

AGENDA ITEM 5 D  
Consent Item

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** August 28, 2008

**TO:** El Dorado County Transit Authority

**FROM:** Mindy Jackson, Transit Director

**SUBJECT:** **Final Draft Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for Western El Dorado County**

**REQUESTED ACTION:**

**BY MOTION,** **Receive and file the final draft Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan for Western El Dorado County**

**BACKGROUND**

Designated recipients of certain Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds are required to certify that projects funded with those funds are derived from a coordinated transportation plan. El Dorado County Transit Authority (El Dorado Transit) relies on these FTA programs for capital and operating funds. The projects developed in this plan will improve access to transportation by individuals who are disabled, elderly or low-income. It is critical that projects be included in the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan for Western El Dorado County (CHSTP) if they are to receive funding from any federal grant program. The CHSTP was commissioned by CalTrans on behalf of the El Dorado County Transportation Commission.

Public outreach for development of the CHSTP was extensive and well attended by members of the El Dorado County Transportation Commission Social Services Transportation Advisory Council; the El Dorado Transit Advisory Committee and members of the public.

Chapter 7 Implementation Plan of Recommended Strategies from the Coordinated Public Transit Human Service Transportation Plan, Draft Final Plan is included for review with the full report available during regular business offices of El Dorado Transit. The CHSTP states:

*“A basic framework for coordination already exists in western El Dorado County, with El Dorado County Transit Authority acting as the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA). Partnerships between El Dorado Transit and local agencies are viewed as solid and*

*productive and should be encouraged to continue. However; within the county, there are additional opportunities for coordination that should be pursued.”*

The CHSTP will be presented to the El Dorado County Transportation Commission for adoption on August 28, 2008. El Dorado Transit submitted an FTA section 5310 grant application to the El Dorado County Transportation Commission that requires plan adoption prior to funding.

## **Chapter 7. Implementation Plan for Recommended Strategies**

The purpose of the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan is to fulfill SAFETEA-LU requirements and also to recommend strategies that encourage creative solutions designed to enhance the provision of transportation services to seniors, people with disabilities, and low income individuals.

The effort required to develop, implement and sustain programs that meet this need cannot be accomplished by the CTSA or any one agency acting alone. Active participation by a wide variety of organizations and individuals will be required. Transit agencies, public, private and non-profit human service providers, transit users, local governments, and the general public will all need to fulfill their respective roles for coordination to be effective.

Months of study combined with often passionate input from stakeholders in western El Dorado County have resulted in the prioritized strategies that are presented in this chapter. The recommendations are divided into high, medium and low priority strategies.

A basic framework for coordination already exists in western El Dorado County, with El Dorado County Transit Authority acting as the CTSA. Partnerships between El Dorado Transit and local agencies are viewed as solid and productive and should be encouraged to continue. However, within the county, there are additional opportunities for coordination that should be pursued.

### **High Priority Strategies**

High priority strategies were selected by stakeholders from a list of recommended strategies during a public workshop in April 2008. Participants agreed to determine priority rankings by applying evaluation criteria as a whole to each strategy, thus considering effectiveness of coordination, documented need and feasibility of implementation.

Figure 7-1 presents those strategies that El Dorado County residents determined to be of the highest priority for achieving more effective coordinated transportation. For each high priority strategy the following information is provided:

- Lead agency/champion: The individual or organization that will assume the leadership role to move the strategy forward. The champion is the key figure in the successful implementation of the strategy.
- Implementation timeframe, when proposed strategies are implemented, including the process of applying for funding
- Order of magnitude costs: Approximate range of costs for implementation
- Cost effectiveness of strategy: When strategies were prioritized by stakeholders, cost-effectiveness was one of the considerations used to determine high priority recommendations. While some strategies may be less costly than others to implement in the short term, more costly strategies may be included if they positively impact

mobility needs of significant numbers of seniors, people with disabilities or low-income individuals.

- Potential funding sources: Strategies without funding sources have little potential for successful implementation. FTA grant sources as well as other possible funding sources are indicated.

