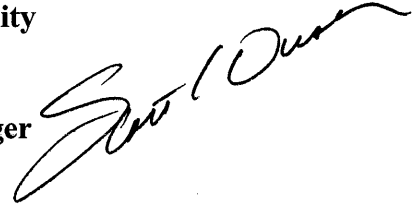


AGENDA ITEM
Action Item 6A

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 29, 2008
TO: El Dorado County Transit Authority
Transit Advisory Committee
FROM: Scott A. Ousley, Operation Manager
SUBJECT: Proposed fare increase



REQUESTED ACTION:
BY MOTION,

Review fare structure, discuss proposed increases

BACKGROUND

The El Dorado County Transit Authority (El Dorado Transit) provides three (3) modes of public transportation: Demand response, community bus routes and commuter service.

1. *Demand response* are lifeline transportation services that include Dial-A-Ride; Sac-Med non-emergency transportation, Senior Day Care and Motherlode Rehabilitation Enterprises client transportation. Dial-A-Ride passenger fares are set under a zone system at \$1.50 to \$7.00 for senior and disabled passengers. General public are allowed to ride on a space available basis, however the demand exceeds capacity so few general public passengers use these services.
2. *Community bus routes* provide service within the communities of Pollock Pines, Camino, Placerville, Diamond Springs, El Dorado, Shingle Springs, Cameron Park and Grizzly Flat. Routes and schedules are coordinated to allow transfers between routes. These general public fixed routes began in July 1980. Passenger fares have held at \$1.10 for general and \$0.55 for senior and disabled residents since at least 1993, maybe earlier.
3. *Commuter service* includes eleven (11) peak hour commuter runs to the downtown Sacramento corridor, two (2) reverse commute runs from the downtown Sacramento corridor to El Dorado County and two (2) hour service that connects with the Sacramento Regional Transit Iron Point light rail station.

The current fare structure adopted in El Dorado Transit Resolution No. 07-05 effective 4/2/2007 follows:

FARE AND MONTHLY PASS PRICING

Effective April 2, 2007

FIXED ROUTES: Placerville Shuttle, Placerville Express, Cameron Park, Diamond Springs, Pollock Pines, Folsom Lake College – El Dorado Center

One Way Fare: General....\$1.10 Senior/Disabled....\$.55
Monthly Pass: General....\$33.00 Senior/Disabled....\$21.00 Student K-12....\$25.00

Grizzly Flat Route:

One Way Fare: General....\$2.00 Senior/Disabled....\$1.00
Monthly Pass: General....\$33.00 Senior/Disabled....\$21.00 Student K-12....\$25.00

Sacramento Commuter Routes:

Sacramento.....	\$4.00	<u>One-way fare</u>
El Dorado County Destinations.....	\$4.00	<u>One-way fare</u>
Monthly Sacramento Commuter Pass.....	\$144.00	
<u>Monthly</u> Combination RT/EDT Pass.....	\$128.00+ RT Fare	

Iron Point Connector (IPC)

El Dorado County to Folsom Light Rail.....	\$ 2.50	<u>One-way fare</u>
Monthly Iron Point Connector Pass.....	\$90.00	
Monthly Combination IPC/RT Pass.....	\$80.00	<u>+ RT Fare</u>

Dial-A-Ride:

One Way Fare: Senior/Disabled - \$1.50 to \$5.00 (+ 0.50¢ per zone crossing)
 General Public* - \$3.00 to \$5.00 (+ 0.50¢ per zone crossing)

*Note: Trips are not available to the general public in outlying areas.

ADA Off-Route Deviations.....\$.25 Per Trip Per Person
ADA Complementary Paratransit.....\$1.50 Per Trip Per Person

A review of El Dorado Transit fares and a comparison of regional fares are included in the annual budget process. The approved budget for FY 2008/09 did not include a fare adjustment pending adoption of the Western El Dorado County 2008 Short Range Transit Plan, June 18, 2008 (SRTP).

