

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING AGENDA  
REDWOOD COAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY**



DATE: Friday, December 12, 2025

TIME: 4:30pm

PLACE: County Admin/Flynn Building, 981 H Street, Crescent City, CA 96631

A link to view the meeting will be posted on <https://media.co.del-norte.ca.us/> .

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1. Call Meeting to Order, Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance
2. Public Comment
3. Consent Calendar
  - 3a. Approve the Minutes of October 27, 2025
  - 3b. Approve Purchase Order 2025-26-21 to CoachWest in a Not-To-Exceed Amount of \$360,000 for One Endera Model B Ford Electric Bus – Replaces Purchase Order 2023-24-21
4. Closed Session - Closed Session:  
PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION  
Pursuant to Government Code section 54957(b)  
Position: Executive Director
5. Approve Resolution 2025-26-04 Adopting RCTA 2025 Short Range Transit Plan
6. Award Agreement to Mobility House for Williams Drive Charge Management System in Not-To-Exceed Amount of \$29,083 and Authorize Executive Director to Execute Agreement Documents
7. Approve Amendment 1 with Dokken Engineering for Williams Drive Plans Specs and Estimates Adding \$33,500 for Survey and Design for Generators and Authorize Executive Director to Execute Documents
9. Update on LCTOP Funding and LCTOP-Funded Programs
10. Discussion of \$2 promo fares on Route 20 as Part of North State Express Route 101 Promotion
11. Announcements
12. Adjourn – Next RCTA Board Meeting will be Monday January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 5:30pm at Flynn

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Any member of the public may speak on any agenda item for a time period, not to exceed 3 minutes, prior to the Public Agency taking action on that agenda item.

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**REDWOOD COAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
MINUTES**

**October 27, 2025 AT 5:30 P.M.**

**ATTENDED: DARREN SHORT (DIRECTOR), JOEY BORGES (DIRECTOR), and RAY ALTMAN (VICE CHAIR),**

**ABSENT: ISAIAH WRIGHT (CHAIR)**

**ALSO PRESENT: JOSEPH RYE, MELLISA ALFARO**

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**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER. ROLL CALL. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice Chair Ray Altman called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Mellisa Alfaro conducted roll call. Vice Chair Ray Altman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following person(s) addressed the Board: **NONE**

**3. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**3A. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 25, 2025 MEETING**

**3B. APPROVE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIGNATURE OF THE 2025 FTA CERTS AND ASSURANCES**

**3C. APPROVE RELEASE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR WILLIAMS DRIVE EV CHARGING STATIONS CHARGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

On a motion by Director Short and seconded by Director Borges, unanimously carried on a polled vote, the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors approved the Consent Agenda items 3A-3C.

**4. CLOSED SESSION:**

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54957(b)

POSITION: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**5. SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN– PRESENTATION OF DRAFT FINAL SRTP AND DISCUSSION**

The LSC Transportation Consultant Team, Genevieve Evans and Chris Sterner presented and held a discussion regarding the Short Range Transit Plan - Draft Final SRTP. No action was taken.

**6. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FISCAL YEAR 2024-25 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE DATA**

The Executive Director, Joseph Rye, presented the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Annual Performance Data & held a discussion. No action was taken. The Fiscal Year 2024-25 Annual Performance Data will be brought back along with the audited financials as an agenda item in a couple meetings.

**7. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF PILOT CTSA LOCAL MEDICAL TRIPS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM WITH DNHD**

On a motion by Director Borges and seconded by Director Short, unanimously carried on a polled vote the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors approved the Pilot CTSA Local Medical Trips Partnership Program with Del Norte Healthcare District.

**8. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Executive Director, Joseph Rye, provided updates on the Fairgrounds ground lease and potential adjustments to the fencing. Also presented was the arrival of new blue buses this winter to support the fleet, which will feature the newly designed RCTA logo.

**9. ADJOURN – NEXT RCTA BOARD MEETING WILL BE MONDAY, DECEMBER 12TH, 2025 AT 5:30PM AT FLYNN**

The Redwood Coast Transit Board of Directors adjourned the meeting at 6:42 PM. The next regular scheduled meeting will be on Monday December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. at Flynn

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Joseph Rye, Executive Director  
Redwood Coast Transit Authority

December 12, 2025

**MEMO TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Joe Rye, Executive Director



**SUBJECT:** Approve Revised Purchase Order 2025-26-21 Replacing Purchase Order 2024-25-21 to Coach West Bus Sales in the Not-To-Exceed Amount of \$360,000 for the Purchase of One Electric Bus for Redwood Coast Transit and Authorizing the Executive Director to Execute the Procurement

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Board approve revised Purchase Order 2025-26-21 (replacing 2024-25-21) to Coach West Bus Sales in the not-to-exceed amount of \$360,000 for purchase of (1) electric replacement bus and authorize the Executive Director to execute purchase.

**BACKGROUND:**

This purchase order (PO) requires reissuance per County Auditor's policy since the bus did not arrive nor was paid for in FY 2024-25 as hoped. This new FY 2025-26 purchase order is identical to the former POs in all aspects except one. The Endera bus is up to \$25,209 more expensive due to inflation plus the switch from white to an attractive blue-colored bus.

This purchase of one (1) Endera Model B electric bus represents the one of several imminent bus procurements that present a rare window to change the fleet's look over a short period of time. Within 2-3 years RCTA will be receiving ~15 new buses, an almost entirely new fleet. Fiscal impacts are modest, the net impact of the color change and various last minute spec changes is up to \$25,209. This upcharge will require RCTA to use additional local match.

<u>Bus Type and Number</u>	<u>Original Amt</u>	<u>2025 Amt w/Blue</u>	<u>Net Difference</u>
(1) Endera Model B Ford Electric Bus	\$334,791	\$360,000	\$25,209

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Actual Diff</u>
Volkswagen Settlement Fund (G108695-1)	\$160,000	44%	\$0
LCTOP Electric Bus Capital (Fund 695)	\$100,000	28%	\$0
State of Good Repair (SGR) STA	\$100,000	28%	\$25,209
RCTA Capital Reserves	\$ 0	0%	\$0

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the Board approve the revised purchase order to Coach West Bus Sales in a not-to-exceed amount of \$360,000 and direct Executive Director to issue the purchase order.