Figure 7-1 Implementing High Priority Strategies

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Lead Agency or Champion	Implementation Timeframe	Order of Magnitude Costs (Capital or Operating)	Cost Effectiveness of Strategy	Potential Funding Sources
Provide sufficient resources to allow the CTSA to negotiate interagency agreements, providing for coordinated use of assets and operating funds	CTSA	Year 1-2	\$50,000 - \$150,000	HIGH Minimal investment to stimulate more effective use of other resources	TDA New Freedom
Provision of contract maintenance through CTSA	CTSA	Year 1-2	\$0 - \$75,000 (Minimal set up cost)	HIGH Little or no investment to expand service options with customers paying full cost of services	Fee for Services
Expand Dial-A-Ride Service, either through increased service hours (El Dorado Transit as operator) or through agreements with human service agencies (El Dorado Transit at CTSA)	El Dorado Transit & CTSA	Year 1 - 2	\$35,000 – \$75,00 per year	HIGH	5310
Increase days of service to Sacramento for medical and social service appointments	El Dorado Transit	Year 1-2	\$50,000 - \$200,000 per year	HIGH Some cost if additional trips are necessary; minimal to no cost if schedule adjustments address the issue	Medicaid New Freedom
Provide travel training for potential passengers to use existing commuter service to Sacramento for connections/transfers	CTSA	Year 2-3	\$25,000 - \$75,000 per year	MEDIUM Minimal cost for training staff to provide instruction	New Freedom AAA Alta California Regional Center
Identify agencies or community leaders to develop and coordinate volunteer programs, including the recruitment, screening, training and managing of volunteers  Identify or create new insurance programs to eliminate exposure of volunteers and agencies to inappropriate levels of liability	CTSA	Year 2-3	Included above in CTSA resources	HIGH Potentially very cost effective: minimal to no investment for free to low cost services	New Freedom

**Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan • Draft Final Plan**

WESTERN EL DORADO COUNTY AND CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Lead Agency or Champion	Implementation Timeframe	Order of Magnitude Costs (Capital or Operating)	Cost Effectiveness of Strategy	Potential Funding Sources
Coordinate arrangements for purchase of capital equipment, including vehicles to help tap available funding, e.g. FTA Section 5310	CTSA	Year 1 - 3	Included above in CTSA resources	HIGH Minimal investment; better coordination of assets	5310 5311 STIP
Use older vehicles for less intense social service agency transportation needs	CTSA	Year 1 -- 2	\$0 - \$25,000 (depends upon decision to add support funding to the bus recipient)	HIGH Minimal expense for more intensive use of assets	
Expand traditional transit service through addition of reverse commute. Could be done by adjusting trip times for returning buses from Sacramento to serve El Dorado Hills and Placerville	El Dorado Transit	Year 2- 3	\$50,000 - \$150,000 (may be minimal if schedule adjustments are sufficient)	MEDIUM Moderate expense if cost of added reverse trips entails expanded service	JARC

Strategies determined by El Dorado County stakeholders to be of medium priority are listed in Figure 7-2.

**Figure 7-2 Implementing Medium Strategies**

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Timeframe	Comments
Expand service beyond the 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM window in the existing transit service area	Year 2 – 5 Depending upon available funding	Included in 2008 Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) Alternatives
Expansion of driver training, alcohol/drug testing and other support services for non-profit organizations through the CTSA	Year 2 – 3 Depending upon level of interest by agencies	CTSA to serve as sponsor
Expand joint use of vehicles and service in El Dorado Hills for seniors, developmentally disabled and youth (typical service hours do not overlap)	Year 2 – 3 Depending upon success of CTSA function	Included in 2008 SRTP Alternatives
Expand joint use of vehicles and service in Cameron Park for seniors, developmentally disabled and youth (typical service hours do not overlap)	Year 2 – 3 Depending upon success of CTSA function	Included in 2008 SRTP Alternatives
Work with tribal management to develop transportation options to serve employees and guests of the Red Hawk Casino	Year 2 – 5 Depending upon growth of casino employment and customer volume	Included in 2008 SRTP Alternatives Casino to open late 2008
Implement taxi voucher program Work with taxi companies to upgrade screening and driver training	Year 3 – 5 Depending upon interested taxi companies	CTSA to serve as sponsor

Strategies determined by El Dorado County stakeholders to be of low priority are listed below in Figure 7-3.

