CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

# Sacramento Regional Transit Master Plan

August 10, 2009


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# 1 Introduction

## Introduction

1.1 Sacramento Regional Transit (RT) is the largest transit authority in the Sacramento region. The last long term plan for RT was a Transit Master Plan developed in 1993. Since then, the region has experienced significant growth in population and employment and regional forecasts prepared by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) predict that this growth will continue well into the future. There is therefore a need for a fresh view on RT's long term plans to ensure that it can continue to support the economic growth and mobility needs of the region.

## Background and Context

### *1993 Transit Master Plan*

1.2 The 1993 Transit Master Plan highlighted that the growing shift away from a single downtown core towards a polycentric region with dispersed centers and continued low density residential suburban sprawl was making efficient transit delivery increasingly difficult. Distances between home and destinations - jobs, shopping, schools and hospitals - were continuing to increase leading to longer journeys and increased congestion across the region.

1.3 Increases in trip lengths, journey times and congestion were not only having an adverse impact on Sacramento residents' quality of life, they were also beginning to have a real and measurable impact on the region's air quality.

1.4 The 1993 Transit Master Plan set a course for RT that included large scale investments in its light rail and bus networks and since its adoption, RT has more than doubled the length of its light rail network to over 37 miles. However, despite this major investment, RT's services are only able to capture 1% of the total travel market in the region.

1.5 As sprawl has continued and jobs and homes have continued to spread over a wider area, it has become even more difficult for RT to provide a substantial or fully effective transit service.

### *A New Way to Grow*

1.6 Planning work undertaken by SACOG has forecast that the regional population will grow to 3.5 million by 2050 (87% increase) with an increased number of households (115% increase) and jobs (100% increase). At the same time the composition of the population will change with a growing number of elderly residents and people living on their own.

1.7 For the past 50 years or more, the Sacramento region has grown as a result of cheap gas prices and a land use pattern designed for an automobile-dependent lifestyle. Residents have become accustomed to using their cars for virtually every trip and parking in most places is abundant and cheap adding a further incentive to drive.

1.8 However, over the past few years there has been a growing recognition that the Sacramento region needs to steer a different course. SACOG has developed an alternative land use vision called the Blueprint that is based on the principles of "Smart Growth". This approach consumes less land because of policies based on higher density, and often mixed use development with an emphasis on livable neighborhoods and local communities where walking and cycling, as well as greater transit use, are encouraged as alternatives to using the car for every trip.

1.9 The Blueprint is a 50-year vision, highlighting that change will occur incrementally, not immediately. Its delivery is also dependent on a consensus between

many stakeholders: the local jurisdictions to adopt Smart Growth guidelines in their general plans; land owners and the development community to realize a benefit in Smart Growth projects; and the public to shift to a different lifestyle, moving away from low density suburban development to well designed communities that have a mix of land uses and better transportation choices. The Blueprint encourages communities that create a more vibrant and interesting place to live and work.

1.10 While such a comprehensive shift in the way the Sacramento region is planned may have seemed ambitious when the Blueprint was adopted in 2004; since then there has been a major shift in circumstances, all of which highlight the need for a new approach for transit provision in the Sacramento region.

### *The Role for Transit*

1.11 The 2008 spike in gas prices and the 2009 recession have highlighted that economic conditions can have a considerable impact on where people choose to live and work and how they travel, with increased levels of transit ridership recorded in 2008. Gas prices are likely to increase in the long term and congestion will only get worse with population growth; therefore, the public will be more open to finding quicker, more affordable ways to travel.

1.12 RT's services already provide a vital service in the Sacramento region. Now, however, there is a need for a comprehensive step change in the quality, coverage and frequency of transit, making it a real transportation choice that is clean, convenient, reliable, efficient and affordable. The way transit is provided will need to adapt to changes in population and employment by connecting employment centers throughout the region to the populations that access them. The Vision set out in this TransitAction Plan will make transit a convenient lifestyle choice in the Sacramento region.

## Structure of the TransitAction Document

1.13 This Transit Master Plan (RT's TransitAction Plan) consists of ten sections. Following this Introduction, Section 2 examines *The Transit Challenge* in more detail, looking at global, national, regional and local changes that influence the content and direction of the Plan.

1.14 This is followed in Section 3 by a brief summary of our *Existing Conditions*, looking at RT's current organization, infrastructure and operating performance, along with already planned major projects.

1.15 With our benchmark established, Section 4 then starts to address the *Transit Vision* for the 25-30-year TransitAction Plan. This section takes a comprehensive look at the components of successful transit, drawing on a review of experiences from elsewhere in California, the US and Europe. It concludes by presenting the TransitAction Plan Vision Statement and supporting objectives, and also highlights the need for an integrated approach encompassing Smart Growth land use and complementary transportation demand management measures.

1.16 Section 5 then provides details of a range of *TransitAction Plan Scenarios* that have been developed to examine the impacts and benefits of different combinations of transit investments. These were used to provide the material for a comprehensive outreach program undertaken as part of the development of the TransitAction Plan. The results of this analysis have been used to shape the development of the final TransitAction Plan.

1.17 The details of the outreach program are presented in Section 6, *The People's Plan*. The combined findings of the technical

scenario testing and the outreach have then been used to frame Section 7 which contains details of the proposed capital program in the *TransitAction Plan* covering 2009-2035. In addition, detailed *Transit-oriented Development Guidelines* will be added to this document to help guide future development with regard to mix of uses, design, and intensity, that ensure transit effectiveness.

1.18 Section 8 sets out details off the increased transit frequencies and operating hours that form a part of the Plan. Updated *Service Planning Guidelines* to be used by Regional Transit to measure transit performance and ensure that services are working to achieve the TransitAction Plan Vision are also presented.

1.19 The concluding Sections of the TransitAction Plan then turn to how the Plan will be achieved. The pragmatic aspects of the TransitAction Plan are addressed in Section 9, *Finding the Funding*, which describes the need to identify sources of funding to pay for the Plan. Finally, Section 10 sets out a phased delivery plan and *Implementation Strategy* for the content of the TransitAction Plan.

1.20 The TransitAction document will be supported by an Americans with Disabilities Act/Paratransit Plan and followed by an updated Short Range Transit Plan.

