

# REGIONAL TRANSIT ISSUE PAPER

Agenda Item No.	Board Meeting Date	Open/Closed Session	Information/Action Item	Issue Date
12	08/10/09	Open	Action	08/05/09

Subject: Adoption of the TransitAction Plan

## ISSUE

Whether to adopt the TransitAction Plan.

## RECOMMENDED ACTION

Adopt Resolution No. 09-08 \_\_\_\_, Adoption of the TransitAction Plan, Identifying Transit Projects and Services That May be Undertaken by Regional Transit Through 2035.

## FISCAL IMPACT

None from this action. The TransitAction Plan represents RT's Long Range Transit Plan, which must be submitted to the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). Project development activities pursuant to the TransitAction Plan will have fiscal impacts when they are undertaken.

## DISCUSSION

### **Background:**

**Why a TransitAction Plan?** - Sacramento Regional Transit (RT) last updated its Transit Master Plan in 1993. Since then, many changes have occurred in the Sacramento region, including the continued expansion of the Light Rail network and bus services, but also continued urban sprawl and increasing congestion. Although transit service and use increased markedly from implementation of the last TMP, auto-dependent uses increased more. Regional demographics are continuing to evolve, with households projected to increase by 115% along with a doubling of jobs. Persons over the age of 65 are projected to increase to 35% of the Region's population by 2035. Most importantly, these demographic shifts have been incorporated into the Regional Blueprint, a land-use plan that seeks to integrate land uses with transportation in a holistic way to allow the region's continued growth while increasing transportation options and efficiency.

### **Major Components of the Plan**

**Service Enhancements** - The TransitAction Plan includes major expansions to the Blue Line rail service to Elk Grove Promenade and to Citrus Heights and beyond. It envisions extending the Gold Line to El Dorado County, and the construction of streetcar and tram systems downtown and in Citrus Heights and Rancho Cordova. This would be complemented by a tripling of bus-based transit service, from neighborhood shuttles to high-speed, high-frequency mainline bus services. All supportive systems, such as fare collection, passenger information, and amenities will be upgraded to create a user-friendly, regional transit system that gets people to where they need to go conveniently and cost-effectively.

Approved:

  
General Manager/CEO

Presented:

  
AGM for Planning & Transit System Development

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**Service Standards** – The TransitAction Plan proposes updated service standards including the goal of 5 and 10-minute frequencies on major routes, and 20-minute frequencies with neighborhood shuttles. The Plan is intended to provide access to high speed transit for 70 percent of Sacramento’s population within a 15-minute walk or ride, as well as access to 80 percent of jobs.

**TOD Guidelines** – The Plan proposes Blueprint-supportive Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) guidelines, which outline the mix of land uses and development intensities that are necessary for cost-effective transit service. These guidelines will help shape the transit service that is designed for each neighborhood in Sacramento.

**ADA Paratransit Plan** – The long-term vision of this plan is to create a seamless transition from fixed-route service accessible to all who can use it, to paratransit service for those who cannot use the fixed route all the time. The philosophy is one of universal access, with no service denial.

**Funding the Plan** – A panel of experts was convened, to provide an unbiased judgment of how RT might fund its TransitAction Plan. The conclusion was that a ballot initiative should be pursued, sufficient to fund at least the first two-thirds of the plan. Then, once RT has proven that it can effectively deliver this level of investment and transit service, a second initiative should be pursued to complete the TransitAction Plan vision.

***Benefits of the Plan***

- ✦ **Increased Employment** – The plan requires annual capital investment of \$255 million. This equates to over 10,000 jobs each year in direct, indirect, and induced impacts.
- ✦ **Safer traveling environment** – public transit has fewer accidents and injuries than other commute modes, and will save an estimated 10 lives over the term of this plan.
- ✦ **Lower medical costs** – research indicates that public transit use directly supports meeting the recommended standards of daily exercise to avoid obesity and heart disease.
- ✦ **Household travel savings** – using transit saves the average traveler \$1.96 by bus and \$2.92 by light rail over the out-of-pocket cost of using a car. In fiscal 2009, this equated to over \$81 million in travel savings for RT riders.
- ✦ **Improved Air Quality** – Increased use of transit avoids Nitrogen Oxide, Sulfur Oxide, and Carbon Dioxide (a greenhouse gas) emissions, contributing to achievement of Sacramento’s clean air goals.
- ✦ **Improved Mobility** – the TransitAction Plan will increase options for travel throughout the region, providing improved connections between cities such as Sacramento, Rancho Cordova, Citrus Heights, and Elk Grove, as well as connection within these cities through improved neighborhood circulation.

