1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CHAPTER 1.0 – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) is to objectively and comprehensively evaluate Placer County Transit’s performance, identify and quantify transit demand, and identify strategies for enhancing community mobility. This plan is primarily a guideline for service development decisions for Placer County Transit and the communities it is responsible for serving (i.e., Colfax, Lincoln, Loomis, and Rocklin). All recommendations and accompanying financial implications are forecasts and subject to change.

Moore & Associates was retained by the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA) in 2010 to conduct SRTPs for the western Placer County cities of Roseville and Auburn, as well as Placer County Transit. Through conducting the three SRTPs concurrently, PCTPA seeks to enhance regional coordination among the transit operators and focus transportation resources throughout the region in an efficient and effective manner.

The County of Placer operates Placer County Transit, a fixed-route transit service, Placer County Dial-A-Ride program, vanpool program, and Placer Commuter Express. These services are funded in part through Memoranda of Understanding with the Cities of Colfax, Lincoln, and Rocklin as well as the Town of Loomis. Placer County Transit consists of five route alignments which during the weekdays (Monday through Friday) and one route alignment on Saturday (no service is offered on Sunday). The service currently operates from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. during weekdays, and from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. Placer County Transit routes make connections with Auburn Transit, Roseville Transit, and Lincoln Transit at various transfer points in western Placer County. It also connects with Sacramento Regional Transit at the Louis Lane/Orlando Blvd transfer point and provides service into Sacramento with both the fixed route and commuter service. It is the intent of Placer County Transit to continue to improve and enhance its connections with all transit operators providing service within western Placer County (i.e., Auburn Transit, Lincoln Transit, Roseville Transit, and Sacramento Regional Transit).

Placer County Transit serves both unincorporated Placer County and the incorporated cities within the County. It operates in both the urbanized and non-urbanized portions of the County and is therefore a recipient of both types of Federal Transit Administration funds. PCT is operated with funding from Rocklin, Lincoln, Loomis, Colfax, the Western Placer CTSA and Placer County. Placer County Transit has an operating agreement with the Cities of Auburn and Roseville and Sacramento Regional Transit District. The County relies on the coordination and collaboration with these entities to make service related decisions. While this plan is for Placer County Transit services, the ultimate implementation measures will need approvals from various City/Town Councils as well as the Board of Supervisors.
Productivity versus Coverage

Placer County is comprised of 1,404 square miles with public transit serving 59 percent of the total land area. With communities dispersed throughout the county (eastern and western portions), providing direct linkages between densely populated cities and unincorporated low-density residential areas, especially in western Placer County, can be challenging. Like many similarly-sized transit providers, the challenge remains in finding a balance between two competing goals: coverage and productivity.

Through focusing on enhancing productivity, frequency of service improves which in turn can potentially increase ridership. However the tradeoff of increasing frequency of service is it often concentrates service in more densely-populated areas limiting its coverage or reach to low-density communities in isolated locations. If the county shifts its focus onto coverage, service is extended to a larger portion of the county providing residents not typically served by transit the opportunity in accessing key destinations outside their community. Consequently, longer travel times often translates into reduced service frequency, single-seat trips, and fewer passengers utilizing the service in spite of potential demand for the service.

Ultimately service expansion will require an increase in operating costs to provide enhanced services and connections. With this in mind, the County seeks to provide the most efficient service possible through increasing productivity and frequency, while extending coverage into unserved areas when warranted (i.e., actual demand exists, increased ridership, etc.).

Title VI Compliance

As part of the six-county region governed by the Sacramento Council of Governments, investments made by Placer County must be consistent with federal Title VI requirements. Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, income, and national origin in programs and activities federal financial assistance. Public outreach to and involvement of individuals in low income and minority communities covered under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and subsequent Civil Rights Restoration Act, and series of federal statutes enacted pertaining to environmental justice, are critical to regional planning and programming decisions. The fundamental principles of environmental justice include:

- Avoiding, minimizing or mitigating disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations;
- Ensuring full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process; and
- Preventing the denial, reduction or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority populations and low-income communities.
The decisions process by which new projects are selected for inclusion in the Short Range Transit Plan must consider equitable solicitation and selection of project candidates in accordance with federal Title VI requirements.\(^1\)

**Short Range Transit Plan Process**

On July 15, 2010 Moore & Associates conducted a kick-off meeting with PCTPA and representatives from each transit operator. The kick-off meeting identified and outlined the project schedule, project expectations, defined project success, and schedule of deliverables. Our project team conducted customer surveys and ride checks onboard Placer County Transit between August 28 and 31, 2010, with additional onboard surveying conducted April 21 to April 23, 2011.

Community workshops were held on November 2 and 3 in 2010 in conjunction with the County’s unmet transit needs public hearings. In total, five meetings were held throughout the county; in Auburn, Lincoln, Loomis, Rocklin, and Roseville. These meetings served as an opportunity for residents to participate in the transit service planning process and to provide input.

