

Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA)



Western Placer Transit Network Coordination Memorandum



August 16, 2024

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INTRODUCTION

In California, most cities/counties have public transit systems that provide good mobility within the particular jurisdiction. However, for longer trips which require riding one or more bus systems, transit travel can become confusing and a deterrent to choosing public transit as one's mode choice. Coordination strategies such as having one type of fare media/fare structure, trip planning tools for the entire region, and interactive maps that allow the rider to see more than one transit system at a time have the potential to increase ridership. Joint marketing and branding techniques further provide the user with a more seamless experience while each agency retains autonomy. There also could be some cost savings accrued through joint procurement of capital assets and technologies. This chapter discusses existing transit service coordination efforts in western Placer County, reviews coordination strategies employed in other jurisdictions, and provides examples of potential coordination strategies that could be beneficial to operators providing service in western Placer County. Although this COA does not include service recommendations for Roseville Transit, coordination with Roseville Transit is considered in this chapter.

CURRENT COORDINATION IN WESTERN PLACER COUNTY

Sacramento Area Council of Governments



The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the six-county Sacramento region, which consists of Sacramento, Sutter, Yuba, Yolo, Placer, and El Dorado counties. SACOG's Board of Directors is comprised of county supervisors and city council members, appointed by the member jurisdictions. As the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties, SACOG collaborates with Placer County Transportation Planning Agency to maintain consistency across counties as it relates to transportation planning and to distribute federal funding for project delivery in the Placer County region. SACOG further maintains the regional transportation demand travel model, which helps forecast land use growth and development, as well as how future transportation infrastructure, service, and program investments address demand and impact air quality in the six-county.

Next Generation Transit Strategy (2021) and Regional Transit Network Study (2024)

SACOG contracted with ARUP to complete the Next Generation Transit Strategy (Next Gen Study) with the intention of improving transportation throughout Sacramento, including inter-regional connections with Placer County. In the study, it was noted that fewer than half of the residents in Placer County work in the same county where they live, according to the 2020 US Census. It was also indicated that while Placer County has several transit operators, each provider is largely oriented toward local trips, making it difficult to serve trips that cross jurisdictional boundaries. The study identified key findings such as increased dispersed employment and shifts in travel behaviors due to rising housing costs. To create better connectivity within and outside of Sacramento, the study recommended strategies related to

integrating consistent fare payment methods, and trip planning information across Sacramento and adjacent regional providers in Placer County. Using branding and marketing consistency amongst networks was also suggested to increase understanding of transit services provided throughout different service areas.

The Regional Transit Network Study was completed by SACOG in May 2024, with contracted assistance from Jacobs and Nelson Nygaard consultants. The study resulted in a plan identifying high-capacity transit (HCT) corridors throughout the greater SACOG region for future consideration in regional planning efforts and funding investment opportunities. In Placer County, a couple of long HCT corridors were identified along the Interstate 80 and State Route 65 (SR 65) corridors, and some medium and short HCT corridors were identified in the Roseville area connecting with Sacramento County. These HCT corridors identify areas where transit services and supporting infrastructure could be enhanced to complement and improve existing transit services and ultimately generate more ridership demand for those services. SR 65 between Lincoln and Roseville as well as the I-80 corridor as far east as Auburn have been identified as HCT corridors which should have some level of high-speed bus improvements. Constructing new stations and bus-only lanes will require a great deal of coordination between the jurisdictions in western Placer County.

Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC)

The Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC) was established by the SACOG Board of Directors to assist in federal planning and oversight of transit service planning and operational coordination activities in the region. The committee is made up of transit operator representatives from Sacramento Regional Transit District, Paratransit, Inc., Yolo County Transportation District, Yuba-Sutter Transit, Auburn Transit, Roseville Transit, El Dorado County Transit, South County Transit/Link, Unitrans, and Placer County Transit, as well as non-profit human service transportation providers.

The Committee provides a forum for the discussion of transit plans and issues, coordinates transit studies and systems on a regional basis, disseminates federal, state and local transit information, reviews and comments on the regional Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP), and gives input into SACOG's Overall Work Program.

