

The Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA) is undertaking a study regarding potential improvements in public transit services in Rocklin, California. The ultimate objective of this study is to determine if there is a need to modify existing transit services or to establish new routes or services to better serve Rocklin residents. Additionally, the most recent Short Range Transit Plan for Placer County recommended a more detailed study of transit needs in the City of Rocklin and therefore did not identify specific recommendations for new service.

Using the services of LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc., this study includes a review of the existing transit services, the needs for transit services in Rocklin, and the community's interest in changes to the service, and will assess the feasibility of various strategies to expand services. This final plan is the compilation of several interim study documents, describing existing transit services available, analyzing demand for public transit services and developing potential alternative solutions to meet transit needs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The 2013 population of Rocklin is estimated by the California Department of Finance to be 58,484. Nationwide, transit system ridership is drawn largely from various groups of persons who make up what is often called the "transit dependent" population. In the City of Rocklin, this category includes older adults (11 percent of total population), youth (12 percent), persons with disabilities (5 percent), low-income persons (7 percent), and members of households with no available vehicles (1 percent of total households). The California Department of Finance projects that the number of Placer County residents over the age of 65 will double by 2030. This will increase the need for public transit in the future. US Census data indicates 18,680 people live in Rocklin and commute elsewhere for work while another 11,866 people commute into Rocklin for work. Approximately 1.3 percent of Placer County residents take public transit to work.

There are two major colleges located within the City of Rocklin: Sierra College and William Jessup University. It is estimated that students account for the majority of ridership on the Lincoln-Sierra College Route. Rocklin Crossings and Rocklin Commons have recently been constructed and contain two major shopping centers which are typically high transit generators: Walmart and Target. As these shopping centers are relatively new, they are not currently served by the Lincoln-Sierra College fixed route. Other planned developments are also not currently served by the fixed route Whitney Ranch Assisted Living Project, Rocklin Park Senior Living Project, Sunset West Lot 2A Apartments, Garnet Creek Project. Although Dial-A-Ride (DAR) service is available in all these areas, a demand response service such as DAR can typically only carry on the order of two to five passenger-trips per hour; thereby limiting its productivity.

EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES

The majority of service is contracted with Placer County Transit (PCT) operated by the Placer County Department of Public Works. Regional fixed route service (Auburn to Light Rail and Taylor Road Shuttle) connects Rocklin residents to Roseville, Auburn and Sacramento and includes stop at Sierra College. Local fixed route (Lincoln Sierra College Route) service is available along some of the major commercial corridors in Rocklin and provides regional connections to Lincoln. General Public Dial-A-Ride provides demand response service throughout the Rocklin area. Lastly, commuter service into downtown Sacramento is available. In addition, Amtrak rail and bus service is available, along with Health Express and limited Roseville Transit service.

The combined performance of all public transit services operated in Rocklin was reviewed for this study:

- ◆ Operating Cost per Trip - \$8.56
- ◆ Operating Cost per Hour - \$106.62
- ◆ Passenger-trips per Hour – 12.5
- ◆ Subsidy per Passenger-Trip - \$6.84
- ◆ Average Fare - \$1.72
- ◆ Farebox ratio – 20.1%

A peer review was conducted to compare only the Rocklin portion of transit services to other peer transit systems in the SACOG area of influence. As indicated in Chapter 4, productivity (passenger-trips per hour) was below the peer average, operating costs per hour were slightly below other peers, while farebox ratio was slightly better than the peer average and above the Transportation Development Act (TDA) minimum. TDA Local Transportation Fund (LTF) expenditures per vehicle service hour and annual transit vehicle service hours per capita was significantly below the peer average.

TRANSIT NEEDS AND DEMAND

Previous Unmet Transit Needs Hearings have yielded the following requests

- ◆ The need for short bus routes that connect Rocklin residential neighborhood to transit hubs such as the Rocklin Amtrak Station and Sierra College.
- ◆ The need for local transit service in Rocklin to the train station to match the train schedule.
- ◆ The need for more transit service in the neighborhoods of Rocklin outside of the major strips (Pacific Street and Sunset Boulevard).
- ◆ The need for a fixed route bus that would run on all major roads in Rocklin.

Input from various public outreach efforts for this study are summarized as follows:

- ◆ Seniors generally living at one of the senior apartments near Park Drive / Stanford Ranch Road requested fixed route service from their home to shopping and other services in Rocklin.
- ◆ Important shopping destinations for potential transit riders include the Blue Oaks Shopping Center (also for the movie theater) and the new Wal-Mart /Target at Rocklin Crossings/Commons.
- ◆ Many commuters requested feeder bus service to the Amtrak station or an earlier return trip to Rocklin.
- ◆ Sierra College students would like a discounted student pass, more frequent service, and service to Walmart for those who live close to campus.
- ◆ William Jessup University would like to see a bus stop on campus in the future and indicated that the Staybridge Suites (where many students live) is not currently served by the fixed route.
- ◆ Improve marketing – Many residents and students are not aware of benefits of fixed route and DAR.