With the inflationary pressure of escalating fuel costs and reductions in available Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding as well as the possible loss of Public Transportation Account (PTA) funding at the state level, fare revenue as a percentage of operating costs has fallen on several routes. El Dorado Transit claims 100% of PTA funding available for transit and this revenue stream was reduced by 4.08% between FY 2007/08 and FY 2008/09.

The recent 14% increase in passenger trips in FY 07/08 resulted in a 10% increase in passenger fares. This additional fare revenue from increased ridership covers a small portion of the increased operating expenses. Passenger fare revenue was \$1,105,338 in FY 2006/07 and \$1,110,426 in FY 2007/08 (an increase of \$5,088). Total increase in expenses between those fiscal years was \$330,691.

The Western El Dorado County 2008 Short Range Transit Plan, June 18, 2008 (SRTP) recommends the following:

Reflecting recent economic trends, Local Transportation Funds (LTF) are assumed to remain flat through the end of FY 2008/09, and then to increase by a relatively low rate of 3 percent per year. To address increasing cost in light of this constraint of EDCTA's most important source of operating funds and also to address current inequities in the overall fare program, the following fare increase will be implemented:

- *In FY 2008/09, the Senior Day Care subscription fare will be increased from \$2.00 to \$3.00 per day (roundtrip).*
- *In FY 2008/09, the Dial-A-Ride zone fare system will be modified by increasing fares in the El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park zones to match the fares currently charged for trips of similar length (and operating cost) in other zones.*
- *In FY 2008/09, a \$1.25 fare will be established for elderly/disabled passengers on the Iron Point Connector, in order to allow future use of FTA Section 5307 funds on this service.*
- *In FY 2009/10, the Dial-A-Ride base fare will be increased from \$3.00 to \$4.00 for the general public and \$1.50 to \$2.00 for elderly/disabled passengers.*
- *In FY 2009/10, the Local Route base fare will be increased from \$1.10 to \$1.25 for the general public and from \$0.55 to \$0.60 for elderly/disabled passengers.*

DISCUSSION

Passenger fare increases require approval by the El Dorado County Transit Authority Board of Directors after a public comment period and public hearing. El Dorado Transit staff is presenting for discussion, elements of a proposed fare restructuring. Adopted policy and federal regulations require a thirty (30) day advance notice of public hearing, public comment period and presentation of recommendations and comments to the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC). The effective date of any fare change shall be at least sixty (60) days after the date noticing the public hearing,

This discussion item is presented with preliminary fare increase recommendations to allow TAC members the opportunity to provide comments to staff.

A fare increase will offset a portion of any cost increases to maintain the required systemwide ten-percent (10%) farebox recovery ratio and sustain the current level of transit services during a time of reduced operating subsidies. Farebox recovery ratio is the percentage of cost captured by passenger fares.

Within the El Dorado Transit service area, current trends indicate retail sales tax and gasoline taxes are decreasing. If this trend continues, there will be less local transportation funds available when more people are using transit. Ridership increased significantly on the local and commuter routes in FY 07/08. Dial-A-Ride did not increase ridership because the service is constrained with a limited number of mini-vans available and the current demand exceeds capacity.

Currently, passenger fares cover 24.11% of the cost of service systemwide. Local transportation funds (retail and gas taxes) and federal operating assistance provide the additional operating revenue.

El Dorado Transit provides three (3) types of service, therefore the fare structure discussions that follow are separated by service type.

Demand Response

Dial-A-Ride

Dial-A-Ride is a curb-to-curb reservation service. The Dial-A-Ride service area covers most of the western slope of El Dorado County from El Dorado Hills to east of Sly Park, north to Garden Valley and south to Hwy 49 at Crystal Boulevard.

The fare is based on the length of any one-way trip within or between twelve (12) zones. If the trips are within a zone the fare ranges from \$1.50 to \$5.00. An additional \$.50 is charged for each zone crossing.

The recommendation in the SRTP would increase fares in El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park to match the fares currently being charged for trips of similar length. The operating cost on the lifeline service is \$100.91 per hour, with a farebox recovery ratio of 6.31%.