Placer County Transportation Planning Agency

The Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA) is the state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Placer County (not including the portion of the county within the Tahoe Basin). The PCTPA Board of Directors consists of one appointed councilmember from each of Placer County's six incorporated jurisdictions (Lincoln, Auburn, Rocklin, Loomis, Roseville, and Colfax), two appointed members of the Placer County Board of Supervisors, and one member of the public appointed by the County Board of Supervisors.



As the RTPA, PCTPA is responsible for allocating Transportation Development Act (TDA) and other state program funds to the transit operators within its jurisdiction. PCTPA also has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Sacramento Council of Governments (SACOG), which coordinates federal transportation planning and fund programming between the two entities.

Transit Operators Working Group

The Transit Operators Working Group (TOWG) is made up of representatives from the region’s three public transit operators (Placer County Transit, Roseville Transit, and Auburn Transit), PCTPA’s member jurisdictional agencies, and other Western Placer Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (WPCTSA) stakeholders that include local and regional social service agencies and non-profit community-based organizations. The TOWG coordinates transit service planning and operational matters, transit funding allocations, compliance with state and federal regulations, joint marketing efforts, and addressing regional transportation needs. The group provides input to PCTPA staff on the annual CTSA budget and the PCTPA overall work program. The TOWG also serves as a forum for jurisdictions and transit operators to discuss broader transportation issues impacting Placer County.

Western Placer Consolidated Transportation Service Agency



The Western Placer Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (WPCTSA) was developed through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between Placer County, the City of Roseville, the City of Lincoln, the City of Auburn, the City of Colfax, and the City of Rocklin specifically to provide transportation solutions for low income, elderly, and disabled residents of western Placer County. Under the terms of the JPA, PCTPA serves as the administrator of the WPCTSA. In western Placer County, WPCTSA is the designated Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) and receives 4.5 percent of TDA funds as allocated through Article 4.5. The objective of WPCTSA is to offer transit programs primarily designed to link inter-community destinations and provide transportation programs of “last resort” for passengers unable to access public transit for their basic and/or non-emergency medical needs. For example, WPCTSA offers Placer Rides, which is a transportation reimbursement program offered throughout western Placer County to eligible passengers who are unable to use other public transit services. Other regional coordination strategies such as the South Placer Transit Information Center, on-stop resources website, and the South Placer Transit Information Education and Training program (providing mobility training and educational outreach for transit services) are also funded through WPCTSA. These are discussed below.

South Placer Transit Information Center

The South Placer Transit Information Center serves as a call center for all South Placer transportation services (Roseville Transit, Placer County Transit, Auburn Transit, and Placer Rides). Operators match the ride request with the appropriate DAR service. The call center came as a result of regional public hearings regarding unmet transit needs. Funding is provided through a partnership between PCTPA and the WPCTSA. The line is open daily from 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM and is managed by the City of Roseville.



Mobility Training and Transit Education Specialists

Free “transit training” is available to all Placer County residents to encourage independent use of public transportation services throughout the south Placer area. Trainers will travel with an individual until they are comfortable and confident making trips on their own. During these sessions, the resident will learn the following:

- How to plan trips using the easiest and fastest routes
- Read and understand maps, schedules, and bus reader boards
- Openly communicate with drivers
- Safely get on and off the bus
- Transfer between buses
- Pay fare and purchase passes
- Identify landmarks and bus stops

Transit education specialists are also available to attend meetings and events to teach groups more about local, commuter, and on-demand transportation services in their area as well as provide mobility training to those who need it. The program is also managed by the City of Roseville and funded through the WPCTSA.

South Placer Information Website

Southplacerttransitinfo.com provides an online one-stop resource that collectively includes information regarding public transit services in western Placer County. The website contains an interactive transit service map with each operator’s specific routes and schedules, along with general information regarding how public transit works. This website is a good base for coordination between the various public transit operators providing services in the southwestern portion of Placer County.