***Why it’s important now***

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The current recession has highlighted the failure of an auto-oriented society. Residential communities built on the outskirts of Sacramento have seen the sharpest declines in property values, as compared with properties downtown and mid-town. More people want to use transit than ever before, and some need to use it just to be able to keep paying their mortgages. As a result, although gas prices are back down around \$2.90 per gallon, RT ridership set a new record in fiscal 2009 of over 34 million trips. The funding climate has changed as well. RT needs to identify and secure a funding source that cannot be arbitrarily taken over by the State or other authority. Agencies such as Los Angeles, Contra Costa, Orange County and others have passed ballot initiatives with 70 percent of popular vote. This is supported by a major shift toward “green” activities, from LEED certified facilities to Smart Growth (like the Blueprint) to State statutes on Greenhouse Gas reduction strategies. RT also undertaken several service reductions in the last three years. These reductions have not only disrupted transit travel, but forced some back to driving – a severe setback to achieving air quality goals. It is time to reverse that trend, and this TransitAction Plan will help us to do just that.

**Outreach and Comments:** In the first series of outreach, RT received over 3,000 comments and survey responses, which, once incorporated into the preliminary plans, resulted in a very expansive and visionary strategy for transit service going forward. Technologies included streetcars, trams, light rail, commuter rail, Bus Rapid Transit, and neighborhood circulators.

The second outreach program involved the “Willingness to Pay” exercise, which attracted over 1,000 responses, both at workshops and online. The results indicated (without any scientific precision) that the people who responded favored about 70 percent of the expenditure that was represented in the TransitAction Plan at that time.

On September 23, 2008, RT held a public workshop at Paratransit, Inc. at which proposed ADA Paratransit Plan recommendations were presented. Participants had the opportunity to discuss and comment on the recommendations with RT staff and consultants, and to have their comments transcribed verbatim by two court reporters. On March 4, 2009 a preliminary version of the final draft plan recommendations was presented to the Mobility Advisory Council (MAC). The RT Board approved release of the plan for public review on April 13, 2009. At a special meeting of MAC on April 16, 2009, the consultant presented the final draft of the plan to the Council for review and discussion. On June 9, 2009, RT and MAC held a second public workshop in the RT auditorium similar in format to the September 2008 workshop. All public comments received to date have been reviewed and considered, a description of the public process is included in the final draft document, and all court reporter transcripts will be kept on file at RT. The public outreach process has been extensive and entirely consistent with the Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) public outreach requirements for a voluntary plan update. On June 30, 2009 the MAC endorsed the plan. A letter from the MAC Chair, Jan Zolin, regarding the MAC’s endorsement is attached for your reference as Attachment A.

Finally, the TransitAction Plan was released for public comment at the Board meeting of May 11, 2009. Staff made presentations around the City and County, including Elk Grove, Rancho Cordova, Folsom, and other public meetings. Comments received at these meetings were

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overwhelmingly positive, though some doubts were expressed about how RT would be able to finance the levels of investment being presented. Overall, comments reinforced that RT had taken the appropriate direction from the public in focusing on system safety, security, accessibility, and ease of use.

### Next Steps

- ± **Determine the Funding Strategy** – RT has been advised to “first put your house in order” in terms of its finances. The recent recession has reinforced that message. RT has reduced management staffing to bare bones levels and significantly reduced other administrative expenses. The rest of the advice was to pursue a ballot initiative in 2010. Should it seek a gas tax increment, a motor vehicle registration transit fee, a special assessment fee, or a sales tax increment or some other source of funding? RT’s plans require the revenue from an equivalent of a ½-cent sales tax, or about \$80 million per year. This will require seeking partnerships in the community, polling, and further public outreach to determine RT’s optimal goal and strategy.
- ± **Participate in the Federal Process** – RT staff has been involved and will continue in discussions regarding the reauthorization of the surface transportation programs (SAFETEA-LU, GREEN-TEA?) as well as discussion on the FTA’s New Starts guidance. It is important that RT’s needs and concerns are represented in the national discussion on transit funding. Staff will also examine which major investments “fit” under the Federal capital programs to maximize the potential Federal support for the TransitAction Plan.
- ± **Revise the Short Range Transit Plan** – The first step in implementing the TransitAction Plan is to revise the Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP), to reflect RT’s new service standards and TOD Guidelines, but also to prepare the way for the first investments to be funded, should the ballot initiative be successful. This will allow RT to queue up the capital projects in the TransitAction Plan, identify the approximate timing and cost of the projects, and inform the public and RT’s Regional partners of the expected funding strategy to pay for the capital projects and their anticipated operating costs.

