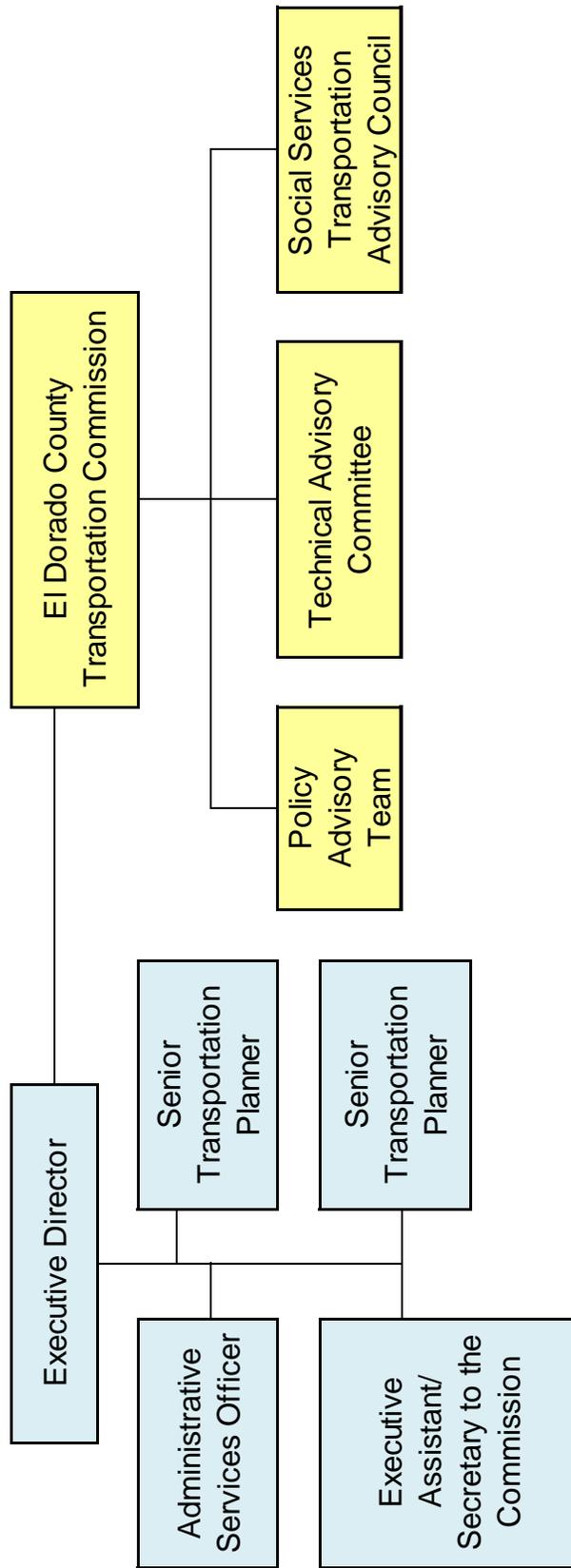
The TAC provides technical guidance for EDCTC plans, programs, and agenda items and generally meets monthly, one week prior to the board meeting. TAC members include staff from the El Dorado County Community Development Agency, EDCTC, Caltrans District 3, SACOG, El Dorado County Air Quality Management District, City of Placerville, as well as all staff and the Executive Director from EDCTC.

The SSTAC advises the EDCTC on all matters pertaining to the transportation needs of transit dependent and transit disadvantaged persons. As all TDA funds are allocated for public transit purposes, an official unmet needs hearing is not required. However, EDCTC must establish a citizen participation process which includes at least one public hearing. The SSTAC is involved in this process. 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 a commuter.
- ◆ Two representatives of local social service providers for seniors.
- ◆ Three representatives of a local social service provider or transit user 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, EDCTC.

The EDCTC is currently served by a staff of five. An organization chart is provided as Figure 1.

**Figure 1: El Dorado Transportation Commission Organizational Chart**



Source: EDCTC

The EDCTC's goals and objectives are clearly outlined in the annual OWP efforts. As the RTPA, the EDCTC's OWP addresses a comprehensive list of elements including TDA administration, inter-governmental coordination, multi-modal transportation planning, project delivery and programming, alternative transportation programs, and public information/outreach.