EXAMPLES OF REGIONAL TRANSIT COORDINATION IN OTHER AREAS

The Northwest Oregon Transit Alliance and NW Connector



In 2010, five transit agencies (Columbia County Rider, Sunset Empire Transportation District, Tillamook County Transportation District, Benton County Transit, and Lincoln County Transit) in northwestern Oregon established a partnership called the Northwest Oregon Transit Alliance (NWOTA), to foster collaboration, improve transit connections between communities, and share resources to improve the cost-effectiveness of their services and programs. The



objective was to create one seamless user experience branded as “Northwest (NW) Connector”. The primary component of NW Connector is a Trillium-based website which provides for regional trip planning. While each transit operator still maintains autonomy in day-to-day operations and finances, the passenger has the ability to see all the participating transit agencies' routes and schedules side by side. Regional passes are also offered to allow for a seamless trip between common destinations. The NWOTA

board is composed of representatives from each transit district and meets periodically to coordinate routes, schedules, operations, and system updates.

The following goals and objectives were created and agreed upon by NWOTA.

Goals	Objectives
Improve transit connections between communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill service gaps • Reduce wait times at transfer locations • Improve fare collection • Sustain new weekend service • Add and sustain late/early service • Increase bike-transit travel opportunities • Improve system identification and wayfinding for transit users
Brand and market transit service in all five counties as a single seamless service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the regional system using the CONNECTOR brand, logo and tag line • Create and sustain annual advertising and marketing programs to promote transit ridership
Improve inter-agency coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Coordinating Committee for the NWOTA partnership • Establish a centralized website for transit data management.
Promote environmentally-conscious travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide on-line information on fossil fuel and greenhouse gas reductions resulting from the transit partnership • Provide incentives for commuters, visitors and colleges to use transit.
Develop transit as an asset for economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create advertising opportunities for regional businesses when marketing the CONNECTOR system. • Reduce employer and employee costs through transit tax benefits. • Promote regional businesses as community-friendly and environmentally conscious when they support transit.
Develop a solid base of local and regional support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with the North by Northwest Transportation Foundation to promote transit programs and raise funds.

Table 1

NW CONNECTOR HISTORY

Together, the five agencies jointly applied for, and were awarded, a special grant from the US Department of Energy (USDOE) General Innovation Fund. The grant allowed the partners to launch the NW Connector as a branded transit service pilot program to increase transit use by commuters and visitors while decreasing community dependence on fossil fuels. The pilot program ran from 2010 to 2013 with the following categories being funded by the General Innovation Fund Grant:

- **Centralized Coordination Program:** Project management led by a procured consultant.
- **Regional Route Implementation:** Identified overlapping services and prime connection points between routes.
- **Branding, Marketing, and Incentive Programs:** NW Connector logo, Website, Bus Wraps, and Bus Stop Signage.
- **Sustainable Funding Mechanisms:** The administrative budget is equally shared; the Connector system

leverages each partner's mobility grants and jointly applies for grants and funding.

- **Performance Monitoring:**
Performance is a discussion topic at NWOTA meetings.

Agency Formation

One of the first steps for the NWOTA was to create an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) per Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 190. Intergovernmental entities must be governed by a board or commission appointed by, responsible to, and acting on behalf of the units of local government that are parties to the IGA, and the IGA must be ratified by each party. Oregon statutes establish certain powers for intergovernmental entities, including the ability to issue revenue bonds and procure goods and services.

Immediately following the award of the USDOE grant on August 13, 2010, the five transit agency partners began working on an IGA to create the Northwest Oregon Transit Alliance (aka "CONNECTOR Alliance"). The IGA development process was led, and the IGA document itself was drafted by Columbia County as the USDOE grant sponsor. Informal phone conferences were held approximately weekly, to discuss progress on the IGA and resolve issues. The IGA was finally executed by all partners about 8 months after the process began.

Following the execution of the IGA, a consultant was hired to help manage the ongoing coordination and implementation of the pilot program. A "Coordinating Committee" was created, tasks were distributed throughout the agencies, and monthly check-in meetings were organized to keep the project moving forward.