**Attachments**

1. Revise and Replace Purchase Order 2023-24-21 with 2025-26-21 to Coach West



# PURCHASE ORDER

c/o TMTP Consulting LLC  
900 Northcrest Drive, #134  
Crescent City, CA 95531  
707-235-3078  
[tmtconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:tmtconsulting@gmail.com)

P.O. NO. 2025-26-21  
DATE December 12, 2025  
CUSTOMER ID tax ID 83-0497811

**VENDOR** Jay Real  
CoachWest, Inc  
1029 E. Dominguez Street  
Carson, CA 90746  
310-609-2900 ext 225

**SHIP TO**  
Redwood Coast Transit  
140 Williams Drive  
Crescent City, CA 95531  
707-464-6400

SHIPPING METHOD	SHIPPING TERMS	DELIVERY DATE
deliver to bus yard	net 30	TBD

QTY	ITEM #	DESCRIPTION	JOB	UNIT PRICE	LINE TOTAL
1.00	Class II ZEB	Ford Endera Model B		\$ 318,712.60	\$ 318,712.60
				-	
1.00		ADA Non-taxable		\$31,200.00	
1.00		Sales Tax @ 8.25%		23,802.29	\$ 23,802.29
1.00		DMV Docs and CalACT Fees		4,822.94	\$ 4,822.94
1.00		HVIP EV Incentive Rebate - \$60k		-	\$ -
1.00		Delivery		2,500.00	2,500.00

1. Please send two copies of your invoice.
2. Enter this order in accordance with the prices, terms, delivery method, and specifications listed above.
3. Please notify us immediately if you are unable to ship as specified.
4. Send all correspondence to:  
Joseph Rye  
900 Northcrest Drive, #134  
Crescent City, CA 95531  
707-235-3078

<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 349,837.83</b>
<b>SALES TAX</b>	<b>23,802.29</b>
<b>TOTAL (including shipping)</b>	<b>\$ 349,837.83</b>

12-Dec-25

Authorized by

Date

December 12, 2025



**MEMO TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Joe Rye, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** Adopt Resolution 2025-26-04 Approving the 2025-30 RCTA Short Range Transit Plan

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Discuss and then adopt Resolution 2025-26-04 approving the 2025-30 RCTA Short Range Transit Plan.

**BACKGROUND:**

Transit operations in California are guided by Short Range Transit Plans (SRTP), typically four to five years in scope. The last full SRTP five-year plan for Redwood Coast Transit was adopted in 2019 with a “mini-SRTP” update adopted in 2022 to address acute impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the direction of DNLTTC, RCTA applied for and was awarded a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning grant in the amount of \$177,000 to fund the 2025-30 SRTP. A RFP (Request for Proposals) was released and LSC Consultants was selected as the top proposer for the RCTA SRTP.

LSC led a robust public outreach campaign in late 2023 and into early 2024, featuring stakeholder interviews/focus groups, driver interviews, and a 4-day on-board survey. Two Tech Memos were released during the course of the plan, existing conditions and alternatives analysis. The Draft Final was posted for comments and distributed to the Board for review and comment in September through November 2025. Comments on the Draft Final SRTP were received from the Board and other interested parties evaluated for inclusion in the Final SRTP.

**DISCUSSION**

The SRTP contains the following sections that both meet and exceed industry standards for SRTP composition:

- System Overview
- Public Involvement, Market Research, and Transit Needs Assessment
- Mission Statement, Goals, and Performance Standards
- Performance Data Collection and Management
- Peer Analysis
- Service Alternative and Recommendations for Service Changes
- Marketing Plan
- Financial Plan

A year and a half in the making, this SRTP presents the system “as is, circa end of FY 24-25”. RCTA is a transit system that generally meets the needs of local residents and visitors, but features some low productivity, mostly on its (Caltrans 5311(f) subsidized) regional routes. After severe ridership decline during the COVID-19 pandemic, ridership has rebounded, returning to its pre-pandemic levels, and up 27% in FY 2024-25.

## **Focus Areas**

- Public Involvement and Market Research/Needs Assessment
- Mission Statement, Goals, and Performance Standards
- Existing Conditions
- Service Alternatives
- Marketing Plan
- Financial Plan

## **Areas Changed Since Draft Final Plan**

- Added an analysis of extending the Northbound Route 20 run which connects with the NSE: 101 in Eureka all the way to Smith River in the evening. Currently it terminates in Crescent City.
- A more positive outlook on ridership projections has been incorporated throughout the document based on the most recent 24/25 actual ridership figures
- Incorporated specific comments from Caltrans
- Incorporation of better on-time performance data into the alternatives analysis
- Caveat that the \$2 fare for Route 20 should only be implemented as a trial program and can be limited to passengers paying by “Tap on”, as is done in Mendocino County.
- Inclusion of an Intercity Fixed Route to Medford (new version of the Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle) in the Unconstrained Plan
- Corrections to fare revenue and CARES projections in the Financial Plan

To summarize, the 2025-30 SRTP indicates RCTA is a well planned and run organization that provides critical transit services to the residents and visitors to Del Norte (and Northern Humboldt) County while struggling against financial headwinds driven by relatively flat revenues and rapidly rising operating costs (labor and fuel). Existing conditions and current services were critically analyzed. The plan provides an a-la-carte menu of potential service reductions in case recent financial trends do not improve, while also providing a similar list of potential service expansions should new or increased funding materialize. The SRTP contains updated performance standards and marketing suggestions that can be implemented with RCTA’s lean, remote managerial model.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt Resolution 2025-26-04 approving the 2025-30 RCTA Short Range Transit Plan.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2025-26-04**

**REDWOOD COAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY RESOLUTION  
APPROVING THE 2025-2030 SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN**

WHEREAS, transit agencies are required to develop short range transit plans periodically to update financials, operating plans, capital plans, and evaluate areas of potential service needs and opportunities, and;

WHEREAS, the transit services in Del Norte County are successful programs and to remain eligible for federal transit funding a Short Range Transit Plan must be completed every 4-5 years; and

WHEREAS, Redwood Coast Transit Authority completed its last full Short Range Transit Plan in 2018-19; and

WHEREAS, the project was funded through an allocation of Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant funds through Caltrans to help RCTA plan for optimal transit service for the residents and visitors to Del Norte County, and

WHEREAS, the funding of this Short Range Transit Plan was included in the approved 2024 Del Norte Regional Transportation Plan; and;

WHEREAS, this Short Range Transit Plan has assisted RCTA staff and the Board to identify the optimal mix of operating projects and capital projects to be delivered between Fiscal Years 2024-25 and 2029-30 based upon transit needs in the service area, available funds to the agency, and staff resources available to manage and deliver projects.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the RCTA Board of Directors hereby adopts the attached 2025-2030 Redwood Coast Transit Authority Short Range Transit Plan and directs the Executive Director to manage the transit system according to and in compliance with the plan.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Redwood Coast Transit Authority on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of December 2025 by the following polled vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