Our project team evaluated transit through reviewing demographic and population data (Census Bureau data), economic data (California Department of Finance), rider and non-rider (community) survey data, and information gathered from community meetings to identify service gaps in mobility needs, accessibility, and community perception. In addition, operations and performance data was provided by the County and through field observations to assess transit performance based on specific indicators such as operating cost per passenger.

The Short Range Transit Plan is divided into five chapters focused on presenting collected data, insightful analysis, and potential recommendations for providing and enhancing those transit services managed by the County of Placer. The following narrative presents a brief summary and findings of each chapter.

The Performance Measurement System is the foundation for developing the Short Range Transit Plan. It provides the County with a governing mission and goal for providing service throughout the county. In this case, it assesses the actual performance of the public transit programs (i.e., fixed-route, dial-a-ride, vanpool, and commuter service) provided by Placer County within the framework performance standards and goals.

The cornerstone goal of the Existing Conditions chapter is to assess Placer County Transit’s existing service conditions by quantifying actual performance and analyzing recent data (i.e., on-time performance and boarding and alighting data) collected during ride checks and field observations.

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This chapter is divided into three sections: Demographic Analysis, Service Evaluation, and Ride Check Analysis. Below is a list of key findings from each of these sections.

3.1 Demographic Analysis
- The number of seniors and low-income persons has grown significantly since Census 2000 and now represent a significant share of the total county population.
- The highest concentration of ride-dependent populations reside in Western Placer County.
- Existing PCT fixed-route alignments serve the majority of locations where ride-dependent persons reside.
- The Foresthill and Granite Bay areas have the largest concentrations of ride-dependent persons not currently served by PCT fixed-route service.
- Lincoln has seen substantial residential growth areas in the past decade, possibly requiring additional fixed-route connections to/from Roseville.
- Placer County residents appear to have a higher level of education and income than the state and nationally.

3.2 Service Evaluation
- PCT ridership increased 26 percent across the evaluation period. However, total ridership decreased 15.5 percent between FY 2008/09 and FY 2009/10 (Exhibit 3.2.4).
- System Operating Cost steadily increased across the evaluation period, with the largest jump occurring in FY 2007/08.
- System Fare Recovery remained below 15 percent across the evaluation period (3.2.12), yet above the established 10-percent threshold.
- Fixed-Route Operating Cost/Passenger dramatically increased in FY 2009/10 to $9.97 from its lowest in FY 2008/09 ($7.92) (Exhibit 3.2.22).
- Placer Commuter Express (PCE) ridership increased 146 percent across the evaluation period (Exhibit 3.2.26).
- PCE Farebox Recovery continues to rise, reaching nearly 60 percent in FY 2009/10 (Exhibit 3.2.32).
- Vanpool ridership averaged 32,669 across the evaluation period, with a modest decrease in FY 2009/10 (Exhibit 3.2.35)
- DAR Operating Cost/VSH and VSM posted substantial increases across the evaluation period.

3.3 Ride Check Analysis
- PCT is well below the industry standard for on-time performance, with system on-time performance under 60 percent.
- PCT’s Auburn to Light Rail Route service had the best on-time performance, approximately 71 percent.
- PCT’s North Auburn Loop had the lowest on-time performance, just above 26 percent.
- The County should focus both on reducing late arrivals and eliminating early departures.
• Placer County Transit has its highest productivity during the early afternoon day-part (12:01 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.).
• PCT’s Auburn to Light Rail Route, followed by the Lincoln to Sierra College Route, had the highest observed ridership of all PCT fixed-route services.
• The Roseville Galleria generated a significant number of boardings and alightings.
• The ride check data reveals many trips originate and end at Auburn Station.
• PCT’s Highway 49 Loop has relatively low productivity.

The Public Input chapter presents the analysis and findings collected from a variety of public involvement activities conducted across a three-month period. These activities garnered input from both the general community at-large and the current riders of Placer County Transit. The ultimate goal is community-driven recommendations for Placer County Transit. The following is a list of findings revealed from our community outreach activities.

4.1 Onboard Survey Analysis
• Nearly 54 percent of respondents indicated they did not possess a valid driver license.
• Only 30 percent indicated having access to a personal vehicle.
• More than 60 percent indicated earning less than $20,000 per year.
• Traveling to work was the most frequently-cited trip purpose (31 percent), with recreation/social as the second most-frequent response (29 percent). Shopping generated the smallest share at nearly six percent.
• Approximately 25 percent transferred from another bus line. Among respondents who indicated walking to the bus stop, 26 percent indicated a distance of three block or less walk versus 20 percent citing walked more than three blocks. Only six percent accessed the bus stop using a bicycle.
• There was a fairly even distribution between PCT customers who indicated riding for less than one year, 1 to 3 years, and those riding for more than three years. Only three percent identified themselves as first-time riders.
• Approximately 60 percent paid cash fare for the surveyed trip.
• While infrequent riders preferred to use the cash fare option, frequent riders tend to use the various passes and ticket books based on belief they realize cost savings available (versus single cash fare).
• Approximately 52 percent of all respondents indicated being very satisfied with PCT service quality while 33 percent cited satisfied.
• More frequent service (nearly 30 percent) was the top-ranked service enhancement. The second most preferred service enhancement was later evening service (approximately 20 percent).
• Most respondents indicated a willingness to pay an additional twenty-five cents in order to realize the preferred service improvement (58 percent). Another 15 percent indicated they would pay fifty cents more than the current base fare.
4.2 Community Survey Analysis