Due to the size of the NW Connector's geographic area, meetings were initially held in person and by teleconference on alternate months. Face-to-face meeting locations were rotated around the region and occasionally held in Salem and Portland, to help balance the travel burden for all partners. Web conferencing was used by the consultant team as needed for the presentation of major findings and training sessions between meetings. As the project has now been running for more than a decade, meetings do not occur quite as frequently. During these meetings, the committee discusses performance, operational challenges, marketing goals, and funding mechanisms.

Agency Formation Lessons Learned

The Director of Transit of Lincoln City Transit was contacted to discuss lessons learned from the NW Connector project. As an original partner of the 2010 agreement, she was able to provide some anecdotal information. According to the *Successes and Lessons Learned Report* completed in 2013, strong partnerships, realistic timelines, and regular coordination meetings were an important part of the process. Early on the various transit agencies learned that they needed to broaden their perspectives beyond their immediate service area and passengers. Seeing the whole northwest region of Oregon as the service area and thinking critically about how to serve beyond the financial restraints of their individual system took time and compromise. Cost sharing, overlapping service boundaries, and reductions to service were necessary in thinking of the northwest Oregon region as a whole.

It was identified that the three-year timeline given by the grant's parameters was much too short for implementing such a project. Completing the necessary IGA and consultant procurement process ultimately left the committee with 26 months to complete the project. The report noted that a four or

five-year timeline would have been more realistic considering each agency's existing workload. Lastly, as mentioned above, standing monthly meetings were essential in keeping the project moving forward.

NW Connector Coordination Strategies

Fare Structure

Fare rates vary between services and can be found on each of the individual provider's pages within the NW Connector website. All five agencies switched to Token Transit to provide fare purchasing consistency. While cash is also still accepted and fare structure varies system by system, the means to purchase these fares electronically are all the same.

One fare coordinating strategy is that passengers may purchase a three- or seven-day regional visitor pass through the website. Visitor passes allow one trip to the coast from Portland or the Albany/Corvallis area, one return trip, and unlimited travel in Clatsop, Tillamook, and Lincoln Counties (from Astoria to Yachats). The three-day pass is \$25.00 while a seven-day pass costs \$30.00.

Website and Branding

Trillium provides web design, General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) management software, and interactive mapping technology to their clients. On the back end of the website, Trillium helped to consolidate each transit agency's ability to maintain GTFS and manage transit alerts by providing log on access to one cohesive portal that in turn, keeps the website current. Swiftly software is used to provide real-time information for passengers. It allows passengers to see when the bus will be arriving even when there are deviations to routes.



Figure 1

The website (nwconnector.org) has evolved greatly over time. At first, the website simply housed each transit agency's schedules and routes, with links to each agency's website. However, the website today has developed into a one-stop-shop source for public transit information and trip planning. People looking for information on the individual transit agency websites are provided with links to nwconnector.org to find schedule and fare information.

On the NW Connector website, users can plan their trip anywhere within the five transit provider areas using the trip planning tool on the home page. For example, a resident or visitor may plan a trip anywhere between Astoria to the far northwest of the service area, eastward towards Portland and St. Helena, southeast to Salem and Albany, and southwest to Newport and Yachats. Not only is trip planning and transit information available for each region, but visitors may also see local attractions and “things to do” in the areas they plan to visit and travel to.



Other branding and marketing strategies that have been implemented to create a cohesive use experience include the placement of the NW Connector logo on the buses, bus stops, and transit centers for each transit agency. While each transit agency bus still has their unique logo and bus wrap, the NW Connector logo has simply been added to their existing branding.

Website and Branding Lessons Learned

The *Successes and Lessons Learned Report* indicated that coordinated branding and objectives of the website should have been agreed upon prior to launch. The website served more as a simple splash page early on and many felt that it should have been postponed until proper logo and branding was finalized. As uploading and managing GTFS data was tasked to each agency to update the website, it was challenging to maintain consistency throughout the system. As a result, a standing GTFS agenda item was added to monthly meetings to inform the committee of any service changes being made and to assign responsibility of updating the website to reflect changes.