CHAPTER 2 - THE TRANSIT CHALLENGE

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# 2 The Transit Challenge

## Introduction

2.1 As a key starting point to the development of the TransitAction Plan, two 'strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges' (SWOC) assessments were undertaken - the first looking at the wider issues facing the Sacramento Region as a whole and the second focused specifically on Regional Transit (RT) as an agency. These analyses were supported by two main sources of information: interviews with the RT Board members and key staff; and an independent review of key background and contextual documents, projects and reports.

## Regional Transit Board and Key Staff Interviews

2.2 A series of meetings and interviews were undertaken with RT Board members and key members of RT staff throughout the fall 2007. These meetings had two purposes: to both shape the overall direction of the TransitAction Plan; and to identify some of the daily challenges for RT in delivering its services to the traveling public. The broad themes/questions discussed included:

- What are the key issues and challenges facing Sacramento's transit system in the future?
- What is the long range vision for transit in the region and is there more that can/should be done than is already planned?
- What is RT's view on the Preferred Blueprint Scenario for 2050 and the implications this will have on transit service/service delivery in the Sacramento region?
- Are there any specific projects, services or changes that are essential to the success, or failure, of transit in the region's future?
- How should we address the need for additional capital and operating funding for transit in the region?
- How will the TransitAction Plan fit within this context and what role will this plan need to play in changing the direction for RT in the Sacramento region?

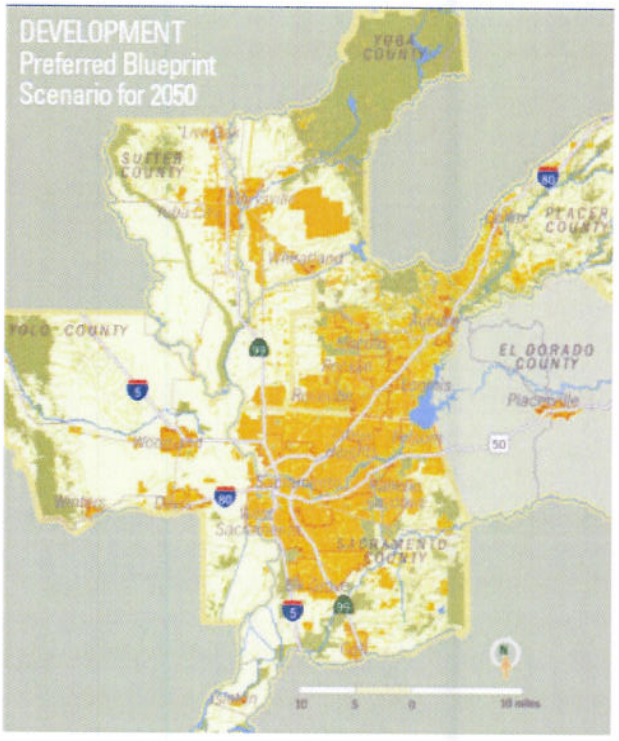


**FIGURE 2.1 PREFERRED BLUEPRINT SCENARIO**

2.3 The key outputs of the discussions were as follows:

- The TransitAction Plan should be ambitious and provide direction for transit in the region. The general consensus was that the TransitAction Plan should be more than a "Transit-only Transit Master Plan." The TransitAction Plan must address wider land use issues in a growing region and must also set out the case for transit in relation to other transportation modes;

- Many of RT's services are provided as a social service ("lifeline" services) and for RT to be successful, they need to grow their market share and attract new users (choice riders). There was a realization that trends in gas prices, congestion, air quality and other factors all required that transit needed to be developed as a real transportation choice. This would not be achieved by a "transit-only" approach and the TransitAction Plan would require a focus on partnerships with other agencies to achieve common goals;

- Successful transit services provide competitive journey speeds, direct routes to key destinations, high(er) frequencies, punctuality and reliability. Light rail and bus rapid transit (BRT) were viewed as offering these attributes and streetcar solutions were also advocated as a means of attracting ridership. However, there was also a clear recognition for the need to have a strong bus, neighborhood ride and paratransit service supporting the whole, wider network;

- There is a need to raise the profile and image of transit. There was a strong view that the TransitAction Plan should also address the need to improve the quality and standard of the transit service provided including: reducing nuisance behavior on transit, improving network information, marketing, fares and ticketing, transfers between modes and operators and generally making the network more "legible." The use of new technology was also seen as part of the TransitAction Plan;

- Smart Growth and the Blueprint will not be delivered without transit. The importance of the Blueprint was recognized in defining the land use future for the region. A number of examples were given of trends towards higher density "urban" lifestyles. However, the largely low-density, suburban form of the region's existing land use and the trends for growth in population, housing and employment were seen as major issues for the TransitAction Plan. The diversity of employment locations and new development locations and the need for transit links was also highlighted. There was a strong view that the TransitAction Plan has to draw relevant partners/agencies together to ensure that Smart Growth ambitions are realized;

**LOW DENSITY SUBURBAN FORM**

- We must make transit seamless, easy, relevant and convenient. A "Put the Passenger First" approach was supported. This requires the TransitAction Plan to review the routes, services, frequencies, standards and modes all undertaken within the wider context of the Blueprint and other challenges over the next 25-30 years. The governance issue was also raised, with a general view that wider transit coordination should be addressed as an alternative to fragmented local service provision. It was felt that a wider

approach to service planning and provision could generate efficiency savings (maintenance and purchases), and provide benefits for riders through coordinated information, fares/tickets and schedules. This wider approach to governance does not preclude the option of locally focused and branded transit services; and

- Transit funding for capital and operations is a major challenge. A consistent theme raised at all the interviews was the need to address funding both for capital investment and for transit operations. The need for service cuts in 2008 highlighted the funding issues facing transit service investment, expansion and operations. The TransitAction Plan has to provide the case for funding, explaining the need for funding increases if the desired outcomes (improved services, higher ridership, greater operating efficiencies, better integrated land use and transit, transit as a real transportation choice, Blueprint objectives) are to be realized in the short, medium and long-term.