**Figure 7-3 Implementing Low Priority Strategies**

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Timeframe	Comments
Expand public transit service and human service agency transportation to provide service on weekends for seniors, youth and disabled individuals	Year 2 – 5 Depending upon available funding	Included in 2008 SRTP Alternatives
Expand public transit service and human service agency transportation to outlying areas of the county	Year 3 – 5 Depending upon available funding	Included in 2008 SRTP Alternatives

## **Implementing the Strategies**

This section addresses what needs to be done to move forward with all of the strategies identified in Chapter 6. Several interrelated activities and decisions need to be addressed to begin implementing the strategies. They are discussed in the following sections.

### **Program Administration**

California pioneered the centralized coordination program administrative structure with the creation of CTSA's in 1979. This forward thinking action provided a basis for centralized program management and inter-agency support. The CTSA is designated by El Dorado County Transportation Commission, which is the RTPA for the County. This structural relationship provides the high-level oversight responsibility at the RTPA/LTC level with implementation responsibility being borne by the CTSA. The Planning Agency has the authority to withdraw its designation of a CTSA and reassign it to another organization if the original agency does not perform its duties to the level expected by the Planning Agency.

In El Dorado County, an effective program administration structure is in place. The El Dorado County Transportation Commission has designated El Dorado Transit as the CTSA. The transit agency has in turn accomplished several coordination activities in this role. The Commission does provide oversight and hopefully will increase its monitoring role as a result of the recommendations in this Coordinated Plan. El Dorado Transit has participated extensively in this planning process, which appears to have re-ignited its pursuit of coordination opportunities. The transit agency was among the most vigorous supporters of the highest ranked priority for increased resources to pursue coordination. This process has served to refocus attention on opportunities for efficient provision of services that in many cases serve to complement the traditional transit operation.

### **Decision Making Process**

The local decision making process in El Dorado County is functioning reasonably well. The Transportation Commission has designated El Dorado Transit as the CTSA. The Commission oversees its performance through a high level of ongoing staff interaction and collaboration on grants and projects. The roles and relationships are also addressed in the 2008 Short Range Transit Plan, which acknowledges the formal relationship of the agencies. Further, the SSTAC is active and participates in the coordination decision process as mandated by state statute. The process could be enhanced through more formal assignment of clearinghouse functions to the CTSA for grant coordination and strategy implementation. This enhanced role has been practiced in some other counties with the result being coordination even at the grant preparation level. This step typically introduces a strong incentive for local agencies to work together.

### **Guidelines for Transportation Provider Agreements and Service Standards**

Coordinated transportation agreements can take many forms, depending on the types of services involved, the agencies that are party to the agreement, and the clients served. Thus each service agreement will have its own unique set of requirements. Agreements can be developed for client transportation, driver training, vehicle maintenance, volunteer coordination, or a myriad of other services. Each agreement should contain clear performance guidelines and standards specific to the service/services provided.

Provider agreements for human service transportation coordination are typically between agencies each with unique resources. The concept is for each participating agency in an agreement to share its resources with the other. This sharing can achieve real efficiencies in resource utilization. Yet the variation among human service agencies in client populations, service needs, professional sophistication, and depth of management staff varies tremendously. Thus a critical component in coordination is flexibility. Coordination will only work where it allows for uniqueness in the agreements that accomplish service delivery.

Each provider agreement should be crafted to fit the unique circumstances and resources of the participants. Such agreements will typically include the following sections:

- Objectives: what are the parties trying to accomplish through coordination
- Term (length) of the agreement
- Compensation or resource specification: what each agency will contribute in money, equipment, staff time, facilities, etc.
- Liability: what each agency's share of liability for incidents will be
- Termination provisions: how can either party get out of the agreement
- Performance standards: what measurable results are expected in order to assess the success or failure of the effort
- Decision making: what process is used for the parties to change or modify the agreement

There may be at least two levels of performance standards associated with human service coordination agreements. The first is contained in the agreement between the actual agencies and is defined in the performance standards section mentioned above. The agencies that fund or provide the service must specify some measures by which they will determine whether the arrangement is meeting their intent. This broad area would also include the requirements imposed by any funding source that is contributing to the project.