## **REVIEW OF COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS**

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

1. 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. There is only one transit operator in the area and all LTF funds are used for public transit.
2. In reference to Public Utilities Code Sections 99233 and 99234, the EDCTC most recently adopted written rules for the submission of claims for pedestrian and bicycle facilities in June 2014.
3. 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 not required to conduct an unmet needs hearing as LTF funds were not allocated to streets and roads projects. The EDCTC actively recruits members for the SSTAC.
4. 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. Over the years EDCTC has commissioned many studies to improve the productivity of El Dorado Transit services. Additionally, EDCTC's Overall Work Program (OWP) work activities include participation in the El Dorado Transit Technical Advisory Committee and preparing amendments to El Dorado Transit's Short Range Transit Plan and Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan. EDCTC has implemented all the recommendations from the prior TPA as well as many of the plan elements in the Short – Long Range Transit Plan.

TDA claim forms (for STA purposes) require that the transit operator include a statement certifying that the operator has made a reasonable effort to implement productivity improvements recommended pursuant to PUC 99244.

**TABLE 1: RTPA Compliance Requirements - El Dorado County  
Transportation Commission**

Requirement	PUC Reference	In Compliance?	
		Y/N	Comments
(1) All operators and city or county governments, in total, claim no more than those LTF monies apportioned to that area period.	99231	Y	
(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	Y	
(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	Y	
(4) The RTPA has annually identified, analyzed and recommended potential productivity improvements which could lower operating cost of those operators.	99244	Y	
(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	Y	
(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	Y	
(7) The RTPA has submitted a copy of its performance audit to the Director of the California Department of Transportation.	99246 c	Y	
(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	Y	
(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	Y	
(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	NA	EDCTA is the designated CTSA
(11) State transit assistance funds received by the RTPA allocated only for transportation planning and mass transportation purposes?	99310.5, 99313.3, Proposition 116	Y	
(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	Y	
(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	Y	
(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	Y	

5. 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.
6. 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). LSC Transportation Consultants Inc. performed the performance audit for the prior three-year period. Reports were completed within one year of the end of triennium. The transit operator audits included an evaluation of performance indicators as required.
7. 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.
8. 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 performance audit of EDCTC included all the required elements.
9. The EDCTC has adopted a blended farebox revenue ratio for transit services as per PUC Sections 99270.1 and 99270.2, reflecting that El Dorado Hills and a portion of Cameron Park were designated "urbanized" areas in the US Census. In June 2014, EDCTC revised the previous blended farebox ratio requirement based on the most recent decennial Census population figures. The amended farebox ratio and methodology was approved by Caltrans. The EDCTC must maintain a farebox ratio of 12.2 percent based on the proportion of population located in urban vs rural areas of western El Dorado County. After the 2020 Census, EDCTC should revisit the farebox ratio calculation to ensure that it reflects an accurate representation of the urban and rural populations in the county.
10. 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). In western El Dorado County, EDCTC, the only transit operator, is also the designated Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA). If additional claimants emerge in the future, the EDCTC should consider implementing a policy regarding Article 4.5 funds based on state statutory requirements.
11. 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.

12. 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. There is only one transit operator in western El Dorado County.
13. 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. TDA funds were not allocated for streets and roads purposes during this audit period. However, a citizen participation process was conducted for each year of the audit period.

14. 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 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. Fiscal and compliance audits are scanned and maintained permanently.

## **STATUS OF PRIOR AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS**

The prior TPA was prepared by LSC Transportation Consultants and contained the following recommendations:

*Recommendation: After the next decennial census or other official adjustments to the*

*Sacramento Urbanized boundary, EDCTC should review the blended farebox ratio requirement to ensure that the ratio accurately represents the proportion of urban and rural areas in western El Dorado County.*

**Status: Implementation In Progress.** As the 2020 Census has yet to be conducted, this recommendation is considered a place holder and will be carried over to this TPA.

## **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**

#### *Governing Board Activities*

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

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 best RTPA practices. The EDCTC does a good job of posting important documents on its website for public review. EDCTC staff keep the Board abreast of all financial and planning activities. For example, the Executive Director compiles a report for each meeting which includes an overview and update of all EDCTC activities. The Board also sees a Check Register report each month displaying all checks written for the period along with explanations for checks with larger amounts.