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Isaiah Wright, Chair

Redwood Coast Transit Authority

ATTEST:

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Joseph Rye, Executive Director  
Redwood Coast Transit Authority



# Redwood Coast Transit - 2025 Short Range Transit Development Plan

## *Final Plan*



Redwood Coast  
Transit Authority





# *Redwood Coast Transit 2025 Short Range Transit Development Plan*

## *Final Plan*

### *Prepared for*

Redwood Coast Transit Authority  
900 Northcrest Drive, #134  
Crescent City, California 95531  
(707) 464-6400

### *Prepared by*

LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.  
2690 Lake Forest Road, Ste. C  
Tahoe City, CA 96145  
530-583-4053

*December 8, 2025*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Mobility is an essential issue that influences the economy, environment, and overall well-being within a region. The region served by Redwood Coast Transit is large, rural, and rugged, making mobility a distinct challenge for many local residents. Public transit is an important transportation



alternative that plays a significant role in helping mobility-limited individuals in Del Norte County get where they need to go. Redwood Coast Transit Authority (RCTA) is the primary public transit provider serving Del Norte County, operating both fixed routes, Dial-a-Ride, Airport Shuttles, and Medical Transport Shuttles. In addition to helping people in need of transportation assistance, RCTA also supports a range of other benefits for Del Norte County, such as decreased road congestion, improved air quality, and improved community health.

RCTA, with funding support from a FY 2023-24 Sustainable Communities Competitive Grant (funded by Caltrans, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transportation Administration), has retained LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc., to prepare an update to the organization's Short Range Transit Development Plan (SRTDP). The SRTDP analyzes the current setting for transportation along the Redwood Coast region and identifies alternatives to improve transit services over the next five years to meet the needs of residents and improve efficiency. This document first reviews the factors influencing transit demand in the Redwood Coast Transit service area, such as regional demographic information and existing unmet transit needs. Existing transit providers, as well as other intercounty services that operate within the region, are then summarized. A performance analysis of recent RCTA operations is conducted to determine the effectiveness of the current public transit services.

The second component, Alternatives Analysis, presents an evaluation of potential changes to RCTA's services. This section also addresses future capital needs, proposes new fare strategies, and provides an overview of marketing strategies. Lastly, this document presents a financially constrained and financially unconstrained plan for RCTA over the next five years.

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## STUDY AREA CHARACTERISTICS

### STUDY AREA

Del Norte County is located along the scenic coast of Northern California, in the northwest corner of the state. The landscape ranges from stunning coastlines to dense redwood forests. While large in area at 1,006 square miles, Del Norte County is home to only 26,589 residents, meaning the population density is only 26 persons per square mile. The population includes approximately 2000 incarcerated inmates at Pelican Bay State Prison, who are counted as a part of the Del Norte County population. A large majority of Del Norte residents live along the coastline, with small towns and rural populations dispersed inland.



Within Del Norte County, Crescent City is the only incorporated city. Crescent City also serves as the county seat and has the greatest concentration of population, public services, and commercial retail. There are also six census-designated places (CDPs) within the county. North of Crescent City are the CDPs of Smith River and Fort Dick. To the east are the CDPs of Gasquet and Hiouchi. To the south is the CDP of Klamath, as well as the Redwood National and State Parks, a collection of numerous national and state parks that draw visitors from all over the world to view the redwood forests that contain some of the world's largest trees. There are also four federally recognized indigenous tribes within Del Norte County: the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, Elk Valley Rancheria, Yurok Tribe, and the Pulikla Tribe of Yurok People. Most local economic activity is generated by the healthcare, tourism, and government sectors.

Figure 1 shows the study area and important roadways. Del Norte County's road network includes city streets, county roads, state routes, and United States (US) highways (Hwy). Hwy US 101 is the major north-south roadway for the region and runs along the coastline connecting the area to Brookings, OR, to the north and Eureka, CA, to the south. US Hwy 199 is the major east-west roadway traversing the Coastal Mountains to provide connectivity between Del Norte County and the major urban centers of Grants Pass and Medford, OR. Given the geography of Del Norte County, a large portion of the county's roads are narrow, meandering, and difficult to navigate. RCTA operations also serve a rural part of northern Humboldt County from Newton B Drury Scenic Parkway to Eureka, CA, including service to the Redwoods National and State Parks, the communities of Orick, Patrick's Point, Trinidad, Arcata, and other small communities along this route. This section of Humboldt County, north of Trinidad, has no other transit service available.



**Figure 1  
Site Map**



## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

### Historic and Projected Population

It is important when planning transit services to not only consider current characteristics of the population living in the service area but also how the population will likely change with time. Historical US Census Bureau population information for Del Norte County and Crescent City is shown in Table 1. Pelican Bay State Prison is located approximately 10 miles north of Crescent City. The institutionalized population, such as that associated with the prison, is identified separately. From 2010 to 2022, Del Norte County's population declined slightly, decreasing by 1,148 persons (-4.0 percent) (Table 1). This trend differed from the State of California, which saw a population increase of 16.2 percent during the same period. Crescent City's population declined by 1,264 persons (-16.5 percent), and institutionalized populations within Del Norte declined by 1,352 (-36.7 percent) over the 2010-2022 time period (Table 1). In summary, Table 1 shows significant declines in the institutionalized population primarily at the Pelican Bay State Prison, modest population decline within Crescent City, and slow population growth within the unincorporated communities in the county, which are more difficult to serve with fixed-route public transit.

	2010		2015		2020		2022	
	Population	% Annual Change	Population	% Annual Change	Population	% Annual Change	Population	% Annual Change
<b>Del Norte County</b>	<b>28,610</b>	-	<b>27,788</b>	<b>-0.6%</b>	<b>27,743</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>27,462</b>	<b>-0.5%</b>
Crescent City	7,643	-	6,751	-2.5%	6,673	-0.2%	6,379	-2.3%
Population Outside of Crescent City	20,967	-	21,037	0.1%	21,070	0.0%	21,083	0.0%
Institutionalized Population*	3,680	-	3,805	3.4%	2,909	-23.5%	2,328	-20.0%
Non- Institutionalized Population	24,930	-	23,983	-3.8%	24,834	3.5%	25,134	1.2%
<b>State of California</b>	<b>33,871,648</b>	-	<b>35,869,173</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>37,253,956</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>39,356,104</b>	<b>1.1%</b>

Source: US Census, California Department of Finance, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

\*Note 1: Institutionalized Population, 2010 and 2020 U.S. Census, 2015 and 2022 American Community Survey.