The second level of standards would come from the oversight agency responsible for coordination. This could typically be the CTSA. In its role as the central point for coordination, the CTSA may also apply certain monthly or annual performance standards. These could include measures such as those listed below:

- Revenue Hours
- Passengers (including a breakdown by category such as fare type, transfers, etc)
- Passenger Fares
- Revenue Miles
- Operating Costs
- Cost/Passenger
- Cost/Hour
- Farebox Recovery Ratio (depends upon the source of funding)
- On-Time Performance or Ride Time

- Accidents/Incidents/Passenger Complaints/Driver Issues
- Vehicle Issues
  - Road Calls
  - Out of service
  - Maintenance activities
  - Missed Runs or Service Denials

Efficiency standards use operational data to measure the performance of a transportation program. Monitoring operational efficiency and productivity may require data such as operating cost, farebox revenue recovery, vehicle revenue miles, vehicle revenue hours and boardings (passenger trips).

Many rural agencies do not have the staff resources to collect and analyze a broad range of performance data. Therefore the recommended efficiency performance standards are limited to key indicators that will provide agencies with a good picture of how well service is doing. Recommended efficiency measures for human service transportation coordination include:

- Operating Cost per Passenger: Calculated by dividing all operating and administrative costs by total passengers.
- Operating Cost per Revenue Hour: Calculated by dividing all operating and administrative costs by the total number of vehicle revenue hours (with revenue hours defined as time when the vehicle is actually in passenger service).
- Passengers per Revenue Hour: Calculated by dividing the total number of passengers by the total number of vehicle revenue hours. The number of passengers per hour is a good measure of service productivity.
- Farebox Recovery Ratio: Calculated by dividing all farebox revenue by total operating and administrative costs. Farebox recovery evaluates both system efficiency (through operating costs) and productivity (through boardings). Some funding sources do not include passenger fare requirements. In such cases, a farebox level is not relevant.

Reliability standards are another method of evaluating performance. Reliability standards can include on-time performance, complaints, accident frequency, and vehicle breakdowns. However, some of these measures may have little relevance to social service agencies. At the time of creating inter-agency agreements, these standards can be evaluated for specific relevance.

## **Access to Jobs and Employment**

In El Dorado County, population and employment centers are focused around the communities of Placerville, El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park. A major employment destination is the Sacramento area. Census 2000 statistics indicate approximately 27% of county residents commute to Sacramento for jobs. El Dorado Transit operates commuter service Monday through Friday beginning as early as 5:20 AM, with return service available leaving Sacramento from approximately 2:30 PM – 6:30 PM.

While some level of reverse commute service from Sacramento is offered by El Dorado Transit beginning at 7:00 AM, stakeholders indicated this schedule did not allow employees in El

Dorado Hills or Placerville to get to work on time. With a growing number of Sacramento area residents working in El Dorado County, reverse commute schedules could be adjusted to provide more viable options.

During the planning process, stakeholders identified the following transportation needs for job access in El Dorado County:

- Service from El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park to Placerville
- Service from Sacramento to El Dorado Hills
- Service outside the 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM window
- Evening and weekend service for youth/entry level job holders
- Service to the new Red Hawk Casino

### **Volunteer Transportation**

While there are agencies in El Dorado County that rely on volunteer drivers (e.g. Senior Shuttle, Snowline Hospice), there is no coordinated effort to recruit, train and retain volunteers.

Many rural counties have developed high functioning volunteer driver programs to supplement public transit, especially to support residents who live in outlying areas or who need non-emergency medical transportation. El Dorado County stakeholders recognized the benefits of a county-wide program and rated as “high” a strategy to build a volunteer driver pool. Program administration is the key to the successful implementation and ongoing viability of volunteer programs; thus the need for an individual or community agency to be the champion is critical.

The issue of agency liability frequently is raised as an obstacle to the implementation of volunteer driver programs. Efforts are underway through agencies such as Nonprofits United to create special insurance packages for individuals or agencies that offer an initial layer of coverage when a volunteer is operating a vehicle. This would supersede the coverage provided by the individual or agency when not in volunteer service. Early indications from Nonprofits United are that such coverage may be on the horizon.

The Beverly Foundation offers online resources for volunteer driver programs at [www.beverlyfoundation.org](http://www.beverlyfoundation.org). Additional information is available at the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation in the State of Washington, which has a manual for starting and maintaining volunteer transportation programs. It addresses the liability issues and provides forms and templates for agencies. The manual is available at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/training/vdq/default.htm](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/training/vdq/default.htm)

### **Coordinating/Integrating School Bus and Public Transportation Services**

The El Dorado County Office of Education (EDCOE) is a contract provider of transit services to clients of the Alta California Regional Center. This arrangement is viewed by the EDCOE as a natural extension of services that were provided to developmentally disabled individuals while they were students in the public school system. It is common for regional centers to contract with multiple vendors within a county; in El Dorado County vendor relationships exist with EDCOE and El Dorado Transit.