<u>One-way fares</u>	<u>Current Senior/Disabled</u>	<u>Proposed Senior/Disabled</u>
El Dorado Hills	\$1.50	\$5.00
Cameron Park	\$1.50	\$3.00

By comparison existing fares in similar zones are:

Pollock Pines	\$5.00	No change
Camino	\$3.00	No change

El Dorado County Senior Day Care

The SRTP recommendation includes changing the Senior Day Care roundtrip daily fare from \$2.00 to \$3.00. This recommendation is supported by El Dorado Transit staff.

Community Bus Routes

The SRTP recommends a local bus route fare increase from \$1.10 to \$1.25 in FY 2009/10. A Regional Fare Comparison (see attached) includes passenger fares for eight (8) regional transit operators. Community bus route fares for the region average \$1.40 per one-way trip. Fares are discounted at least fifty-percent (50%) for senior and disabled persons as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Currently, El Dorado Transit covers 90% of the cost of fixed route with federal operating funds and retail sales tax revenue. In an effort to maintain the current level of service and absorb the increase in costs per hour, the recommendation is to consider raising the one-way fare on community bus routes from \$1.10 to \$1.50 and from \$2.00 to \$2.75 for the Grizzly Flat route. This proposed increase is \$.25 more than the \$1.25 recommended in the SRTP due to recent cost increases not anticipated in the development of the SRTP.

Passengers would see an additional \$0.40 per general fare and \$0.20 per discounted fare for senior and disabled residents on the community bus routes and \$0.75 per general fare and \$0.35 per discounted fare for Grizzly Flat. The majority of passengers are eligible for the discounted fare. General monthly passes would increase from \$33.00 per month to \$60.00 based on the average regional fare (see attached report). The 50% discount off the general monthly pass for senior and disabled persons would increase the discounted monthly pass from \$21.00 to \$30.00.

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
<u>One-way fares</u>		
General	\$1.10	\$1.50
Senior/Disabled	\$0.55	\$0.75
Student (K-12)	\$1.10	\$0.75
<u>Grizzly Flat</u>		
General	\$2.00	\$2.75
Senior/Disabled	\$1.00	\$1.35
Student (K-12)	\$2.00	\$1.35
<u>Monthly Passes (unlimited travel per month)</u>		
	<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
General	\$33.00	\$60.00*
Senior/Disabled	\$21.00	\$30.00
Student	\$25.00	\$30.00

*Proposed new monthly pass value developed assuming an average use as 40 one-way trips per month at general fare (\$1.50). The \$60.00 monthly pass is a rate close to the \$55.00 average regional general pass. Although based on 40 one-way trips the monthly passes are good for unlimited trips during the month issued. Discounted pass rate of \$30.00 is a 50% discount off general pass value.

Route Deviations

<u>One-way charge</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
	\$0.25	\$0.50

Person 80 Years Young – Continue current Free Lifetime Pass program
(Provided 344 trips for Lifetime pass holders in July 2008)

Daily Pass

Staff identified many challenges incorporating a daily pass media. By purchasing a daily pass from the driver, a customer would be able to take unlimited trips within the community bus service for a flat fee. Regional operators offering daily passes base the fee on two and one-half (2.5) times the basic fare. In this proposed fare structure, the rate for a daily pass would be \$3.75.

The majority of customers using the community bus system would pay the proposed reduced fare of \$0.75 per trip requiring a person to take five (5) trips before a daily pass would be advantageous. The administrative time involved with managing a daily pass would result in a net loss of revenue.

Transfer Fee

A free transfer is issued by drivers for persons connecting to other community buses within the system. The purpose of the transfer is to allow the customer to arrive at their destination without paying two (2) fares. El Dorado Transit issues an average of seventy-three (73) transfers daily on the community bus service.

Community bus routes provide an average of 9.4 passenger trips per hour with an operating cost per hour of \$93.45. During FY 2007/08, ridership on the community bus routes provided 29,837 more passengers trips than the prior year. Considering the large geographical area of the community bus service, and the printing and handling costs of transfers, staff recommends a nominal \$0.25 cent fee per transfer issued.