**Recommendation:** The TransitAction Plan includes a revised Paratransit Plan, Transit-Oriented Development guidelines, and updated service standards that will be used to develop RT’s next Short Range Transit Plan. Staff recommends adoption of the TransitAction Plan.

**JAN ZOLIN, CHAIR  
MOBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL  
9108 Shady Hollow Way  
Fair Oaks, California 95628  
(916) 987-1629**

July 2, 2009

Steve Cohn, Chair  
Regional Transit Board of Directors  
PO Box 2110  
Sacramento CA 95812-2110

Re: ADA Paratransit Plan

The Mobility Advisory Council (MAC) voted at its June 30, 2009 meeting, to recommend that the RT Board of Directors adopt the ADA Paratransit Plan as proposed in the Final Draft.

The plan was first presented to MAC in February of 2008, at which time an Ad Hoc Committee was created to work with RT staff and consultants on the ADA Paratransit Plan. The Ad Hoc committee, chaired by Mauro Lara, reviewed a preliminary report that included a description of existing ADA paratransit service, discussion of current and emerging issues and preliminary financial and demand projections for the ten year period covered by the plan.

Over the course of three meetings, the Ad Hoc Committee discussed potential changes to ADA paratransit service and provided recommendations on several policies covered by the plan. The preliminary draft plan was presented to the full MAC in March 2009. MAC also participated in two public workshops, one in September 2008, and one in June 2009.

We would like to thank the staff and consultants who provided timely updates to the MAC as the plan progressed over the eighteen months. They actively sought our input on the key policy issues.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jan Zolin  
Chair, Mobility Advisory Council

c/enc: RT Board of Directors  
RT Mobility Advisory Council  
Mike Wiley, GM/CEO  
Laura F. Ham, Director of Accessible Services and Customer Advocacy



Regional Transit

# Transit Action Plan Recommendation for Adoption

August 10, 2009

## TransitAction 2010

- Last Plan 1993
- There has been considerable change in the region.
- The Blueprint addressed the land use changes.
- TransitAction addresses the role of Transit in the Blueprint.



## TransitAction - Components

- Service Enhancements – better connections, higher speeds, smart card fare technology
- Service Standards – 5-10 minute frequency, timed connections at transfer points
- TOD Guidelines – 80% of people within a 15-minute walk
- ADA Plan – no missed trips, seamless access
- Funding Plan – equivalent to 1/2-cent sales tax





## TransitAction - Innovations

- Complete Corridors – making the pedestrian of primary importance
- Streetcar – providing easy-to-use, short distance trips
- European Tram – modern, neighborhood-friendly light rail option
- Hi Bus – high-speed, high frequency bus service to connect communities

## TransitAction – Community Benefits

- Increased employment – Annual investment of \$255 million in TAP supports over 10,000 jobs per year
- A safer traveling environment – fewer traffic deaths
- Lower medical costs – healthier lifestyle
- Household dollar savings - \$3,800/avoided car
- Improved Air Quality – NOx, SOx, CO2 ↓
- Improved mobility – easier daily trips, all day long
- A more “people friendly” region