Despite overall population decline in the upcoming decades, the average age of residents is predicted to increase significantly. Population projections by age category for Del Norte County, based on data from the US Census Bureau and the California Department of Finance (DOF), are shown in Table 2. Highlights of the projection data include:

- Del Norte County's population will decline significantly over the next twenty years, experiencing negative growth from 2020 to 2030 (-10.7 percent), and declining more slowly in the decade following (-5.6 percent). This implies a -1.1 average annual decline in population over the SRTDP planning period.
- The number of children aged 5 to 17 will decrease from 2020 levels (-23.6 percent by 2040).
- The number of college-aged adults aged 18 to 24 is expected to have a short-term increase between 2020 and 2030, while declining in the long term from 2020 to 2040 (-10.9 percent).
- The number of seniors aged 75+ is expected to increase significantly between 2020 and 2040 (56.1 percent). This is the only age group expected to increase in population within the county. Suggesting that Del Norte County seniors are more likely to age-in-place and live longer than in the past.



- Del Norte County has experienced a significant decrease in the size of the adult population of traditional working age (25 to 64) in recent years (-4.2 percent). This trend is expected to continue, with a -15.9 percent further decrease expected between 2020 and 2040.

Overall, the population forecast for Del Norte County reveals how the population will age significantly in the coming years as the number of seniors ages 75 and older is forecasted to grow rapidly (56.1 percent increase from 2020 to 2040). The larger senior population will likely result in increased demand for public transit. New or expanded transit services should focus on meeting the needs of this growing senior population. Examples of transit services popular among seniors are demand response, paratransit, and non-emergency medical transportation programs.

**Table 2: Del Norte County Population Projections by Age Category**

Year	Total (All Ages)	Preschool (0-4 years)	School Age to Young Adult (5-17 years)	College Age (18-24 years)	Working Age (25-64 years)	Young Retirees (65-74 years)	Mature Retirees (75-84 years)	Older Seniors (85 or older)
2010	28,471	1,708	4,641	2,733	15,488	2,192	1,367	370
2020	27,692	1,656	4,347	1,923	14,842	3,049	1,332	543
2030	24,738	1,287	3,337	2,265	12,082	2,826	2,131	810
2040	23,347	1,278	3,323	1,714	12,476	1,629	1,855	1,072
<b>2010 to 2020 Change</b>								
Number	-779	-52	-294	-810	-646	857	-35	173
Percent	-2.7%	-3.1%	-6.3%	-29.6%	-4.2%	39.1%	-2.5%	46.7%
<b>2020 to 2030 Change</b>								
Number	-2,954	-369	-1,010	342	-2,760	-223	799	267
Percent	-10.7%	-22.3%	-23.2%	17.8%	-18.6%	-7.3%	60.0%	49.2%
<b>2030 to 2040 Change</b>								
Number	-1,391	-9	-14	-551	394	-1,197	-276	529
Percent	-5.6%	-0.7%	-0.4%	-24.3%	3.3%	-42.4%	-13.0%	65.3%

Sources: US Census Bureau, California Department of Finance. Report P-2B: Population Projections by Individual Year of Age, 2010-2060, California Counties

## Transit Dependent Population

An important step in the transit planning process is to look for high concentrations of transit-dependent residents. Transit-dependent persons within a region are typically considered to be youths, senior adults, persons with a disability, low-income persons, and persons who live in households with no vehicle available.

Table 3 presents this data at the census tract level, with detailed figures included as Appendix A, Figure 2 shows census tract designations alongside the RCTA fixed route network. The demographic groups considered to be transit-dependent are not exclusive from each other, and some people may fall into more than one category and therefore be double-counted. Despite this technicality, the census data is still valuable in showing trends regarding where large numbers of persons who may benefit from transit live.

Highlights from Table 3 include:

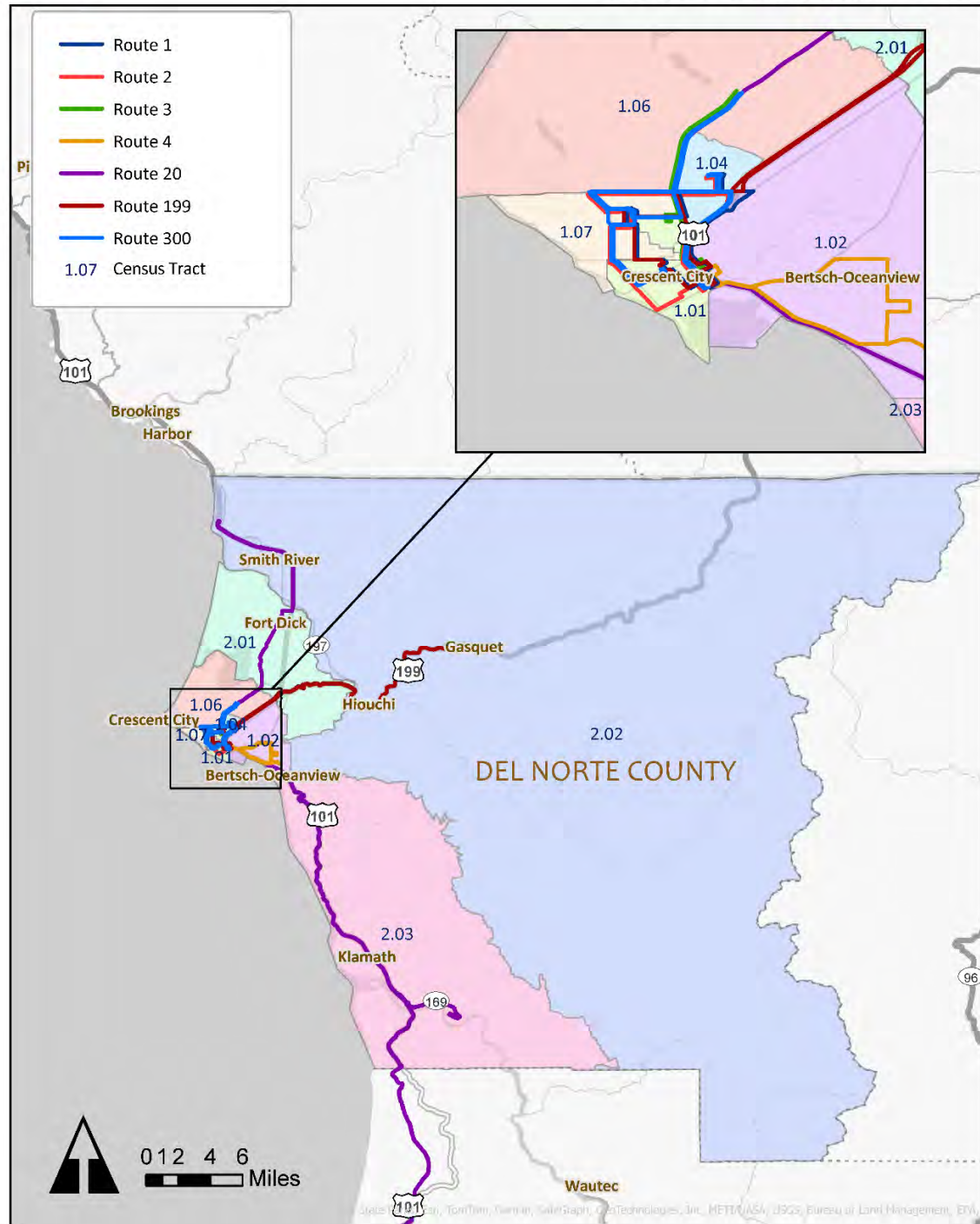
- About one out of every five Del Norte County residents (21.1 percent) are estimated to be **youth** (children younger than 18), which is almost the same rate as the State of California (21.8 percent). The census tracts of Bertsch-Oceanview and West Crescent City have the highest concentrations of children, with each community located in a census tract that is home to 18.8 percent or more of the county's total youth population.
- **Senior adults** over the age of 65 represent 19.2 percent of the total Del Norte County population, which is a greater proportion compared to the State of California (15 percent). Census tracts with distinctly large senior populations include those which encompass Smith River and Fort Dick. These two census tracts are home to over 38.7 percent of the total county senior population.
- It is estimated that 17.1 percent of Del Norte County residents are **people with a disability**, based on the definition used by the US Census Bureau. This is a greater rate of disabled persons compared to the State of California (11 percent). The census tracts which contain West Crescent City and Smith River are all regions home to 33.7 percent of the total Del Norte County disabled population.
- As defined by the US Census Bureau, 13 percent of Del Norte County residents are **persons living below the federal poverty level**. This is a higher rate than the State of California (12 percent). Downtown Crescent City is the most disadvantaged; it is home to over 27.8 percent of the total county population living below the poverty line.
- The US Census Bureau estimated there are 698 **zero-vehicle households** in Del Norte County (7.3 percent). This is a rate slightly higher than the State of California as a whole (7 percent). Most of these households are located in downtown Crescent City (55.7 percent of the total countywide zero-vehicle households), Northeast Crescent City (13.5 percent), and North Crescent City (10.7 percent).

**Table 3: Del Norte County Demographic Characteristics**

Census Tract	Area Description	Developed Land Square Miles	Developed Land Square Miles	Total Persons	Total Households	Youth (Under 18 Years)		Seniors (65+)		Persons with a Disability		Persons Below Poverty Level		Zero-Vehicle Households	
						#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1.01	Crescent City Downtown	1.5	1.5	4,391	1,991	874	15.1%	777	14.8%	880	18.1%	<b>997</b>	<b>27.8%</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>55.7%</b>
1.02	Bertsch-Oceanview	8.7	3.4	3,676	1,238	<b>1,089</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	682	13.0%	534	11.0%	365	10.2%	42	6.0%
1.04	Northeast Crescent City	0.8	0.8	2,625	812	760	13.1%	328	6.2%	490	10.1%	<b>517</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>13.5%</b>
1.06	North Crescent City	13.7	4.7	3,978	1,226	<b>1,160</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	769	14.6%	<b>801</b>	<b>16.5%</b>	301	8.4%	13	1.9%
1.07	West Crescent City	1.5	0.9	3,187	1,196	597	10.3%	556	10.6%	406	8.4%	452	12.6%	75	10.7%
2.01	Fort Dick <sup>1</sup>	38.0	15.8	5,322	1,271	585	10.1%	<b>917</b>	<b>17.4%</b>	661	13.6%	193	5.4%	54	7.7%
2.02	Smith River-Hiouchi- Gasquet	805.6	17.3	3,249	1,414	501	8.6%	<b>942</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>17.3%</b>	498	13.9%	23	3.3%
2.03	Klamath	143.4	4.3	1,034	382	232	4.0%	290	5.5%	248	5.1%	<b>262</b>	7.3%	<b>8</b>	1.1%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,013</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>27,462</b>	<b>9,530</b>	<b>5,798</b>	<b>21.1%</b>	<b>5,261</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>4,860</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>3,585</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
*Note 1: Pelican Bay State Prison located in this tract which contributes to its population numbers. Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates.										X% = (bolded) tracts with the highest percentage of population type.					



**Figure 2**  
**Del Norte County Census Tracts**



## Transit Needs Index

It is helpful to consider all five of the potentially transit-dependent groups simultaneously to paint a better picture of what areas of Del Norte County have the greatest relative transit needs. To better compare the transit needs of different communities, LSC developed a Transit Needs Index (TNI) (Table 4) for Del Norte County using the demographic data presented in Table 3.

The first step in developing the TNI was to estimate the actual developed land area within each census tract and calculate the density of each specific transit-dependent group within each census tract (for example, there are 568 youth per square mile in Census Tract 1.01). Then, the ranges of densities for each subpopulation were divided into quintiles. Population densities in the highest quintile were assigned a score of 5 to represent the high density and resulting high transit need, while the lowest population densities were assigned a score of 1 to represent the lower need for transit. The scores for each subgroup were then summed to yield an overall transit needs index rank for each census tract (Table 4 and Figure 3). Ultimately, the TNI measures the relative demand for transit services from the population living in the census tracts, with possible values ranging from a low of 5 to a high of 25. A score of 25 indicates the greatest relative need for transit services considering all five transit-dependent subgroups.

Based on the TNI, the areas of Del Norte County with the greatest need for transit services are census tracts 1.01 (downtown Crescent City), 1.04 (Northeast Crescent City), and 1.06 (West Crescent City), all receiving a very high transit need rating. Census tract 1.02 (Bertsch-Oceanview) is another important area of medium transit need primarily due to its relatively large youth population. Because population density is used as part of the TNI equation, the overall size of developed lands in each census tract impacts results. The communities of Fort Dick, Smith River, Hiouchi, Gasquet, Klamath, and Klamath Glenn are home to large numbers of transit-dependent persons; however, the population density of these subgroups within the tract's developed lands is much lower than within Crescent City, which makes them appear low on the overall TNI.