Commuter Routes

A summary of the current fare structure, cost per hour and farebox recovery ratios for the three (3) commuter services is presented below for discussion.

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>One-way fare</u>	<u>Cost per hour</u>	<u>Farebox Recovery</u>
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Downtown Sacramento Corridor

1988 – 2002/2003	\$2.50		
2003/04	\$3.00	\$81.35	74.20%
2004/05	\$3.50	\$107.80	66.47%
2005/06	\$4.00	\$110.38	73.86%
2006/07	\$4.00	\$105.24	68.04%
2007/08	\$4.00	\$111.39	66.27%

Iron Point Connector

2006/2007	\$2.50	\$102.75	3.99%
2007/2008	\$2.50	\$109.00	8.97%

Reverse Commute

2004/05	\$3.50	\$121.25	1.19%
2005/06	\$4.00	\$120.14	3.39%
2006/07	\$4.00	\$ 97.58	2.56%
2007/08	\$4.00	\$116.03	3.92%

Downtown Sacramento Commuter

During FY 2007/08 El Dorado Transit provided an additional 5,486 trips on the downtown Sacramento commuter service at a cost per passenger of \$6.88.

The current one-way fare for El Dorado Transit downtown Sacramento commuter route is \$4.00 which is slightly higher than the average \$3.88 one-way fare noted on the attached Regional Fare Comparison. The SRTP includes a discussion regarding the fiscal constraint of adding commuter routes and does not include a recommendation to increase the commuter fare or monthly pass.

Iron Point Connector

The SRTP recommends the establishment of a \$1.25 fare for elderly/disabled passengers on the Iron Point Connector in order to allow future use of FTA Section 5307 funds on this service. El Dorado Transit Staff supports this recommendation.

Impact on Ridership

The American Public Transportation Associates (APTA) estimates urban transit agencies can expect a four percent (4%) loss in ridership with a fare increase. The community bus service is a rural system and it is difficult to estimate an actual loss of ridership. Staff will monitor ridership closely if a fare increase is instituted. El Dorado Transit did not see a loss of ridership during the phased (2003 – 2005) fare increases for the commuter service.

FISCAL IMPACT

The projected **increase** in fare revenue based on the recommendations in the staff report would be as follows:

Community Bus Routes	
General Monthly Passes	\$ 12,633
Senior/Disabled Person Monthly Pass	\$ 12,411
Student Monthly Pass	\$ 3,820
Farebox cash	\$ 48,995
Transfers:	\$ 4,526
 Demand Response	
Dial-A-Ride	\$ 11,850
Senior Day Care	\$ 9,295
 Total Projected Increase in Fare Revenue with proposed recommendations	 \$ 103,530