There was initially concern over whether a passenger would know that a NW Connector logo bus or bus stop was synonymous with service from that regional agency. To help with this, they ensured that the NW Connector logo would always be presented next to or in close proximity to the agency logo.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Coordinated Service

Advantages

- Increased visibility for all partner organizations through combined marketing efforts.
- Increased value to advertisers who might be interested in attracting business from nearby towns.
- Standardization of data collection techniques makes it easier to compare performance and identify opportunities to improve services.
- Coordinated customer service training provides a familiar feel to riders and helps to boost coordinated pass sales.
- Requires individual providers to track missed connections in network, which is helpful in identifying problems and coordinating future improvements.

Disadvantages

- Making necessary schedule changes is made more clunky and complex.
- Risk of instability as individual provider funding fluctuates.

- Increased demand for bus stop amenities at transfer stops that tend to be rural and have low boarding numbers.
- Increased demand for managerial staff to attend coordination meetings.
- Potential need to retain third-party consultants to resolve disputes between organizations.

Coordination Results

Limited operational and survey data before and after the NW Connector coordination effort in 2010 is available. The organizational goal of standardized data recording processes across providers had yet to be adopted at the time that many of the organizations last published data. Available ridership statistics do indicate a significant increase in ridership on the Coast to Valley Express Route, which is likely more popular with visitors and tourists. Rural services providing connectivity to larger urban areas such as Corvallis have not seen an increase in ridership.

VAMOS MOBILITY



The [Vamos Mobility](#) is a smart phone app created by the San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOCG) to allow for more integrated trip planning through six different transit agency service areas within San Joaquin County. The app is free, and available for iOS and Android devices.

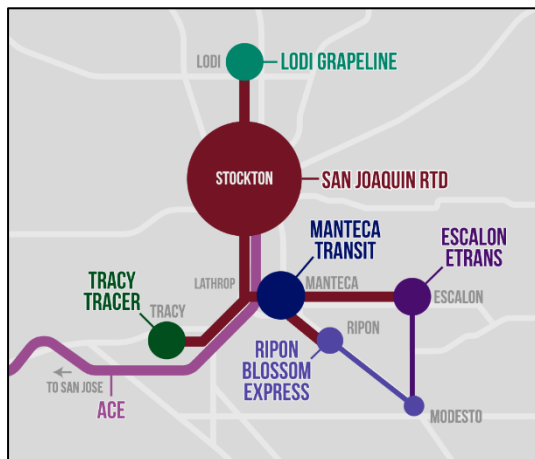


Figure 2

The app was launched as a partnership between San Joaquin Regional Transportation District, Lodi’s GrapeLine, Tracy’s Tracer, Manteca Transit, Escalon Etrans, and Ripon Blossom Express. The app also provides trip planning information for other types of transportation services including rail, bicycle sharing, and electric car shares.

All transit agencies have switched to using EZHub fare payments in addition to cash. While in the smartphone app, one may directly purchase tickets for all portions of their planned travel.

Seamless Bay Area

Seamless Bay Area is a transit advocacy group whose mission is to ultimately transform the various transit operators in the region into a seamless coordinated transit experience with equitable fares, accessible service, and multi-modal connections. The group has looked to the European idea of a Regional Transit Network Manager or “Verkehrsverbund” VV for a long-term vision of how transit could be better coordinated in the Bay Area.

In a region with a VV there is mutual feedback among transit operators, government jurisdictions, and the VV executive body. For example, government jurisdictions establish the overall level of transit service, but the VV translates that into specific service levels by mode, route, and schedule — with crucial input from

the transit operators providing the service. Similarly, government jurisdictions jointly determine overall subsidy and fare levels, but the VV translates them into a specific fare structure, and transit operators collect those fares. Government jurisdictions determine which services to contract out, but the VV issues the tenders and awards contracts, and transit operators (both within and outside the VV) compete to provide such services. Seamless Bay Area is still a vision and represents a greater degree of coordination than may be compatible in western Placer County.

Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit

Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit (TART) is an example of two separate agencies operating under one brand. TART is the name and brand of the service operated by both Placer County and The Town of Truckee in the North Tahoe/Truckee area. Tahoe Area Regional Transit has been the name of the public transit service in North Lake Tahoe operated by Placer County since 1975. The TART name had become well-known and recognizable in the community. There were a couple of iterations of branding for the Placer County TART service over four decades. Previously, the Town of Truckee's public transit service was known as Truckee Transit, without distinct branding.

In 2015 both Placer County and the Town of Truckee approved the new joint branding of Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit and kept the acronym of TART. Fallon Multimedia was hired by Placer County to create the branding graphics and style guidelines. The new branding was placed on new bus stop signs, new buses, the website, the online bus tracking software, and other printed materials. A single phone number is used for both systems. Placer County and the Town of Truckee include their agency name on their own buses and bus stop signs. Both agencies continue to operate and manage their systems separately. In documents and presentations, the services are referred to as Truckee-TART and Regional TART for clarification. The joint branding has been carried into TART Connect which is operated both in Placer County and the Town of Truckee with the same contractor, but separate contracts. While the two agencies have a funding and operations agreement, there is no formal agreement regarding the use of the brand. Schedules and route maps are available on one website: www.tahoetruckeetransit.com. Most marketing is conducted by the local Transportation Management Association.

It is worth noting that TART also operates in Washoe County, Nevada in the Incline Village/Crystal Bay communities. This service is operated by Placer County under a long-standing inter-agency agreement with the Washoe Regional Transportation Commission (RTC). RTC funds the service, owns the bus stops, and has decision-making authority regarding service levels. The TART service within Washoe County is branded, marketed, and operated seamlessly with the TART service in the rest of the region.

Humboldt Transit Authority

Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) was established in 1975 by a joint-powers agreement between the County of Humboldt and the Cities of Arcata, Eureka, Fortuna, Rio Dell, and Trinidad. HTA leadership consists of a seven-member Board of Directors. The Board is comprised of one representative from each of the five incorporated cities included in the joint-powers agreement and two representatives from Humboldt County.

HTA operates most of the intercity public transit services across Humboldt County, providing connectivity between the communities and amenities along the US 101 corridor as well as service along CA 299 between Arcata and Willow Creek. HTA also oversees and operates local fixed route service within the

City of Eureka via the Eureka Transit Service (ETS). HTA recently began operating the Arcata & Mad River Transit System (A&MRTS) in July 2023. ETS and A&MRTS operations and maintenance services are provided by HTA through separate agreements with each provider.

All of the services operated by HTA are separately branded and have various levels of coordination with each individual City. All the services are administered by the HTA. HTA, the City of Arcata, and the City of Eureka are all separate National Transit Database (NTD) reporters. All of the agency's vehicles are stored and maintained at the HTA facility in Eureka.

A recent development in Humboldt is that the City of Arcata contracted the operation of Arcata and Mad River Transit System to HTA for a one-year pilot program to address the difficulty the City of Arcata was experiencing in staffing the local service. Under this agreement, the City is responsible for funding, determining service levels, and bus stop maintenance. HTA is responsible for all aspects of operations, vehicle maintenance, and administration of the City's service. This includes NTD reporting, DMV record keeping, annual CHP inspections, compliance with FTA requirements, and reporting on ridership performance.

A key takeaway in Humboldt is that each of the various Humboldt County transit providers retains its own branding and identity and is the responsibility of the individual jurisdiction. Each system has unique color schemes for buses and promotional materials. There has been discussion, and even a commissioned study, to potentially brand all systems together in hopes that this might improve passengers' understanding of the continuity between the services, but there is also a desire to maintain the uniqueness of each system per stakeholder interviews. HTA maintains one website for each of the separately branded services. The website is well-designed and easy to navigate and conveys cohesiveness in service throughout the county. This website allows a potential rider to see schedules and route maps for all the services in one place.

The various operators in Humboldt County practice active management by having the transit managers and directors continually review the performance of their respective transit services and modify services in response to community needs.