## Table 4: Del Norte County Transit Needs Index

### Legend

1	Very Low Rank
2	Low Rank
3	Medium Rank
4	High Rank
5	Very High Rank

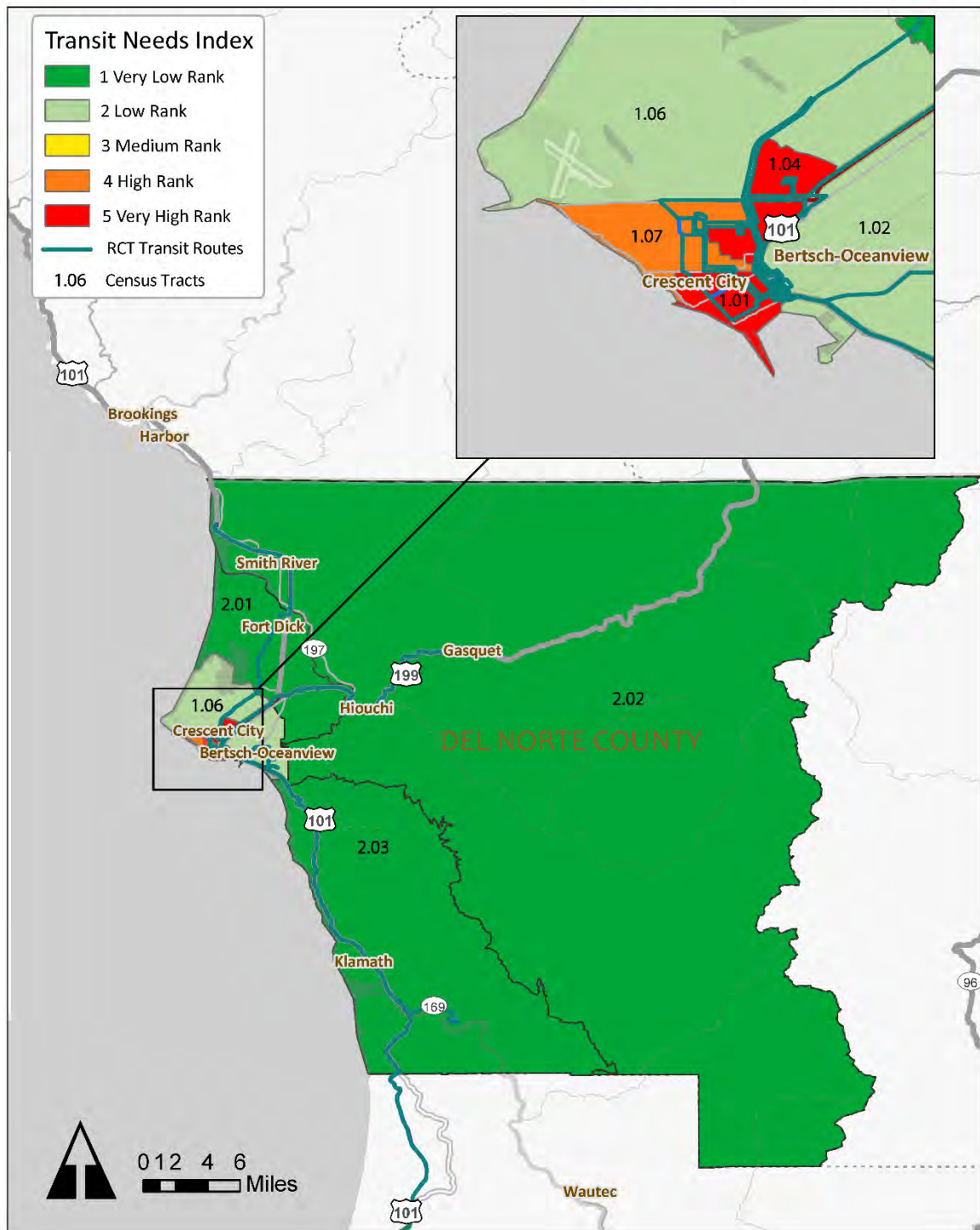
### Rank<sup>1</sup>

Youth (Under 18 Years)	Senior Adults (65+)	Persons with a Disability	Persons Below Poverty Level	Zero-Vehicle Households
------------------------------	------------------------	------------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------

Census Tract	Communities	Youth (Under 18 Years)	Senior Adults (65+)	Persons with a Disability	Persons Below Poverty Level	Zero-Vehicle Households	Overall Transit Needs Index Rank
1.01	Crescent City Downtown	3	5	5	5	5	23
1.02	Bertsch-Oceanview	2	2	2	1	1	8
1.04	Northeast Crescent City	5	4	5	5	3	22
1.06	North Crescent City	2	2	2	1	1	8
1.07	West Crescent City	4	5	4	4	2	19
2.01	Fort Dick	1	1	1	1	1	5
2.02	Smith River-Hiouchi- Gasquet	1	1	1	1	1	5
2.03	Klamath	1	1	1	1	1	5

Source: LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.

**Figure 3**  
**Redwood County Transit Needs Index**



## EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY

Some of the most regular transit riders are those who rely on the bus for commuting to and from work. This section reviews the Del Norte County economic characteristics influencing transit demand for the purpose of commuting.

### Top Employers

Major employers can be significant transit trip generators. Del Norte County's largest employers, according to the California Employment Development Department (2024), are shown in Table 5.

The largest employers are the Pelican Bay State Prison in Northern Crescent City, Sutter Coast Hospital, which is located in Northeast Crescent City, and the Yurok Tribe, who have a tribal office located in Klamath. It is important to note that Yurok Tribe employees' station of duty is likely interspersed throughout their tribal lands, which extend well into Humboldt County. Almost all of the other large employers within the county are located in Crescent City, with the exception of Lucky 7 Casino and Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, both located in Smith River. The economic sectors most represented by the top employers are government services, healthcare, tourism, and education.

The U.S. Census maintains a Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) database that reports information on worker commute patterns based on home and employment addresses. The results for Del Norte County are shown in Table 6 below. Despite the data not clarifying who works in-person or remotely, most of this information can be logically assumed. For instance, Del Norte County residents holding jobs that are technically located in Sacramento County are likely to be working remotely. Even with these caveats, the LEHD data still provides useful information about popular commute patterns that could potentially be served by transit. Currently, according to census data, over 85 percent of Del Norte County workers either drive alone or carpool to get to their place of work, indicating that new transit services would likely be needed to encourage workers to choose transit for commuting instead. Other hurdles to encouraging workers to use transit for commuting include convenient and free parking at most workplaces and no traffic congestion during the commute. To get choice riders to choose to use transit, the experience must feel more convenient than driving in their own private vehicles.