**A better transit system**



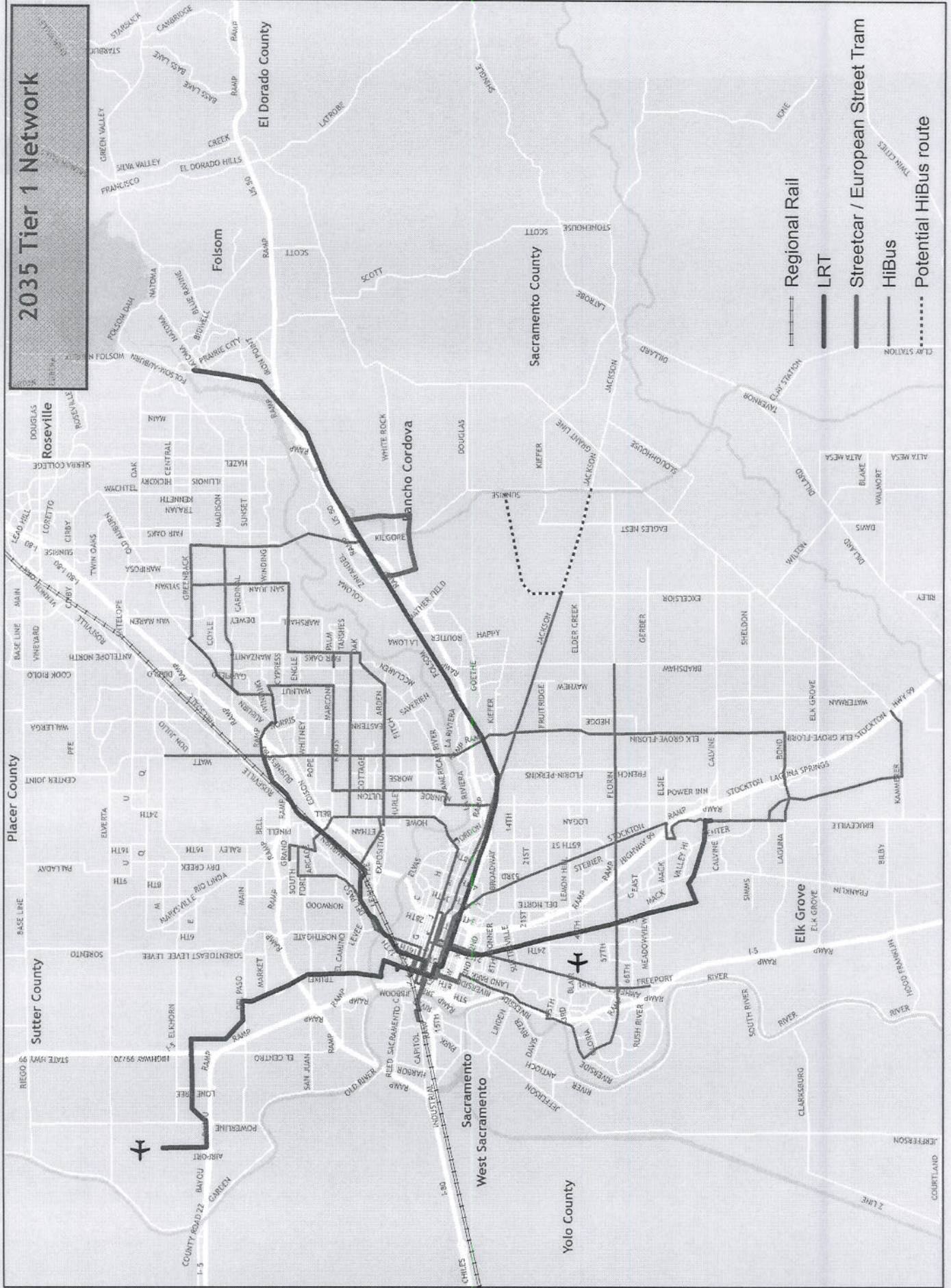
## TransitAction – Why now?

- The recession highlighted failure of an auto oriented society.
- More people want to use transit – new record in 2009 of over 34 million trips.
- Funding climate changing – more communities contributing more to transit service.
- Communities are becoming greener.
- Service reductions have to end, be reversed as soon as possible.

## TransitAction – Next Steps

- **Determining the funding strategy** – is it a vehicle tax, special tax, or sales tax?
- **Participating in the Federal Process** – what projects will ‘rank’ in New Starts? RT and Blueprint in Surface Transportation Authorization
- **Revising the Short Range Transit Plan** – setting a new direction, planning for 2010 and beyond, introducing TOD Guidelines

# 2035 Tier 1 Network



- Regional Rail
- LRT
- Streetcar / European Street Tram
- HiBus
- Potential HiBus route

# 2035 Tier 2 Network



# 2035 Tier 3 Network



- Regional Rail
- Streetcar / European Street Tram
- LRT
- HiBus

RESOLUTION NO. 09-08-\_\_\_\_\_

Adopted by the Board of Directors of the Sacramento Regional Transit District on this date:

August 10, 2009

**ADOPTION OF THE TRANSIT ACTION PLAN IDENTIFYING TRANSIT PROJECTS  
AND SERVICES THAT MAY BE UNDERTAKEN BY REGIONAL TRANSIT  
THROUGH 2035**

WHEREAS, the TransitAction Plan was developed with public participation, which included public meetings, open houses, and internet-based comments; and

WHEREAS, the public comment was reflected in the development of the final version of the TransitAction Plan, including the Paratransit Plan and Transit-Oriented Development guidelines.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SACRAMENTO REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT AS FOLLOWS:

THAT, the TransitAction Plan, Regional Transit's plan for expanded transit service through 2035, is hereby adopted.

\_\_\_\_\_  
STEVE COHN, Chair

A T T E S T:

MICHAEL R. WILEY, Secretary

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cindy Brooks, Assistant Secretary