REGIONAL FARE COMPARISON
Updated August 2008

AGENCY	FARE SENIOR/DISABLED	FARE GENERAL	MONTHLY PASS STUDENT	MONTHLY PASS SENIOR/DISABLED	MONTHLY PASS GENERAL	FARE DIAL-A-RIDE	FARE COMMUTE	MONTHLY PASS COMMUTE	COMMUTE SERVICE MILES & TIME
EL DORADO COUNTY TRANSIT AUTHORITY	\$0.55	\$1.10	\$25.00	\$21.00	\$33.00	Zone 1 - \$1.50 (S/D)* \$3.00 (G)** Zone 2 - \$3.00 (S/D) \$5.00 (G) Zone 3 - \$5.00 (S/D) only PLUS \$0.50 (S/D) - \$1.00 (G) per zone crossed	\$4.00 one way	\$144.00	45 miles 60 min.
FOLSOM STAGE LINE	\$1.00	\$2.00	\$34.00	\$42.50	\$85.00	\$3.75 one way \$90.00 p/month	N/A	N/A	N/A
ROSEVILLE TRANSIT	\$0.75	\$1.50	\$29.00	\$29.00	\$58.00	\$3.75 one way (G) \$2.25 one way (S/D)	\$3.25 one way (Resident) \$4.50 one way (Non-resident)	\$110.00 (Resident) \$155.00 (Non-resident)	17 miles 30 min.
PLACER COUNTY TRANSIT	\$0.50	\$1.00	\$15.00 (40 rides)	\$15.00 (40 rides)	\$30.00 (40 rides)	\$1.00 oneway (S/D) \$2.00 one way (G)	\$4.00-\$5.50 one way (per zone)	\$125.00-\$170.00 (per zone)	55 miles 90 min.
YOLOBUS	\$0.60	\$1.50	\$42.50	\$42.50	\$85.00	\$2.00 - \$3.00 (senior/disabled)	\$1.00 oneway (S/D) \$2.00 one way (G)	\$80.00	20 miles 25 min.
YUBA-SUTTER TRANSIT	\$0.50	\$1.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$30.00	\$2.00 (S/D) \$4.00 (G)	\$3.50 one way	\$112.00 20 ride / \$70.00	45 miles 60 min.
AMADOR REGIONAL TRANSIT	\$0.50	\$1.00	N/A	\$17.00	\$34.00 (40 tickets) Scrip	N/A	\$2.00 (S/D) \$3.75 (G)	RT Monthly Pass + \$0.25 surcharge per trip	45 miles 90 min.
SAC REGIONAL TRANSIT	\$1.00	\$2.00	\$42.50	\$42.50	\$85.00	\$4.00 one way \$8.00 one way (airport)	N/A	N/A	N/A
AVERAGES	\$0.68	\$1.39	\$29.00	\$28.06	\$55.00	\$2.05 (S/D) \$3.64 (G)	\$2.96 (S/D) \$3.88 (G)	\$110.25-\$125.25	37.8 miles 59 min.

PUBLIC HEARING

**El Dorado County Transit Authority will Hold a Public Hearing
on Proposed Fare Increase for the Local Community Bus Route
and Dial-A-Ride Services**

**Thursday, December 11, 2008
1:10 p.m.
2850 Fairlane Court, Hearing Room
Placerville, CA**

**For more information on the proposed fare
structure, visit www.eldoradotransit.com or call
Transit Services at (530) 642-5383 ext. 201**

**To submit comments contact Matt Mauk, Transit Services Asst. (530) 642-5383 ext. 201
or send an email to mmauk@eldoradotransit.com. Written comments may also be
submitted by mail to the following address:**

**El Dorado Transit
Attn: Matt Mauk, Transit Services Asst.
6565 Commerce Way
Diamond Springs, CA 95619**

**To ensure proper consideration, written comments must be received on or before
Monday, November 17, 2008 to be included in the staff report to the El Dorado Transit
Board of Directors. Oral and written testimony may be submitted in person at the
public hearing.**

**Para informacion en espanol, por favor llama Danielle Pedrique a (530) 642-5383 extension 223,
o manda correo electronicos a dpedrique@eldoradotransit.com**



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: October 22, 2008
From: El Dorado County Transit Authority
Matt Mauk, Transit Services Assistant
(530) 642-5383, Extension 201

El Dorado Transit to Hold Public Hearing on Thursday, December 11 to Discuss Local Route and Dial-A-Ride Fare Increases Proposed for April 2009

Placerville, CA, October 22, 2008 – In response to increased operating costs and an expected loss in state funds, the El Dorado County Transit Authority (El Dorado Transit) will hold a public hearing to discuss proposed fare increases. The public hearing will be held on Thursday, December 11, 2008, at 1:10 p.m. in the Hearing Room of Building C located at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville.

The recently approved State budget for fiscal year 2008/09 (July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009) calls for substantial funding cuts to transit agencies statewide. This is the second consecutive year that State Transit Assistance funds have been diverted to the State's general fund to balance the budget. In addition, rising fuel costs have simultaneously increased operating expenses for transit agencies while creating more demand for transit service. As a result, public transit service across the region has been severely impacted. "Unfortunately, a fare increase is necessary to sustain the current level of service during a time of reduced operating subsidies and increased costs," stated Mindy Jackson, Executive Director, El Dorado Transit. Currently, passenger fares cover 24.11% of the cost of service system wide. Local transportation funds (retail and gas taxes), state and federal operating assistance provide the additional operating revenue.