## The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges (SWOC) Assessment

2.4 The contextual information from the interviews along with background research provided the starting point for undertaking the SWOC assessment. In order to better frame the specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, two separate yet related SWOCs were prepared: the first was done at the macro or regional level and the second was a more detailed examination of RT.

2.5 The SWOC assessment was not only undertaken to provide useful context and a starting point for developing the TransitAction Plan, but also to help set the overall vision and objectives for the Transit Master Plan.

### *The Macro or Regional View*

2.6 The first SWOC (Table 2.1) highlights the wider issues that influence RT's ability to provide a high quality transit service. As the capital of California, Sacramento has a strong regional economy and also benefits from a favorable climate. These issues combine to make the area an attractive place to live and work. However, over the last 50 years growth in the area has been relatively low-density and suburban in nature. Employment and other opportunities have also tended to disperse, moving away from a conventional downtown/suburban growth pattern to a polycentric land use pattern with employment, retail and other services found in several locations across the region. Many of these issues work against the delivery of an efficient transit network.

**SACRAMENTO: STATE CAPITAL**

2.7 Looking ahead the inherent attractions of the region forecast an increase in population, employment and households, adding to existing issues relating to congestion and air quality. The Blueprint vision has been developed in response to these challenges.

**TABLE 2.1 SWOC ASSESSMENT – THE BIG PICTURE**

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|---|---|
| ▪ High employment<br>▪ (Relatively) Low gas prices<br>▪ Sacramento's climate & topography<br>▪ The Blueprint initiative<br>▪ State capital of California | ▪ 50 years of suburban, low density development<br>▪ Dispersed, multiple activity centers<br>▪ High automobile dependency<br>▪ Congestion<br>▪ Poor air quality |
| **OPPORTUNITIES** | **CHALLENGES** |
| ▪ A Smart Growth future<br>▪ A need for transportation choice<br>▪ Transit-oriented development<br>▪ 21st Century information technology<br>▪ Green/renewable technology<br>▪ A state/national/international leader | ▪ Big increases in population, employment and households<br>▪ An aging population<br>▪ Worsening congestion<br>▪ Worsening air quality<br>▪ Climate change<br>▪ Energy prices & security |

*Specific Strengths*

- Strong and diversified employment market (retail 27%, office 42%, industrial 16%, public/quasi-public 15%);
- Blueprint predicts a 20% job growth to 568,000 jobs (retail 25%, office 63%, industrial 8%, public/quasi-public 4%);
- Climate and topography of the region - annual average temp 74°F, 78% probability of sunshine;
- State capital - a center for leaders and decision makers as well as state, federal and local government employment; and
- One of the most ethnically diverse major cities in the US.

*Specific Weaknesses*

- Air quality - Sacramento ranks in the top 12 areas in the US for the number of days that air quality does not meet federal health standards and is the 6th worst in the nation for ozone pollution;
- Continued suburban development making transit provision difficult;
- Without any change, time spent driving in congestion is forecast to increase by 35%; and
- 92% of all trips are made by car (1% transit, 7% bike/walk).

*Specific Opportunities*

- Up to 50% of new housing to be 'attached' products in Sacramento County;
- Blueprint 'friendly' General Plans being developed;
- Large in-fill developments can provide a 'show-case' for transit-oriented development;
- Higher density and mixed use development is required if transit mode share is to reach Blueprint target (1.1% to 3.3% for region); and

- Transit needs to attract lifestyle users. Transportation Choice is a key component of Smart Growth.

*Specific Challenges*

- SACOG forecasts that Sacramento County will continue growing over the life of the TransitAction Plan. (Details by area are presented in Table 2.2 and summarized below).
  - Population - 55% increase (1.3 million to 2.0 million) by 2035;
  - Households - 60% increase (500,000 to 800,000) by 2035;
  - Jobs - 45% increase (680,000 to 970,000) by 2035;
  - 65+ age - 80% increase (125,000 to 225,000) by 2035; and
- Energy prices continue to rise.

**TABLE 2.2 REGIONAL POPULATION FORECASTS BY AREA**

| Jurisdiction | 2005 | 2035 |
|---|---|---|
| City of Citrus Heights | 83,856 | 94,308 |
| City of Elk Grove | 110,843 | 192,889 |
| City of Folsom | 57,454 | 101,461 |
| City of Galt | 23,842 | 39,429 |
| City of Isleton | 1,361 | 2,239 |
| City of Rancho Cordova | 50,679 | 162,825 |
| City of Sacramento | 427,409 | 642,257 |
| Sacramento County (unincorporated) | 527,790 | 751,135 |
| Totals | 1,283,234 | 1,986,543 |

Source: SACOG MTP2035 Appendix D

***The Regional Transit View***

2.8 The RT-related SWOC framework (Table 2.3) shows an infrastructure and organization that provides a comprehensive transit service, benefiting from investment over a sustained period and with a set of further projects to enhance the scope and quality of services. However, the analysis also highlights the difficulties posed by the wider macro-issues, resulting in a low market share for transit, and a focus on providing "lifeline services for transit-dependent passengers." These services and the renewal and maintenance of existing assets are delivered against challenging financial targets.

2.9 Looking ahead, RT has many opportunities and significant challenges to address. The role of transit is central to the delivery of a sustainable and prosperous Sacramento region. The growth forecasts and the Blueprint vision will not succeed without a high quality transit network relevant to the 21st Century lifestyles of its existing and future inhabitants.

2.10 However, for RT to be able to contribute to the delivery of a new Smart Growth Sacramento, it will need funding for capital investment to extend and improve the quality of the transit network, and for operating revenues to run a comprehensive network.