The majority of Del Norte County jobs are held by county residents (73.6 percent), with most jobs being held by people who live in Crescent City (15.8 percent), Bertsch-Oceanview (8.1 percent), Brookings, OR (3.9 percent), Smith River (2.1 percent), and Gasquet (1.3 percent). The top out-of-county locations Del Norte County workers are commuting from are Curry County, OR (7.8 percent) and Humboldt Counties (4.5 percent).

In terms of where Del Norte employed residents commute to, the top location of employment is Crescent City, where nearly one out of every three Del Norte County employed residents works (32.2 percent). Other communities where many residents commute to work include Eureka (4.5 percent), Bertch-Oceanside (4.3 percent), Brookings, OR (3.3 percent), and Redding (1.9 percent). The top county locations Del Norte employed residents are commuting to are Humboldt (9.3 percent) and Curry, OR Counties (5.9 percent). In all, about 1,100 people commute between Del Norte and Curry, OR Counties, and an additional 1,150 commute between Del Norte and Humboldt Counties based on the total number of workers estimated to be traveling in either direction. There are existing transit services between Del Norte County and both Curry, OR, and Humboldt Counties; however, the timing of the connections with Humboldt may not be conducive to a full-time regular 9 to 5 work schedule.

**Table 5: Del Norte County Major Employers**

Company	Location	# Of Employees
Pelican Bay State Prison	Crescent City	1000+ Employees
Sutter Coast Hospital	Crescent City	250-499 Employees
Yurok Tribe	Klamath	250-499 Employees
Del Norte County Health Dept.	Crescent City	100-249 Employees
Del Norte County High School	Crescent City	100-249 Employees
Del Norte County Unified Schools	Crescent City	100-249 Employees
Elk Valley Casino	Bertch-Oceanview	100-249 Employees
Hambro Forest Products	Bertch-Oceanview	100-249 Employees
Lucky 7 Casino & Hotel	Smith River	100-249 Employees
New Dawn Support Svc	Crescent City	100-249 Employees
Walmart Supercenter	Crescent City	100-249 Employees
Battery Point Lighthouse	Crescent City	50-99 Employees
College of the Redwoods	Crescent City	50-99 Employees
Crescent Elk Middle School	Crescent City	50-99 Employees
Del Norte County Chamber of Commerce	Crescent City	50-99 Employees
Del Norte County Mental Health	Crescent City	50-99 Employees
Del Norte County Unified Schools	Crescent City	50-99 Employees
Del Norte Sheriff's Office	Crescent City	50-99 Employees
Harbor View Grotto	Bertch-Oceanview	50-99 Employees
Home Depot	Crescent City	50-99 Employees
Joe Hamilton Elementary	Crescent City	50-99 Employees
McDonald's	Crescent City	50-99 Employees
Opes Addiction Recovery	Crescent City	50-99 Employees
Port O'Pints Brewing Co	Crescent City	50-99 Employees
Redwood Elementary School	Crescent City	50-99 Employees
Reservation Ranch	Smith River	50-99 Employees
Safeway	Crescent City	50-99 Employees
Source: California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Info, 2024, California State Controllers Office		



**Table 6: Del Norte Local and Regional Commute Patterns  
2021**

<b>Where Employees In Del Norte County Commute From</b>					
<i>Counties</i>	<i># of Jobs</i>	<i>% of Total</i>	<i>Cities and Towns</i>	<i># of Jobs</i>	<i>% of Total</i>
<b>Del Norte County, CA</b>	<b>5,434</b>	<b>73.6%</b>	<b>Crescent City city, CA</b>	<b>1,163</b>	<b>15.8%</b>
Curry County, OR	577	7.8%	<b>Bertsch-Oceanview CDP, CA</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>8.1%</b>
Humboldt County, CA	329	4.5%	Brookings city, OR	287	3.9%
Siskiyou County, CA	125	1.7%	<b>Smith River CDP, CA</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
Josephine County, OR	122	1.7%	<b>Fort Dick CDP, CA</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
Coos County, OR	75	1.0%	<b>Gasquet CDP, CA</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
Jackson County, OR	65	0.9%	<b>Klamath CDP, CA</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
Shasta County, CA	62	0.8%	Harbor CDP, OR	87	1.2%
Sacramento County, CA	39	0.5%	Eureka city, CA	68	0.9%
Butte County, CA	30	0.4%	<b>Hiouchi CDP, CA</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
All Other Locations	522	7.1%	All Other Locations	4,624	62.7%
<b>Total Number of Jobs</b>	<b>7,380</b>		<b>Total Number of Jobs</b>	<b>7,380</b>	
<b>Where Del Norte County Residents Work and Commute to</b>					
<i>Counties</i>	<i># of Jobs</i>	<i>% of Total</i>	<i>Cities and Towns</i>	<i># of Jobs</i>	<i>% of Total</i>
<b>Del Norte County, CA</b>	<b>5,434</b>	<b>60.9%</b>	<b>Crescent City city, CA</b>	<b>2,869</b>	<b>32.2%</b>
Humboldt County, CA	828	9.3%	Eureka city, CA	397	4.5%
Curry County, OR	522	5.9%	<b>Bertsch-Oceanview CDP, CA</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
Shasta County, CA	243	2.7%	Brookings city, OR	291	3.3%
Jackson County, OR	222	2.5%	Redding city, CA	166	1.9%
Sacramento County, CA	184	2.1%	Arcata city, CA	154	1.7%
Siskiyou County, CA	100	1.1%	<b>Klamath CDP, CA</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
Josephine County, OR	96	1.1%	<b>Fort Dick CDP, CA</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
Alameda County, CA	89	1.0%	Medford city, OR	127	1.4%
Klamath County, OR	84	0.9%	Harbor CDP, OR	123	1.4%
All Other Locations	1,119	12.5%	All Other Locations	4,125	46.2%
<b>Total Number of Jobs</b>	<b>8,921</b>		<b>Total Number of Jobs</b>	<b>8,921</b>	
Source: US Census Bureau LEHD Database, 2021					
Note: <b>Bold text</b> indicates locations within Del Norte County.					

## MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTERS

A large proportion of transit trips, if not to work, are to other major activity centers such as hospitals, grocery stores, social service agencies, tribal headquarters, and schools. Table 7 identifies some important activity centers in Del Norte County's larger communities.