The Auditor contacted several EDCTC Board member to anonymously discuss the effectiveness of the organization. Based on interviews completed with one EDCTC Board member, there is strong support of the EDCTC staff efforts. In addition, there is 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.

### *General Administration*

The EDCTC office appears to be well organized. Important documents are retained according to an established schedule and are easily retrievable. Staffing levels are sufficient to complete the elements listed in the annual OWP and are comparable to similar RTPAs. However, if EDCTC were to increase the project load, EDCTC may consider hiring additional staff. During this audit period, the Executive Director retired and was replaced by one of the EDCTC Planners, thereby reducing overall planning staff. EDCTC staff meetings are held every Monday morning with additional meetings as warranted. Performance reviews are conducted annually. Staff members are offered health and retirement benefits through CALPERS. Continuing education and training programs are also available to employees.

EDCTC periodically updates the *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual* which outlines expected working conditions, rules associated with benefits such as sick time, disciplinary actions, and grievance procedures. During this audit period, EDCTC developed an *Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual*. This document outlines the EDCTC Request for Proposal process, cash management policies, and grant administration policies.

One of EDCTC's regional transportation planning roles is to act as the El Dorado County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC). The purpose of an ALUC is to set land use standards for the area surrounding airports in the region so as to maximize safety, minimize noise impacts for the public, and prevent encroachment of non-compatible airport uses. As the ALUC, EDCTC reviews development projects for consistency with the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan as well as provide support to aviation agencies and local jurisdictions.

EDCTC also operates a Freeway Service Patrol on US 50 in an effort to reduce congestion, improve air quality, and increase safety for corridor commuters. As part of the program, EDCTC contracts with a towing company, generates reports, and markets the program.

### *Internal Planning and Achievements*

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. EDCTC staff prepare a quarterly report which compares OWP budgeted expenditures vs actual expenditures. The EDCTC has been successful in obtaining discretionary funding to facilitate the planning and programming of all types of transportation projects aimed at improving public transit, reducing congestion, enhancing pedestrian/bicycle safety, facilitating goods movement, and improving the efficiency of the overall transportation system. Examples are the Coloma Sustainable Community Mobility Plan, A Dial-A-Ride Zone Assessment Study, and a Marketing Plan for El Dorado Transit. For each year of the audit period, the budget has generally been adequate for funding the EDCTC's activities.

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 (Freeway Service Patrol), multi-modal planning (Active Transportation Plan and Multi-Modal Transit Center), as well as public outreach and education of the local communities. The EDCTC transportation planning process allows staff and the Board to be well informed of transportation issues and conditions in the region while providing the tools for a solution to transportation problems.

## **Transportation Planning and Regional Coordination**

### *Regional Transportation Plan*

The most recent *El Dorado County Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) was adopted in September 2015. The RTP sets forth clear goals and cost estimates for transportation needs in the region. As evidenced in the long list of completed multi modal transportation projects, the El Dorado County RTP has been an effective planning tool with a positive impact on the region. The RTP includes all elements required under state guidelines, including a discussion of issues for each transportation mode, clear goals, actions to address the issues and a timeline for implementation. As for public and stakeholder input to the RTP, the EDCTC convened an RTP Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from SACOG, 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. The RTP Advisory Committee provided input and advice on each element of the RTP as part of two committee meetings. EDCTC staff also separately met with the Shingle Springs Rancheria. The EDCTC board was involved in the RTP update throughout the planning process as draft versions of the RTP Policy and Action elements were brought to the EDCTC Board before completion of a complete draft report and subsequent Environmental Impact Report.

As a rural county, El Dorado County is not subject to the requirements of SB 375 which sets forth greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction standards. However, the EDCTC works closely with SACOG to incorporate the RTP into the SACOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Sustainable Community Strategies. EDCTC is currently in the process of updating the 2015 RTP.

### *Regional Coordination*

EDCTC is very involved in all types of transportation planning projects and studies to reduce congestion management and improve mobility for both motorized and non-motorized methods of travel.