**TABLE 2.3 SWOC ASSESSMENT – THE REGIONAL TRANSIT VIEW**

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|---|---|
| ▪ Mature existing transit system<br>▪ The light rail network<br>▪ Modern bus fleet<br>▪ RT staff<br>▪ Overall passenger growth<br>▪ A range of new expansion projects<br>▪ Recent increases in farebox recovery (removed 25%) | ▪ Transit market share<br>▪ Perception of a 'lifeline' service offer<br>▪ Finances are tight<br>▪ Delivery timescales for new projects |
| **OPPORTUNITIES** | **CHALLENGES** |
| ▪ RT as a leader/innovator - information technology, carbon footprint, etc.<br>▪ Changing public opinion - from 'Lifeline' to 'Lifestyle'<br>▪ Genuine transportation choice<br>▪ 'New Transit' as the key to a Smart Growth future<br>▪ Integrated transportation solutions<br>▪ Working with 'tomorrow's travelers'<br>▪ More people means more passengers | ▪ Maintenance & renewal of existing facilities & infrastructure<br>▪ Providing a transit system for an expanding & dispersed region<br>▪ Responding to a changing demographic - an aging population<br>▪ How can RT 'help save the planet'?<br>▪ Finding the funding<br>▪ Government and public's willingness to pay for transit improvements |

*Specific Strengths*

- 97 bus routes, 37 mile light rail system;
- Serving 1.4 million potential customers covering a service area of 418 square miles;
- Ridership more than doubled in last 20 years - from 14 million in 1987 to 34.4 million passengers (fiscal year to end December 2008); and
- 100% compressed natural gas fuel in full-sized (40') fleet.

*Specific Weaknesses*

- Transit only carries a small share of the overall travel market (1.1%);
- Recent service reductions and fare increases;
- Reduction/elimination of state funding sources;
- Perception of RT services as a social service rather than mass transit; and
- RT is only one of 14 regional transit agencies.

*Specific Opportunities*

- Up to 50% of new housing to be 'attached' products in Sacramento County;
- 20% of RT's passengers use transit to get to school;
- Patronage on the system is continuing to grow (4-7% per year) and existing riders rate the system positively (72%); and
- SACOG's analysis predicts:
  - Region-wide transit trips will grow from 93,000/day to 629,000/day by 2050 and
  - Region-wide trips into the Sacramento downtown will rise by approximately 40%.

*Specific Challenges*

- RT's light rail vehicles are approaching mid-life refurbishment and will need to be replaced during the life of the TransitAction Plan - 60% of the fleet is between 17-20 years old;
- RT provides and maintains 3,600 bus stops but only 40% have benches (1,470) and less than 10% have shelters (332); and
- The number of seniors is predicted to double, increasing demand for fully accessible transit and Paratransit services, including bus shelters and other transit amenities.

## Conclusions

2.11 The inputs from RT Board members and staff and the SWOC analyses have defined the challenges facing RT as it develops the TransitAction Plan. The long-term changes to the region with the forecast of continuing growth and the new ambitions as set out in the Blueprint point towards a TransitAction Plan that sets a new transit agenda with an integrated approach to capital investment and improved levels of transit service. It also calls for an integrated approach between transit planning, Smart Growth land use and a complementary approach to transportation demand management. This complete approach to transit planning will put Sacramento alongside many of its contemporaries, in California, the rest of the country and beyond.

CHAPTER 3 - EXISTING CONDITIONS: THE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUDIT

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# 3 Existing Conditions: The Regional Transit Audit

## Introduction

3.1 The Strenghts, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges (SWOC) analysis described in the previous section of the TransitAction Plan highlighted a number of issues being faced by RT. Before looking forward and developing a new transit vision, this section provides a brief summary of the current RT organization.

## An Overview of Regional Transit

### *History and Organization*

3.2 RT began operations on April 1, 1973, with the acquisition of the Sacramento Transit Authority. Over the next decade, RT continued to expand bus service to the growing Sacramento region while a cooperative effort emerged among city, county and state government officials to develop a light rail system. Key dates in RT's history include:

**1971**: RT was created by the California State Legislature

**1973**: RT took over Sacramento Transit Authority

**1987**: 18.3 mile Light Rail starter line began operation

**1993**: RT began operating Compressed Natural Gas fueled buses

**1998**: First light rail extension to Mather Field/Mills station began operation

**2003**: 6.3-mile South Corridor extension began operation

**2004**: Extension of Folsom Corridor to Sunrise began operation

**2005**: Folsom Corridor 7.4-mile extension began operation

**2006**: Folsom Corridor 0.7-mile extension to Sacramento Valley/Amtrak Station began operation

3.3 RT is governed by an eleven-member Board of Directors comprised of members of the Sacramento (four), Elk Grove (one), Citrus Heights (one), Rancho Cordova (one), and Folsom (one) City Councils as well as members of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors (three).

### *Annual Budget and Funding Sources*

3.4 The fiscal year 2010 adopted capital budget was $117.1 million and the adopted operating budget was $139.3 million (Table 3.1). The operating budget is funded from revenues that can be grouped into three categories:

- Operating revenues (fares, contract services and other income) - 36%;
- Local and state assistance - 42.2%; and
- Federal assistance - 21.8%.

**TABLE 3.1 SUMMARY OF RT OPERATING EXPENSES (FY09 ADOPTED)**

| Operating Expenses | $ Million | Proportion |
|---|---|---|
| Salaries and Benefits | 89.1 | 63.9% |
| Professional Services | 23.6 | 16.9% |
| Materials and Supplies | 9.2 | 6.6% |
| Utilities | 5.6 | 4% |
| Insurance and Liability Costs | 10.4 | 7.5% |
| Other | 2.51 | 1.8% |
| January Service Cuts | (1.0) | <1% |
| **TOTAL** | **$139.3** | **100%** |

### *Regional Transit Staff and Workforce*

3.5 RT employs a work force of approximately 1,130 people, 75 percent of whom are dedicated to operations and maintenance of the bus and light rail systems. RT operates three maintenance and operations facilities - one for buses at 29th and N Streets, one for the Community Bus Service at McClellan Park, and one for the light rail system at 2700 Academy Way in North Sacramento. A small rail yard with three sidings is also located on R Street adjacent to 13th Street station.

## Transit Operations

### *Six County Transit Operations*

3.6 While RT provides most of the transit services within Sacramento County, within the wider six county region covered by Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), there are over 17 other transit operators including:

- Folsom Stage Line;
- Yolo County Transportation District;
- Yuba-Sutter Transit;
- Roseville Transit;
- El Dorado Transit;
- South County Transit/Link;
- Unitrans;
- Placer County Transit;
- Amtrak Capitol Corridor Intercity Rail Service;
- Auburn Transit;
- Lincoln Transit;
- Sacramento State Hornet Shuttle;
- Amador Transit;
- U.C. Davis Transportation and Parking Services;
- E-Tran;
- Paratransit, Inc.; and
- North Natomas TMA.