In Rocklin the aging of the population and the growth of college campuses is anticipated to increase transit demand in the future.

SERVICE ALTERNATIVES

A variety of transit alternatives were reviewed in Chapter 6 including:

- ◆ Modifications to the existing Lincoln-Sierra College Route to serve Rocklin Commons/Rocklin Crossings.
- ◆ Increased service on the Lincoln-Sierra College Route
- ◆ Modifications to the existing Taylor Road Shuttle route to serve Rocklin Commons/Rocklin Crossings
- ◆ New local service in Rocklin to better serve residential neighborhoods
- ◆ Checkpoint service or designated time points for new local service near residential neighborhoods and unserved transit activity centers.
- ◆ Increased service on Dial-A-Ride
- ◆ Reduced service on Dial-A-Ride
- ◆ Commuter feeder van service
- ◆ Taxi voucher program
- ◆ Special activity bus/DAR tripper

Ridership estimates for these alternatives were based on a transit trip rate per capita developed from existing ridership, elasticity analysis on existing ridership and Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) trip generation rates for commercial supercenters. Cost estimates for these alternatives were based on Placer County's estimated FY 2014-15 operating costs. Out of all these alternatives, only modifications to the Lincoln Sierra College Route and Taylor Road Shuttle so as to serve the new Rocklin Commons and Rocklin Crossings would achieve the adopted minimum farebox ratio 13.5 percent.

CONSULTANT RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

These recommended strategies are intended to provide guidance for the City of Rocklin, PCTPA and PCT staff for implementation of transit improvements and evaluation of unmet transit needs. These recommendations are not meant to commit or constrain decision makers in the development of future services, budgets and establishment of policies. The alternatives analysis demonstrated that serving Rocklin Crossings/Commons will meet many transit needs identified through the public input process as well as boost overall ridership and farebox ratio with relatively low marginal operating costs. Recommended strategies are as follows:

- ◆ **Lincoln – Sierra College Route – Realign Route along Granite Drive to Serve New Shopping Centers** – By realigning the Lincoln – Sierra College route to travel along Granite Drive and Sierra College Boulevard instead of Rocklin Road, the fixed route could serve the Rocklin Commons and Rocklin Crossings Shopping Centers prior to terminating at Sierra College.
- ◆ **Taylor Road Shuttle - Add Stops at the New Shopping Centers to the Existing Route in Both Directions** – Taylor Road Shuttle passengers may request a deviation to the Rocklin Commons and Crossings shopping centers but a consistent stop is not currently built into the schedule. In an effort to provide consistent public transit service to the Walmart and Target for both Rocklin residents

and other Placer County residents along Taylor Road as far as Auburn, the Taylor Road Shuttle schedule should be adjusted to serve the Rocklin Commons/Crossings shopping centers in both directions. The schedule adjustment will make it more difficult for passengers transferring between Auburn Light Rail and Taylor Road Shuttle but will be more convenient for passengers transferring between the Lincoln –Sierra College Route and Taylor Road Shuttle as well as between City of Auburn Transit services and the Taylor Road Shuttle.

- ◆ **Capital Elements** – Relocate the Lincoln-Sierra College bus stops near Safeway and the old Jaspers to Granite Drive near Sierra Meadows Drive, as these stops will no longer be located on the route. To best serve passengers on the revised Taylor Road Shuttle Route, a new bus stop should be constructed at Target.

With both of these plan elements implemented, ridership on Placer County Transit services will increase by 21,090 one-way passenger-trips annually and cost Placer County Transit an additional \$3,500 to operate. Currently the City of Rocklin does not participate in the cost sharing of the Taylor Road Shuttle. As part of this recommendation, the contract between the City of Rocklin and Placer County should be amended to include the Taylor Road Shuttle for two reasons: 1) The Taylor Road Shuttle will now include more stops within the City of Rocklin and 2) The revised Taylor Road Shuttle will bring more passengers from other Placer County communities such as Loomis and Auburn to shop in the City of Rocklin. Therefore, the City of Rocklin's operating subsidy for this plan element will increase by \$13,900 annually. Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds could be used to pay for the additional \$13,900 in operating subsidy and Proposition 1B funds or the new Low Carbon Transit Operations Program are potential funding sources for bus stop improvements.

Implementation Plan

The following outlines an implementation plan for the recommended strategies to improve mobility in Rocklin. The responsible agency/agencies are identified in parenthesis.

FY 2014-15

- ◆ Accept the Rocklin Community Transit Plan as a basis for evaluating unmet transit needs for Rocklin. (PCTPA)
- ◆ Work cooperatively to determine an implementation schedule for service recommendations, including necessary operating, schedule, capital, marketing, and funding elements. (City of Rocklin, Placer County)

FY 2015-16

- ◆ Amend contract between Placer County and the City of Rocklin to reflect the agreed upon implementation schedule for the Lincoln Sierra College Route and Taylor Road Shuttle operating, capital, schedule, marketing and funding elements. (City of Rocklin and Placer County)