El Dorado Transit is proposing fare increases on its Community bus routes and Dial-A-Ride services, for implementation on April 6, 2009. Staff will present the following fare structure options at the public hearing scheduled for December 11, 2008:

1. **Dial-A-Ride:** Dial-A-Ride is a curb-to-curb reservation service. The Dial-A-Ride service area covers most of the western slope of El Dorado County from El Dorado Hills to east of Sly Park, north to Garden Valley and south to Hwy 49 at Crystal Boulevard. The fare is based on the length of any one-way trip within or between twelve (12) zones. If the trips are within a single zone the fare ranges from \$1.50 to \$5.00. An additional \$.50 is charged for each zone crossing.

The proposed recommendation would increase fares in El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park to match the fares currently being charged for trips of similar length in Pollock Pines and Camino. The operating cost on the service is currently \$100.91 per hour; approximately 6.31% of operating cost is recovered from passenger fares.

2. **El Dorado County Senior Day Care:** El Dorado Transit provides weekday client transportation to the El Dorado County Senior Day Care Program in Placerville. The proposed recommendations include a change to the Senior Day Care roundtrip, daily fare from \$2.00 to \$3.00.
3. **Community Bus Routes:** El Dorado Transit provides fixed route service, Monday through Saturday, within the communities of Pollock Pines, Camino, Placerville, Diamond Springs, El Dorado, Shingle Springs, Cameron Park and Grizzly Flat. Routes and schedules are coordinated to allow transfers between routes. These general public fixed routes began in July, 1980. Passenger fares are currently \$1.10 for general and \$0.55 for seniors and persons with disabilities. Fares for the weekly Grizzly Flat route are currently \$2.00, one-way for general passengers and \$1.00 for seniors and persons with disabilities.

The proposed recommendation is to consider raising the general one-way fare on community bus routes from \$1.10 to \$1.50 and from \$2.00 to \$2.75 on the Grizzly Flat route specifically. The discount fares, for seniors, persons with disabilities and students K-12, would remain at 50%, increasing by \$0.20 or \$0.35 respectively. General monthly passes would increase from \$33.00 per month to \$60.00. The price of a discounted monthly pass for seniors, disabled persons and students would increase from \$21.00 to \$30.00. These proposed changes would represent a 36% increase in the one-way fares, across the board, and bring El Dorado Transits monthly pass rates in line with the regional average.

Under the current fare structure, passengers may request a free transfer when utilizing up to two (2) connecting buses to complete a one-way trip within the system. El Dorado Transit issues an average of seventy-three (73) transfers daily on the community bus service. Considering the large geographical area covered by the community routes and the costs of printing and handling paper transfers, staff recommends implementation of a \$0.25 fee per transfer issued.

In accordance with guidelines set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), eligible, registered passengers may request all of the community buses, except the Placerville Shuttle, to deviate off-route up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile. The current fee for such a deviation is \$0.25, per one-way trip, in addition to the base fare. The recommendation is to increase this fee to \$0.50.

4. **Iron Point Connector:** Staff recommends a \$1.25 (50% discount) fare be established for seniors and persons with disabilities on the Iron Point Connector, in order to allow future use of Federal Transportation Act (FTA) Section 5307 funds for this service.

Staff will request Board approval of the proposed fare structure following the public hearing on Thursday, December 11, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. in the Hearing Room of Building C located at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville.

For more information or to submit comments related to the proposed fare structure, please call Transit Services at (530) 642-5383 extension 201 or send an email to mmauk@eldoradotransit.com. Comments may also be submitted by mail to the following address:

El Dorado Transit
Attn: Matt Mauk, Transit Services Asst.
6565 Commerce Way
Diamond Springs, CA 95619

To ensure proper consideration, written comments must be received on or before Monday, November 17, 2008 to be included in the staff report to the El Dorado Transit Board of Directors at the December 11th hearing. # # #