The EDCTC understands the importance of intergovernmental coordination as a means to completely address transportation needs in El Dorado County. The Executive Director and staff participate on a wide variety of policy and technical advisory committees such as Caltrans

Corridor Planning, SACOG Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and with partner agencies including the Tahoe Transportation District, Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization, SACOG, Caltrans, and others. EDCTC is also a member of the Rural Counties Task Force and staff has served as Chair and Vice Chair of the committee during the audit period. This regional coordination helps to create effective partnerships with other entities and to more effectively express to funding agencies the transportation needs of western El Dorado County. EDCTC is also involved in the Cap to Cap Advocacy Effort whereby participating delegates from the Sacramento region educate federal officials about transportation project priorities in the Sacramento region, thus increasing the potential for various Federal funding sources.

### *Information Generation and Distribution*

The EDCTC's website is kept up-to-date and is comprehensive, with links to El Dorado Transit, local transportation-related information, and various transportation planning documents. The website also includes links to information regarding the transportation planning/funding process and the project delivery process. The EDCTC prepares quarterly project monitoring reports that are available on the website which discuss the status of on-going transportation projects such as the Western Placerville Interchanges and the El Dorado Trail, as well as provide contacts for Project Managers.

### **Claimant Relationships and Oversight**

The EDCTC does not have a formal productivity committee to review services and recommend improvements for lower transit costs, although the EDCTC has a Transit Advisory Committee which serves that purpose. An EDCTC staff member serves on the SSTAC. The EDCTC Executive Director and Senior Transportation Planner review EDCTC Administrative Operations Reports at least annually. This report includes operating statistics, on-time performance review, and performance measures by service, including those required by TDA.

Staff of both the EDCTC and the EDCTC concur that a good working relationship exists between the two organizations. As noted in the transit operator Audit Report, the EDCTC is well managed and frequently reviews services for improvements. The EDCTC has been responsive to any suggestions that the EDCTC has had with respect to transit. The two organizations work independently focusing on their given tasks. The EDCTC reviews the need for service adjustments and performs most marketing efforts. However, EDCTC has been very proactive in obtaining and managing planning grants for specific transit studies, such as the El Dorado Hills Community Transit Needs Assessment and the current Short Range/Long Range Transit Plan update.

During the Audit period, the EDCTC commissioned fiscal and compliance audits from an independent auditor for the EDCTC and for the EDCTC 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.

### *TDA Claim Processing*

In 2018, EDCTC adopted a *TDA Guidelines Manual*. The document provides a good description of LTF, STA, and State of Good Repair funds as well as outlines the TDA claim process. The EDCTC processes TDA claims in an accurate and timely manner. In March, after the County Auditor estimates the amount of LTF available to claimants in El Dorado County, EDCTC estimates the allocation available to each local jurisdiction, based on population. The EDCTC board then approves the Draft Findings of Apportionment of TDA funds by resolution. The findings of apportionment include the amount of TDA available to:

- County Auditor Controller
- EDCTC for TDA administration
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects
- LTF Contingency Fund
- EDCTC

After approval from the EDCTC Board, the EDCTC staff submits a claim to the EDCTC for TDA funds by June of each fiscal year. TDA claim packets must include:

- Annual project and expenditure plan
- Status of previously approved projects
- Statement of Conformance
- The EDCTC 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 – on file
- Information establishing eligibility under efficiency criteria for STA operating assistance – not applicable during this audit period
- Certification that the claim is consistent with Capital Improvement Plan – not applicable during this audit period

Both the EDCTC Administrative Services Officer and a Senior Transportation Planner review EDCTC's claims and the Executive Director signs off on the claim. The EDCTC Board 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 in order of priority (Auditor, TDA Administration, Bicycle/Pedestrian, LTF Contingency, and EDCTC). However EDCTC must be paid at least 1/12 of the total allocation each month. A concise history of TDA, apportionment process, claim process and unmet needs process is clearly outlined in the recently adopted EDCTC TDA guidelines.

As per the prior audit recommendation, EDCTC now holds up to three percent of EDCTC's LTF allocation in a contingency fund, until the amount reaches \$500,000. The purpose of this allocation is to have a "rainy day" fund in case of a sudden downturn in the economy resulting in an unexpected drop in LTF revenues. This is good practice for maintaining the reliability of public transit service.