3.7 SACOG provides support for service and planning coordination among the region's transit operators through its Transit Coordinating Committee.

### *Regional Transit Services*

3.8 RT operates 95 bus routes and two light rail lines covering a service area of 418 square miles with services provided 365 days a year with buses operating daily from 5 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. every 15 to 75 minutes (depending on the route) and light rail operating from 4:00 a.m. every 15 minutes during the day and every 30 minutes in the evening to midnight (Blue Line) and almost 1:00 a.m. (Gold Line). Figure 3.1 overleaf presents the current RT Service Area Map.

3.9 Included in the bus route services are Neighborhood Ride services. These are special service shuttles that can deviate off route up to ¾ mile to pick up and drop off seniors and passengers eligible for paratransit service.

3.10 RT's existing operations have a peak vehicle requirement of approximately 197 buses and 56 light rail vehicles . The full fleet is larger than this allowing for maintenance and repairs and upcoming mid-life refurbishments and includes approximately 218 compressed natural gas buses, 19 shuttle vans and 76 light rail vehicles (plus 21 awaiting retrofit for use on the RT system).

3.11 In addition, RT contracts its demand response, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)/Paratransit, services to Paratransit Inc. who provides coverage of the network using 109 vehicles.

3.12 Passenger amenities include 48 light rail stops or stations, 26 bus and light rail

transfer centers and 18 free park-and-ride lots. RT also serves more than 3,600 bus stops throughout Sacramento County.

## FIGURE 3.1 REGIONAL TRANSIT SERVICE AREA MAP

### *Fares and Ticketing*

3.13 RT provides a number of fare and ticketing options to customers including single trips, prepaid tickets and daily, semi-monthly and monthly passes. In addition 50% discounts are provided to seniors (62 and older), students (aged 5-18) and disabled passengers.

3.14 As of September 1, 2009, the current flat fares (on which the 50% discounts are then applied) are:

- Single fixed route trip - $2.50;
- Daily pass - $6.00;
- Monthly pass - $100.00; and
- Semi-monthly pass - $50.00.

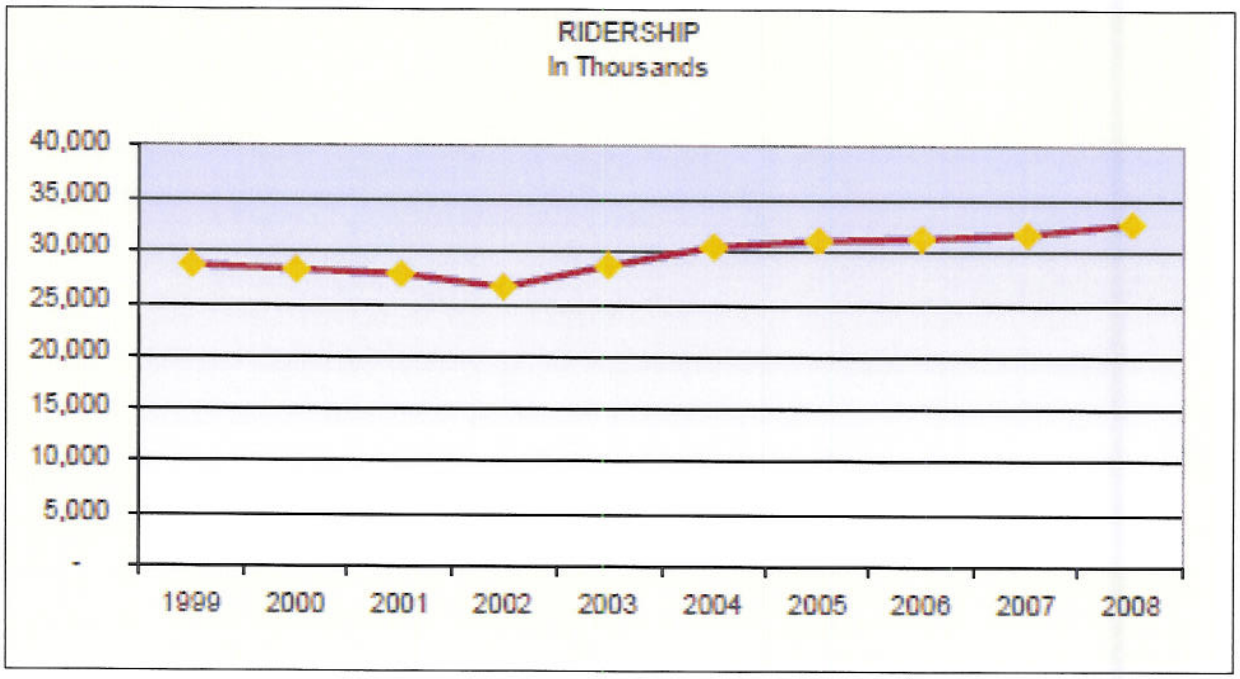
## Operating Performance

### *Transit Ridership*

3.15 Annual ridership has steadily increased on both the bus and light rail systems from 14 million passengers in 1987 to over 32 million passengers in FY2008. Bus ridership declined earlier in the decade but has seen a resurgence over the past year. Figure 3.2 shows the ridership on the RT system over the past decade.

3.16 Weekday light rail ridership averages about 51,000, which accounts for approximately 40% of the total system ridership with bus weekday ridership at an average of 58,000 passengers per day. Recent increases in light rail ridership are bringing the proportions closer to 50/50.