Riverside, California

Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) encompasses approximately 2,500 square miles of western Riverside County with a service area population of over 3 million. The agency operates 330 revenue vehicles and had an annual ridership of over 4 million in FY 2021/22. RTA's service area covers 18 cities and the unincorporated areas of western Riverside County. RTA coordinates regional services with the Cities of Corona, Beaumont, and Banning, which operate separate municipal transit services. In the City of Riverside, RTA coordinates with Riverside Connect demand response service. These cities are represented on the RTA Board. RTA is also the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency for western Riverside County.

The RTA website includes information on connections to individual city transit services, and vice versa. There is not a universal fare structure covering RTA and the smaller city operators. However, the agencies accept each other's fare media as a valid transfer. RTA has transfer agreements with neighboring transit services including Metrolink, Omnitrans, Orange County Transportation Authority, Corona Cruiser,

Banning Connect, Beaumont Transit and SunLine. RTA also has agreements with multiple colleges and universities for free boardings by eligible students.

TRANSIT COORDINATION OPPORTUNITIES IN PLACER COUNTY

Fare Collection Technology & CalITP

Placer County Transit and Roseville Transit are part of the Connect Card consortium with Sacramento Regional Transit District and several other transit agencies in the Sacramento Region. The City of Auburn did not join the consortium and does not use Connect Card. The Connect Card is the universal electronic transit fare media payment option provided throughout the Sacramento region. However, the Connect Card fare payment system is outdated compared to current payment technology standards and does not accept open payment means with smartphones or credit cards.

Recently, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) launched the California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP) with the goal of making it easier, and less expensive, to update fare collection technology in the state of California. The CalITP project offers master service agreements with four vendors for data plans, two credit card payment processor vendors, and six vendors for transit fare processing and payment acceptance devices. Local agencies can work with CalITP to procure these services without having to conduct a new and time-consuming competitive procurement process. Sacramento Regional Transit District is coordinating with Placer County Transit, Roseville Transit, and the rest of the regional transit operators to transition from the Connect Card to a new open-source fare payment system using the CalITP resources.

Fare Capping

With on-board fare payment technology being widely available to transit agencies, the concept of fare capping has become a popular and practical way to improve the passenger experience and increase ridership. With fare capping, fares are free once the passenger has used an electronic payment method to pay for the number of trips that the agency sets as the cap for a given period of time. To provide a simple example - if a daily pass is \$3.00 and a single boarding fare is \$1.50, the passenger is no longer charged once they pay for two single fares. Fare capping can be implemented for any time period. Agencies trying to promote more repeat ridership by passengers can consider offering fare capping monthly so that once the passenger has paid for a certain number of single rides in a given month, they no longer pay for the rest of their rides that month.

Fare capping among all the Placer County transit operators would be best adopted along with the same fare payment system and validation technology across all the operators.

Coordination and Governance Structure

Placer County Transit has annual agreements with the cities of Lincoln, Rocklin, Colfax, and the Town of Loomis to operate transit services on behalf of each jurisdiction. In addition, PCT and the City of Auburn have a funding agreement for Placer Commuter Express. Placer County and the City of Roseville have a transfer agreement and Placer County has been a funding partner for Roseville bus stop improvements

that also benefit Placer County. For example, Placer County contributed funding to the Louis-Orlando Transit Center in Roseville.

In 2015, Placer County Transit replaced the City of Lincoln Transit system which operated within the City of Lincoln limits. This was done at the request of the City of Lincoln and in partnership between the two transit entities. The City of Lincoln cited the growing administrative burden of the transit services, which had increased since the City had become an eligible recipient of FTA 5307 funds. Placer County Transit continues to use the City of Lincoln facilities for storage of Dial-A-Ride vehicles that serve the city.

The jurisdiction transit agreements are renewed automatically on an annual basis. Placer County provides each jurisdiction with a summary of budgeted expenses and service levels annually for the upcoming fiscal year. The expenses for each jurisdiction include credits for fare revenues, federal funding, and state funding received directly by Placer County. Each agreement has a cancellation clause and can be modified based on coordination between Placer County and the jurisdiction. These agreements, in some form, have been in place for over thirty years. While it has not been a significant issue to date, changes made in one jurisdiction can impact services provided in a neighboring jurisdiction. This is particularly true for PCT fixed routes and demand response services in Lincoln, Rocklin, and Loomis. With the implementation of COA service recommendations, the jurisdiction agreements and funding commitments will need to be modified.