- Most survey respondents were non-riders.
- *Work* and *school* generated the most frequent trips with *medical/social services* generating the least. This is likely due to the non-regular scheduling of healthcare visits for example.
- PCT received high marks regarding overall service from survey respondents (even among non-riders).
- *Saving money* was the most frequently cited reason for selecting PCT.
- While it is clear the attractiveness of public transit as a travel option is tied closely to local economic conditions (e.g., increases in gasoline prices), no single service improvement was identified which would result in significant increases in PCT ridership.

4.3 Public Workshop

- Connectivity between Roseville Transit and Placer County Transit needs to be marketed more effectively.
- Taylor Road Shuttle trial service is slated to end December 2011.
- The County should expand PCE services based on positive ridership growth.
- There is a desire for more service between Auburn and Roseville.
- There is a desire for regular bus services to/from Granite Bay and Folsom and between Auburn Folsom and Douglas Blvd., and Sierra College Blvd.
- Request were made for transit service linking Auburn with Truckee (with stops at ski resorts), with possible connections with TART or Truckee Transit.
- There is a desire for fixed-route service along the main arterials within Rocklin.
- Requests were made for better time coordination with morning and evening Sacramento RT buses at PCT transfer points.

Service Plan

The purpose of the Service Plan chapter is to present our recommendations based on the abovementioned findings as well as other performance data revealed through public involvement activities. The Service Plan chapter is primarily intended to be a guideline for service development versus a strict prescription and is divided into three sections: highlighting enhancement alternatives, capital and financial impacts with each funding scenarios, and implementation of proposed enhancement scenarios. Two recommendation scenarios were developed presenting a status quo scenario with minor improvements (Alternative A) and the service with additional operational and capital improvements to the existing transit network (Alternative B). Each alternative includes some level of operational, administrative, capital, and marketing enhancements.

Alternative A presents a low-cost scenario recommending the implementation of minor operational and administrative enhancements. This alternative is meant to address the customer and community input and observations made in the most cost-effective manner. Alternative A seeks to improve the experience and image of Placer County Transit for both riders and non-riders. Alternative A recommendations include:
• Develop a no-show and trip cancellation policy for dial-a-ride.
• Develop a College Transit Pass Program.
• Raise farebox recovery standard from 10 percent to 13.3 percent.
• Reduce number of time points published in transit schedule.
• Extend service hours on the Lincoln/Sierra College route.
• Seek grant funding to support service enhancements.

There are advantages and disadvantages to every change implemented within a transit program. Disadvantages will typically include the cost of the enhancement and increases to Vehicle Service Miles and Vehicle Service Hours. For this alternative, the disadvantages mainly include an increase in marketing and short-term administrative costs. Foreseeable advantages include:

Advantages
• High probability of ridership growth, especially during the evening.
• Retain familiarity to current riders.
• Improved on-time performance.
• Increase in ridership.
• Increase in fare revenue.
• Increase in service connectivity and coordination.
• Low-cost relative to the other service scenario.
• Increased customer satisfaction.
• Increase student ridership on PCT service.
• Enhance coordination between Sierra College route and Auburn/Light Rail route.

Alternative B incorporates the recommendations made in Alternative A plus additional capital/infrastructure and schedule improvements. This alternative seeks to enhance the existing service through introduction of new routes to provide transportation options to underserved areas, elimination and extensions of existing routes/route segments, as well as improvement of bus stop visibility through recommending the replacement of all bus stop signs with more visible and identifiable signage. The following are all the recommendations under Alternative B include:

• Convert Highway 49 Loop to on-call service.
• Reduce number of vehicles operating on Highway 49.
• Launch “Foresthill deviated fixed-route” pilot program.
• Convert Rocklin DAR into a deviated fixed-route.
• Introduce commuter bus service along Highway 65 in Lincoln.
• Increase frequency on Auburn Light Rail service.
• Extend service hours on the Lincoln/Sierra College service.
• Extend Taylor Road Shuttle service to Sierra Gardens.
• Develop a route to/within Meadow Vista.
• Enhance Taylor Road Shuttle service by incorporating two round trips into the baseline schedule and formalizing the daily schedule.
• Develop a Highway 193 service.

For this alternative, the disadvantages include an increase in capital, operational, and marketing costs, with possible short-term drop in farebox recovery while new services take root. Foreseeable advantages include:

Advantages
• High probability of ridership growth, especially during the evening.
• Retain familiarity to current riders.
• Improved on-time performance.
• Increase in ridership.
• Increase in fare revenue.
• Increase in service connectivity and coordination.
• Low-cost relative to the other service scenario.
• Increased customer satisfaction.
• Increase student ridership on PCT service.
• Enhance coordination between Sierra College route and Auburn/Light Rail route