**FIGURE 3.2 REGIONAL TRANSIT PASSENGER GROWTH**



### *Key Performance Measures*

3.17 RT currently use a number of key performance measures to track their relative operational and financial performance over time. The adopted FY 2008 measures were (including Oct 2008 actuals):

TABLE 3.2

| | Adopted FY2008 | October 2008 Actuals |
|---|---|---|
| Subsidy per passenger | $3.37 | LR-$1.91<br>Bus-$3.73 |
| Farebox recovery ratio | 20.6% | 24.0% |
| On-time bus performance | 80% | 79.4% |
| Total ridership | 31.3 million | 34.2 million |
| Crimes committed per million passengers | 8.5 | 12 |
| Complaints per million passengers | 51.0 | 35.4 |

## Planned Projects

3.18 In addition to operating and maintaining its current services, RT has an ongoing program of planning and development of new services, light rail extensions and other systems and infrastructure improvements. The current budget (FY2009) focuses on the following capital priorities:

### *System Expansion*

- Northeast Corridor Enhancements - phase 1 of 2 to complete the double-tracking and upgrading of the elements of the northeast section of the light rail Blue Line;

South Sacramento Phase 2 light rail extension - four mile extension of the Blue Line from its current terminus at Meadowview to Cosumnes River College; and Downtown-Natomas-Airport light rail extension - light rail extension being planned in three phases. The first stage (MOS1 - Minimum Operating Segment) will operate as a start-up downtown circulator from the 13th Street Station to Richards Boulevard (through the future Railyards development site). Future planned phases include extending across the American River into Natomas and then eventually further north to Sacramento International Airport (SMF).

### *Fleet Program*

- Overhaul Siemens and retrofit UTDC rail vehicles. Mid-life refurbishment of the existing light rail fleet.

### *Facilities Program*

- Bus Maintenance Facility #2 - the expansion and construction of the McClellan Maintenance facility, including a second compressed natural gas fueling facility.

### *Transit Technologies Program*

- Farebox Collection / Smart Media Implementation - implementation of a regional smart card system; and
- Light Rail Station Video Surveillance and Recording System, based on a fiber-optic network.

## Key Statistics

3.19 RT operates a significant public transit system and Table 3.3 describes some of the key statistics related to their service and operations.

**TABLE 3.3 REGIONAL TRANSIT KEY STATISTICS**

| RT Statistic | 2009 |
|---|---|
| Service Area | 418 sq.mi. |
| Service Area Population | 1.4 million |
| Annual Passenger Miles | 142.6 million |
| Annual Ridership | 32.5 million |
| Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles | 11.9 million |
| LRT Vehicles (in operation) | 76 |
| Bus Vehicles | 236 |
| Paratransit Vehicles | 109 |
| LRT Stations | 48 |
| Bus Stops | 3,600 |
| Transfer Centers | 26 |
| Park & Ride Lots | 18 |
| Park & Ride Spaces | 7,379 |

## Peer Review

3.20 A peer review was undertaken as part of the early development of the TransitAction Plan. The aim of the peer review was to help provide further context to RT's operations and performance as well as to identify peer cities or agencies for best practice examples of transit service delivery.

3.21 The following cities were reviewed:

- San Bernardino, CA
- San Diego, CA
- Denver, CO
- Salt Lake City, UT
- Portland, OR
- Charlotte, NC
- Memphis, TN
- Kansas City, MO
- Indianapolis, IN
- Minneapolis/St Paul, MN
- Cleveland, OH
- Vancouver, Canada
- London, England
- Nottingham, England
- Dublin, Ireland
- Montpellier, France

3.22 In addition to looking at the raw data across key operating and performance criteria (e.g. total ridership, fleet size, miles of service provided), a set of indicators were developed to provide a more meaningful comparison across the cities. These included:

- Trips per Capita - Trips / Service Area Population;
- Passenger Miles per Capita - Passenger Miles / Service Area Population;
- Average Trip Length - Annual Passenger Miles / Annual Ridership;
- Operating Costs per Passenger Mile; and
- Farebox Recovery - Percent of operating cost recovered from fares.

3.23 Table 3.4 presents all of the comparative indicators in a single table followed by Figures 3.3 and 3.4 showing the transit trips per capita and operating cost per mile.

**TABLE 3.4 KEY COMPARATIVE INDICATORS**

| Transit Agency | Trips per Capita | | Passenger Miles per Capita | | Average Trip Length | | Op. Costs per Pass. Mile | | Farebox Recovery | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bus | LRT | Bus | LRT | Bus | LRT | Bus | LRT | Bus | LRT |
| Sacramento[1] | 15.4 | 13.3 | 50.2 | 71.9 | 3.3 | 5.5 | $1.48 | $0.65 | 17% | 22% |
| San Bernardino | 11.8 | N/A | 54.4 | N/A | 4.6 | N/A | $0.80 | N/A | 20% | N/A |
| San Diego | 8.7 | 16.1 | 33.0 | 99.4 | 3.8 | 6.2 | $0.64 | $0.26 | 35% | 51% |
| Denver | 28.3 | 4.3 | 149.7 | 22.6 | 5.3 | 5.2 | $0.64 | $0.59 | 22% | 27% |
| Salt Lake City | 12.4 | 8.7 | 85.4 | 49.3 | 6.9 | 5.7 | $0.63 | $0.27 | 14% | 32% |
| Portland | 52.6 | 27.6 | 197.5 | 143.5 | 3.8 | 5.2 | $0.82 | $0.39 | 20% | 37% |
| Charlotte[2] | 30.0 | 0.30 | 132.3 | 0.4 | 4.4 | 1.6 | $0.74 | $6.92 | 17% | 11% |
| Memphis | 11.8 | 1.1 | 64.8 | 1.0 | 5.5 | 1.0 | $0.65 | $3.99 | 21% | 22% |
| Kansas City | 18.3 | N/A | 68.5 | N/A | 3.7 | N/A | $1.12 | N/A | 14% | N/A |
| Indianapolis | 12.2 | N/A | 60.4 | N/A | 4.9 | N/A | $0.70 | N/A | 23% | N/A |
| Minneapolis | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Cleveland | 25.7 | 1.7 | 92.3 | 9.8 | 3.6 | 5.8 | $0.79 | $0.59 | 22% | 14% |
| Vancouver | 75.7 | | N/A | | 0.6 | | $5.40 | | 55% | |