A potential improvement in this multiple jurisdiction coordination model would be to develop a Joint Powers Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding among all of the jurisdictions, including the City of Roseville. The type of agreement would depend on direction from agency legal counsel. Either a Joint Powers Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding would be an appropriate means of defining the relationship among all the parties and could define a systemwide coordination process to address changes in funding, service levels, and capital funding. The agreement could also clarify responsibilities for bus stop premises, bus stop maintenance, and transit facilities such as the Auburn Multimodal Station, Rocklin Station, and Loomis Station. With the need to have battery electric bus charging facilities in different locations on routes, the agreement could address roles and responsibilities of individual jurisdictions in development of this infrastructure. While legal counsel from each jurisdiction would need to be engaged for this process, it would **not** be necessary to form a separate public entity – a Joint Powers Authority, similar to Yuba-Sutter Transit. Separate funding agreements could still be in place between the County and each of the jurisdictions with reference to the joint powers agreement or memorandum of understanding.

CAPITAL PLANNING COORDINATION

ZEV Infrastructure

There is coordination among western Placer County transit operators in terms of ZEV Infrastructure planning. At the Roseville Galleria electric charging infrastructure is being constructed to support Roseville Transit and the new Rapid Link service (with supporting infrastructure being installed to connect with the Roseville Parkway bus stop location served by PCT in the future). Additionally, there are preliminary coordinated planning efforts to construct joint charging facilities at Nevada Station in Auburn (where PCT, Auburn Transit, and Nevada County Connects meet/transfer). Regional SB 125 funds have

been identified as a funding source for ZEV charging infrastructure to be installed throughout various locations within western Placer County including Nevada Station. As the respective transit fleets slowly transition to zero-emission, continued coordination for charging at transfer points will need to occur. Capital needs, including zero emission vehicle charging/fueling infrastructure, for the western Placer County transit operators will be addressed as part of the SRTP update.

RECOMMENDED COORDINATION STRATEGIES

Based on a review of current network coordination strategies in western Placer County and other regions, the following strategies should be considered further by PCTPA and the transit operators as part of the Short-Range Transit Plan update.

- **Regional Transit Brand**– Similar to the Northwest Connector project, the transit operators in western Placer County should consider creating a regional brand and logo which supplements each individual agency. The logo could be fixed to all bus stops throughout the region and added to transit vehicles. The South Placer Transit Info website could be rebranded with the new name/logo and could be enhanced to include a trip planning tool. The website should be updated regularly. The regional branding will need to be complemented with a marketing effort.
- **Technology** – As on-demand public transit options expand in Placer County, using the same microtransit technology (and app to be downloaded by the passenger) is important for providing a seamless experience for the passenger. Using the same technology could also bring uniform data reporting for each transit operator, as well as economies of scale for procurement. In October 2024, Auburn Transit anticipates transitioning to the same on-demand technology as Placer County Transit and Roseville Transit. Attempts should be made to procure the same on-demand technology when contracts need to be renewed. This also could apply to other software and technology such as Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) systems and on-board cameras.
- **ZEV Infrastructure Coordination** – Continue to coordinate planning for ZEV infrastructure as the transit fleets in western Placer County transition to zero-emission and as battery technology progresses and/or hydrogen fuel cell technology and fueling infrastructure becomes more economically feasible and accessible.
- **Joint Powers Agreement** - Placer County Transit should consult with legal counsel to discuss the option of establishing a Joint Powers Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding with the local jurisdictions, and the region’s other transit providers, Roseville Transit and Auburn Transit. The agreement could clarify roles and responsibilities for coordination strategies such as regional branding and trip planning, joint procurement and continued maintenance of technology, fare collection technology, and fare capping, as well as maintenance and improvement to shared capital facilities such as regional transfer points and ZEV infrastructure. Having an established agreement in place will be helpful and informative for when management positions at the local jurisdictions and the public transit operators change.