In FY 2015-16, a small amount of LTF funds were incorrectly distributed to the western slope of the county vs. the eastern slope of the county as an old population percentage split was used to make the calculations. This was rectified per the FY 2017-18 fiscal audit.

## **Marketing and Transportation Alternatives**

### *Marketing*

The majority of marketing for transit services in El Dorado County are performed by EDCTC staff. A more detailed review of the EDCTC marketing efforts is discussed in the transit operator audit. EDCTC will promote transit services on their website and social media as well as be involved in public relations for transit planning efforts.

### *Public Information and Transportation Alternatives*

EDCTC is very active in promoting alternative and active transportation in western El Dorado County. During the audit period, EDCTC commissioned the El Dorado County Active Transportation Connections Study; a detailed analysis of active transportation corridors in each of the supervisorial districts of the western slope of El Dorado County to inform investments in project development, maintenance, wayfinding, safety, and innovative active transportation programs and projects. EDCTC's OWP includes an Alternative Transportation Programs work element. Activities include promotion of ridesharing, carpooling, transportation demand management of school sites and with employers, and coordination with regional Transportation Management Associations (TMA). EDCTC has embraced the states goals of increasing active transportation through the development of Active Transportation Plans for both the County and the City of Placerville.

At the local level, EDCTC stays abreast of development proposals in the region that might result in traffic congestion and other community impacts through the CEQA process. Staff ensures that new developments are consistent with the long-range goals of the adopted RTP.

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. EDCTC posts quarterly project monitoring reports on the website.

## **Grant Applications and Management**

EDCTC has been successful in obtaining FTA planning grants, Caltrans planning grants, and ATP grants to fund transportation studies, transit studies, and active transportation projects. EDCTC

also assists EDCTC with preparing FTA 5311 and 5310 grant applications, such as preparing the Program of Projects. The EDCTC SSTAC serves as the advisory committee for FTA 5310 applications. This distribution of grant management duties worked well during the audit period. Because of the grant management process, EDCTC 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. During the Audit period, no state or federal grant applications were denied in El Dorado County due to errors or omissions.

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## Conclusions and Recommendations

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There is 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 performance. All Board members interviewed were in agreement that the EDCTC is meeting its goals and objectives and held a high opinion of all staff. 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 has set forth and follows a clear and effective TDA allocation process.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ As evidenced by the long list of completed and in progress transportation projects in western El Dorado County, EDCTC is an effective Regional Transportation Planning Entity.
- ◆ The EDCTC and the EDCTC have a good working relationship with defined duties which allow for a productive transit system.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1:** *After the next decennial census or other official adjustments to the Sacramento Urbanized boundary, EDCTC should review the blended farebox ratio requirement to ensure that the ratio accurately represents the proportion of urban and rural areas in western El Dorado County.*

The blended farebox ratio requirement for El Dorado Transit adopted in June 2014 is based on the proportion of the western El Dorado County population which resides within urban and rural areas. The population of western El Dorado County has been growing at a modest pace since the 2010 Census. Therefore after the 2020 Census, the El Dorado Transit blended farebox ratio calculation should be adjusted to reflect new population figures. Additionally, it is likely that the Sacramento Urbanized Area boundary may expand further, as a result this will increase

the portion of western El Dorado County living in an urban area. It should be noted that according to the farebox ratio methodology approved in 2014, the proportion of EDCTC service area located in the urban areas is not factored into the blended farebox ratio. Therefore, EDCTC service area changes resulting from the on-going Short Range Transit Plan effort will not spur an adjustment to the farebox ratio.

**Recommendation 2:** *After Caltrans develops web accessibility guidelines per AB 434, incorporate these standards into the EDCTC website and review biannually.*

AB 434 stipulates that before July 1, 2019, each state agency post on the homepage of their website a signed certification that the website meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 or the most recent version published by Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium. As a state agency, Caltrans will be subject to these rules. In the next year or so, Caltrans will likely provide requirements and guidance for RTPAs to also meet these internet accessibility standards.

Currently, EDCTC makes an effort to have on line documents accessible for all users. PDFs on the EDCTC website can be accessed as “readable” documents. As web accessibility guidelines are developed by Caltrans, EDCTC should incorporate these standards into the EDCTC website as well as review the guidance biannually to ensure that the newest standards are used.