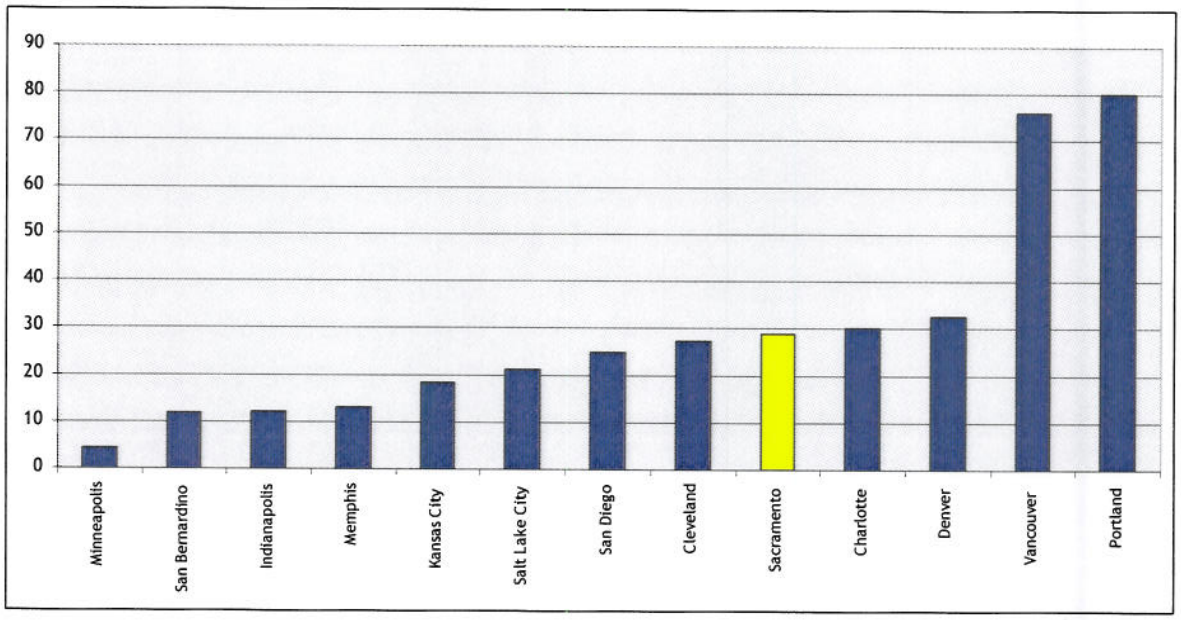
[1] Note that the Peer Review was completed in February 2008 and therefore data used in this analysis was drawn from reported 2007 information, which meant that Minneapolis data was not comparable to other cities.

[2] Data collected for Charlotte does not accurately reflect the full LRT operations.

3.24 A review of the key points of comparison reveals the following observations:

- Despite the relatively low population and bus fleet size, on a per capita basis, Sacramento is able to attract 15.4 and 13.3 trips for bus and LRT respectively. When bus and LRT trips per capita are combined, Sacramento places among the top half of the North America peer group agencies (Figure 3.3);
- Figure 3.3 also illustrates that Vancouver and Portland have the highest combined bus and LRT trips per capita. With a service area population very close to that of Sacramento, Portland is able to attract more than twice the transit trips per capita. Vancouver, with almost double the service area population of Sacramento is also able to attract more than twice as many riders with system-wide trips per capita of 75.7;

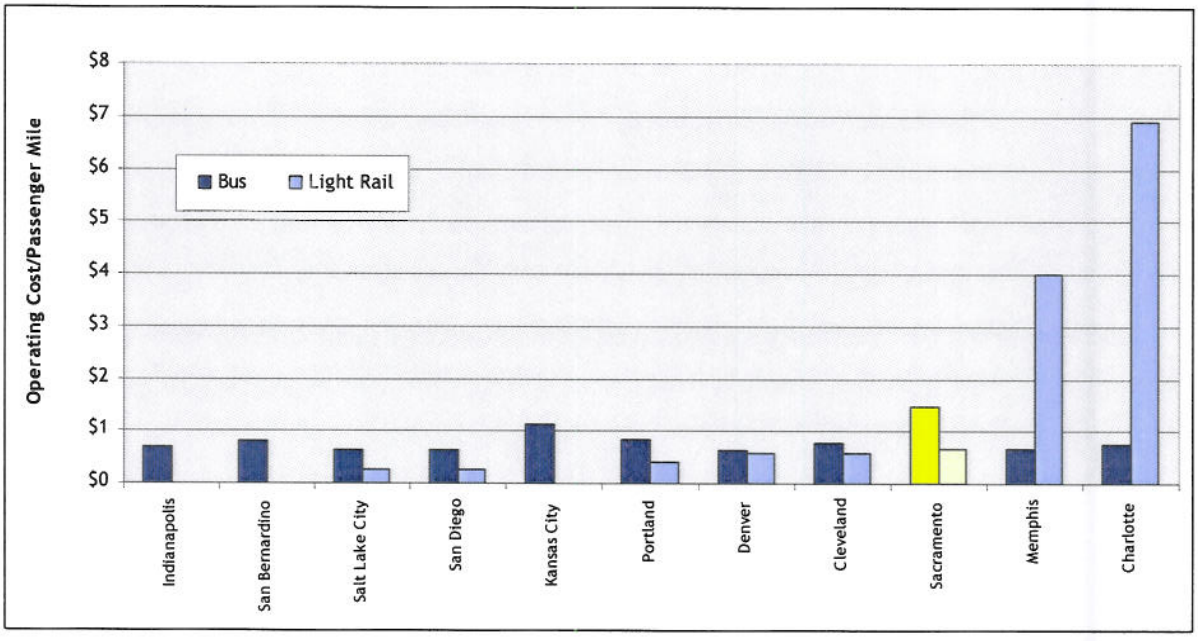
**FIGURE 3.3 TRANSIT TRIPS PER CAPITA (BASED ON SERVICE AREA POPULATIONS)**




- Sacramento is on the low end of the bus passenger miles per capita comparison. When combined with light rail passenger miles per capita, Sacramento's ranking does not change relative to the other peer agencies that also provide both bus and light rail service. Once again, Portland is the best performing agency in this area by a significant margin;
- Average trip lengths for both bus and LRT in Sacramento of 3.3 miles and 5.4 miles respectively are lower than most of the North American peers. When bus and light rail are combined, Sacramento's average transit trip length is lower than all agencies with the exception of Vancouver, Charlotte and Memphis. Average trip lengths in Vancouver are much lower than the other North American peer agencies likely reflecting the relative population densities in Vancouver's downtown core where short bus and train trips are common. Trip data for Charlotte is likely understated given the newness of its light rail system. In Memphis, where the light rail is a streetcar, it is somewhat expected that the trip lengths would be lower than those experienced in a true light rail system;