The coordination/integration of student transportation and public transportation services is fraught with obstacles. These include legislative and institutional barriers; restricted funding requirements and reporting requirements; turfism; attitudes and perceptions about student safety; vehicle design, and operational issues.

In California, there are no state statutes or regulations that prohibit using school buses to transport non-pupils. Indeed, from the state perspective, the use of school buses and in particular the co-mingling of pupils and non-pupils on school buses appears to be allowed as long as seating is available. Ultimately, though, the responsibility for school bus operations and policies is delegated to the local districts, which traditionally have been uninterested in broadening their focus beyond student transportation.

According to the California Department of Education, there have been sporadic uses of public school buses for transporting the general public, primarily in connection with moving people for special events, such as spectators at a professional golf tournament or marathon participants. CDE staff is not aware of any instances in California where the general public is being transported along with students on home-to-school routes.

While school district transportation resources were identified in the inventory of transportation service providers (Figure 4-4), stakeholders representing the EDCOE did not participate in any stakeholder meetings associated with the study. EDCOE's focus is on student transportation and there has been little interest shown in coordination efforts with other agencies.

## **Vehicle Maintenance and Operations**

Efforts are currently underway to determine the future facility needs of El Dorado County Transit Authority. The El Dorado Transit fleet consists of 60 vehicles ranging in size from four to forty five passengers. Maintenance facilities are adequate to meet the needs of the current fleet; however a feasibility study should be commissioned to determine the requirements for the next generation of commuter buses. The analysis should consider both space and equipment needs. Parking lot expansion at the transit facility will be required to accommodate employee and transit vehicles. Administrative space will be enhanced to include training facilities and office space for support staff.

During meetings with stakeholders, interest was expressed by several agencies in a consolidated maintenance program, which would take advantage of the facilities and technical expertise of the El Dorado Transit maintenance department. El Dorado Transit, in its role as CTSA, could develop agreements that would allow for the implementation of this coordination activity. An analysis should be done to determine the maintenance department's ability to add additional clients, utilizing current facilities and staffing. One option would be to make greater use of the existing facility evenings and weekends for transit and social service vehicles.

For additional information on consolidated maintenance programs a part of coordinated plans, please see Appendix F.

## **Summary and Next Steps**

For the majority of the high priority strategies recommended in this plan, the CTSA was suggested as the appropriate sponsor or champion. As the CTSA, El Dorado County Transit Authority can be the catalyst for the range of activities described in chapters six and seven. A number of the strategies are relatively low cost projects that should be easy to implement.

However, critical to accomplishment of any of these is the emphasis on its role as the CTSA by the transit agency. By raising the profile of the CTSA function within the agency, El Dorado Transit conceivably could accomplish much more in its coordination role.

This role of CTSA mirrors the federal focus on mobility management centers. A mobility management center is very close in concept to a CTSA. Under the broad umbrella of a mobility management center, the CTSA should use the limited resources required to craft new coordination programs and oversee their operation. This is largely a staff function that is often missing even in agencies such as El Dorado Transit that have achieved some results relative to coordination. Stakeholders in El Dorado County agreed that the primary strategy in this plan should call for El Dorado County Transit Authority to redouble its effort as CTSA through the addition of staff services to implement the range of strategies.

Staff services could be obtained with limited funding through such sources as New Freedom, which specifically mentions “mobility management centers” as a funding priority. The staff resources needed to accomplish real results could either be added internally or purchased from outside sources of coordination expertise.

A fully functioning CTSA would be capable of doing the necessary staff work to negotiate agreements, design maintenance programs, organize volunteer driver programs, establish key relationships with the social service community, and finally monitor the success of the many ventures thus established.

Many transit agencies serve as the CTSA, as is the case in El Dorado County. While this dual function is not always the most efficient structure to achieve real social service coordination, in El Dorado County the joint responsibility serves to facilitate integration of regular transit service with human service transportation. The necessary leadership is in place to accomplish this.