- Sacramento RT has the highest bus cost per passenger mile of all the authorities reviewed (Figure 3.4). Light rail operating costs per passenger mile are also slightly higher in Sacramento than they are at other agencies offering light rail, again with the exception of Charlotte and Memphis. Based on the data presented in the table, light rail operating costs per passenger mile are much higher in both Charlotte and Memphis. However, this is likely explained by the relatively small light rail fleets and age of the light rail service in Charlotte which only recently expanded their new light rail fleet to 16 vehicles and has not been operating long enough to generate worthwhile statistics. The statistics in Memphis are also somewhat misleading as Memphis operates streetcars rather than light rail vehicles;
- Bus fare box recovery ranges from 14% in Kansas City to 35% in San Diego. Sacramento is towards the lower end of the range. Information by mode is not available for Vancouver; and
- The range of light rail fare box recovery ranges from 11% in Charlotte to 51% in San Diego. Sacramento is towards the mid to lower end of the range.

**FIGURE 3.4 OPERATING COSTS PER PASSENGER MILE**



## Current Trends

3.25 Due to a number of factors, including increased gas prices through summer 2008 and the economic downturn in late 2008, RT ridership numbers have been increasing dramatically over the past year. February 2009 numbers show a 9% increase over the previous year.

3.26 However, due to statewide funding issues, RT continues to have its annual budgets cut and, at a time when ridership is at an all time high, is being forced into a downward cycle of service cuts and increasing fares.

## Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Initiatives and Progress

### *Transit for Livable Communities*

3.27 In 2002, RT undertook a land use planning project called *Transit for Livable Communities* that included 21 RT light rail stations in the Folsom, Northeast and South Sacramento Corridors.

3.28 The project objectives were to devise land use recommendations for the 21 stations to: capitalize on the hundreds of millions invested in the existing and future light rail system; develop informed and enthusiastic public support for Transit Oriented Development (TOD); and identify ways for getting TODs built around light rail stations.

3.29 Recommended land use plans emphasized walkable designs, higher intensity development, and a mixture of residential, retail and office land uses, all designed to support and create unique, thriving communities at each station while encouraging transit use. The plans cover approximately a one-quarter mile radius around each light rail station.

3.30 The project included more than 100 outreach meetings in the community and more than a dozen public workshops, spanning nearly two years. The extensive public outreach program included bus tours of the stations, community workshops, presentations to business and community associations, interviews with local, regional and national developers, and regular briefings with City and County staff, appointed and elected officials, and RT Board members.

3.31 On August 26, 2002, the RT Board of Directors unanimously approved the Transit for Liveable Communities plan and recommendations. Since that time RT, the City of Sacramento, and the County of Sacramento have been working together to develop transit villages and special planning areas for major light rail stations. RT has also developed economic profiles, land use plans and conceptual development plans for a number of stations across the network. Details for each station are provided in Table 3.5.

3.32 These station area profiles and land use plans form the basis for ongoing discussions between RT and its planning partners, the City and County of Sacramento, as well as numerous local development advisory committees. The aim is to produce station area plans that support transit-oriented development, both at and around the transit station, and work in harmony with the surrounding neighborhoods on land that also benefits from the presence of transit.

**TABLE 3.2 TRANSIT FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE STATION TOD PROGRESS**

| Station | Details | Assessment Progress |
|---|---|---|
| **Folsom Line** | | |
| 65th Street | 0 acres, Close to CSUS<br>Residents - <50, Employees - 900 | Economic |
| Butterfield | 1 acre, P&R, Townhouse, Office, Retail | Economic & Land Use |
| Cordova Town Center | Up to 19 acres (potential)<br>Residents - 274, Employees - 1,722 | Economic |
| Hazel | 13 acres, Office, Townhouse, Condo | Economic & Land Use |
| Horn | 0 acres, Office, Retail, Townhouse | Economic & Land Use |
| Mather Field/Mills | 3 acres, P&R<br>Civic, Industrial, Retail/Residential | Economic, Land Use & Concept |
| Sunrise | 5.5 acres, P&R, High Density Office, Retail | Economic & Land Use |
| Watt / Manlove | 7 acres, P&R, Retail/Residential, Hotel, Office | Economic & Land Use |
| Zinfandel | 0 acres, Residents - 964, Employees - 1,094 | Economic |
| **Northeast Line** | | |
| Arden / Del Paso | 0.5 acres, P&R, Retail/Residential, Live/Work | Economic & Land Use |
| Globe | 0.5 acres, Retail/Residential, Office | Economic & Land Use |
| Marconi | 20 acres, P&R<br>Phase 1: Condo, Mixed-Use Retail/ Residential, P&R | Economic, Land Use & Concept |
| Royal Oaks | 2 acres, Phase 1: Office | Economic, Land Use & Concept |
| Swanston | 21 acres, P&R<br>Phase 1: Mixed-Use Retail/Office/ Residential, P&R | Economic, Land Use & Concept |
| **South Line** | | |
| 47th Avenue | 6.5 acres, P&R<br>Retail, Office, Live/Work | Economic & Land Use |
| 4th Avenue/Wayne Hultgren | 0 acres, Retail/Residential | Economic & Land Use |
| Broadway | 0 acres, Retail/Residential | Economic & Land Use |
| City College | 0 acres, Retail/Residential, Condo, Office | Economic & Land Use |
| Florin | 22 acres, P&R<br>All Phases: Townhouse, P&R, Condo, Retail, Office, Community Center, Seniors Housing | Economic, Land Use & Concept |
| Fruitridge | 0 acres, Retail/Residential, Townhouse, Civic | Economic & Land Use |
| Meadowview | 20 acres, P&R<br>All Phases: Condo, Live/Work, P&R, Retail/Residential | Economic, Land Use & Concept |