Crescent City, as the county seat and central hub, is home to many activity centers including government offices for both the County of Del Norte and the City of Crescent City, the Sutter Coast Hospital, Walmart, Del Norte Senior Center, a secondary campus for College of the Redwoods, Del Norte High School, Crescent Elk Middle School, and a number of grade schools. In the small community of Klamath is the Yurok Tribal offices, and a Post Office. The town of Smith River has a post office, public library, Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation tribal offices, United Indian Health Service, Lucky 7 Casino, and an elementary school. All of which are located along the US 101 corridor. Other out-of-county locations for medical and shopping include McKinleyville, Arcata, Eureka in CA, and Brookings, Medford, and Grants Pass in Oregon. Figures 3 through 7 in Chapter 3 show the activity centers included in Table 7 in reference to transit services.

An important trend to note from Table 7 is the concentration of resources in Crescent City; in the smaller communities, very limited options for social services, shopping, and medical services exist, while recreational access is abundant across the county. Crescent City is only home to 23.2 percent of Del Norte County residents; this indicates the likely significance of the intercity and regional transit services offered by RCTA and social service providers to transit-dependent persons living in more rural regions of the county. These services will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

## RECENT PLANNING STUDIES

The SRTDP should both reflect and complement the goals and strategies presented in other related studies recently adopted in Del Norte County and statewide. Recently completed plans related to the SRTDP effort include local studies such as the Crescent City Economic Development Strategic Action Plan (2021), county-wide studies such as the Del Norte County Regional Transportation Plan (2020), as well as regional studies such as the California Intercity Bus Study. These studies were reviewed while updating the SRTDP to ensure the final five-year plan aligns with the work of these other studies. A full review of planning documents is provided in Appendix B.

Caltrans in collaboration with RCTA, Del Norte Local Transportation Commission (DNLTC), and other regional partners is in the process of developing a District Transit Plan that will identify transit infrastructure needs on the State Transportation Network (STN) and prioritize transit-supportive improvements that address these needs. The Plan is expected to be completed in Fall 2026, and should be referenced while developing future planning efforts following its completion.



**Table 7: Major Transit Activity Centers**

Type of Activity Center					
Community	Human Service & Tribal Agencies	Senior Services	Schools & Youth Programs	Shopping & Recreation	Medical
Bertch-Oceanview	Sovereign Nation of Elk Valley Rancheria			Elk Valley Tribal Cemetery Elk Valley Casino Howland Hill Rd. Hiking Trails	
Crescent City	Crescent City Cultural Center Del Norte County Offices Del Norte Superior Court DHHS Behavioral Health Branch DHHS Public Health Branch DHHS Social Services Branch Department of Motor Vehicles Family Connections Fred Endert Municipal Pool Housing Authority Main Library - Crescent City Branch Family Resource Center of the Redwoods Del Norte County Regional Airport United States Postal Service	Del Norte Senior Center	Bess Maxwell Elementary Castle Rock Charter School College of the Redwoods Crescent Elk Middle Del Norte Community School Del Norte High School Joe Hamilton Elementary Margaret Keating Elementary Mary Peacock Elementary Mountain Elementary Pine Grove Elementary Redwood Elementary Sunset High School	Shop Smart Food Warehouse & Dollar Tree St. Vincent De Paul Society Walmart Supercenter Safeway Redwoods National and State Parks- Crescent City Information Center Del Norte Recreation Department Florence Keller County Park & Campground	Sutter Coast Hospital United Indian Health Service
Fort Dick	Lake Earl Grange Hall Pelican Bay State Prison			Lake Earl Trail	
Gasquet	American Legion		Mountain Elementary School	Gasquet Market Smith River National Recreation Area	
Hiouchi	Hiouchi Visitor Center			Hiouchi Hamlet Jedidiah Smith State Park Myrtle Creek Botanical Trailhead	
Klamath	United States Postal Service Klamath Community Center Yurok Tribal Offices Yurok Indian Housing Authority			Lagoon Creek Picnic Ground Trees of Mystery	
Smith River	Smith River Library Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation Offices Dat-naa-svt Community Center United States Postal Service		Smith River Elementary Howonquet Head Start	Dollar General Clifford Kamph Memorial Park Lucky 7 Casino & Hotel	United Indian Health Service
Source: LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc., Del Norte County.					

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## OVERVIEW OF EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES

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### INTRODUCTION

There are several public, private, and non-profit organizations that operate transit and transportation services in Del Norte County. While all of these organizations help move people around, each transportation program differs in the types of services, availability, and passenger eligibility they offer. This chapter primarily discusses the services and amenities of the county's public transit provider, RCTA, with other services summarized afterward.

### REDWOOD COAST TRANSIT

#### Administration and Management

RCTA is a Joint Powers Agency (JPA) that was established in June 2004 by the County of Del Norte and the City of Crescent City. RCTA has a five-member Board of Directors consisting of two representatives from both the county and Crescent City, as well as one representative of the citizens at large who is appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. The Board of Directors meets monthly and oversees operational and policy issues. RCTA General Management is contracted out to TMTP Herron Consultants on a remote part-time basis, while legal services are provided by Hanson Bridgett LLP. RCTA contracts with TransDev for operations and maintenance of the transit program.

#### RCTA Fixed Routes

RCTA currently operates seven fixed routes ranging from local to intercounty services. Most of these services begin weekday operations between 6:00 AM and 8:00 AM and end between 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM. Four routes are also available on Saturday, and no service is offered on Sunday. Passengers can board RCTA regional intercounty fixed routes (20, 199) both at designated stops as well as at flag stops. Flag stops refer to locations where a passenger can hail down the driver in order to board, as long as it is safe for the driver to pull over. RCTA Crescent City local routes (1-4, 300) use an established network of official bus stops where all boardings and alightings take place.

RCTA has had to adjust its service schedule several times over the last few years due to funding fluctuations and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. RCTA services, as of October 2024, are summarized in Table 8. More detailed descriptions are included in the following pages.

#### *Route 1 – Crescent City Parkway / El Dorado*

Route 1 provides local, hourly service within Crescent City (Figure 4), serving important destinations such as Safeway, Walmart, Sutter Coast Hospital, Bess Maxwell Elementary, Del Norte County Offices, and Crescent Elk Middle School, among others, in a counterclockwise pattern. Route 1 operates on weekdays between 7:00 AM and 5:37 PM, completing eleven, twenty-five-minute roundtrips throughout the day. Route 1 is interlined with Route 3 at the Cultural Center Transit Hub.

**Table 8: Summary of RCTA Services and Frequency**

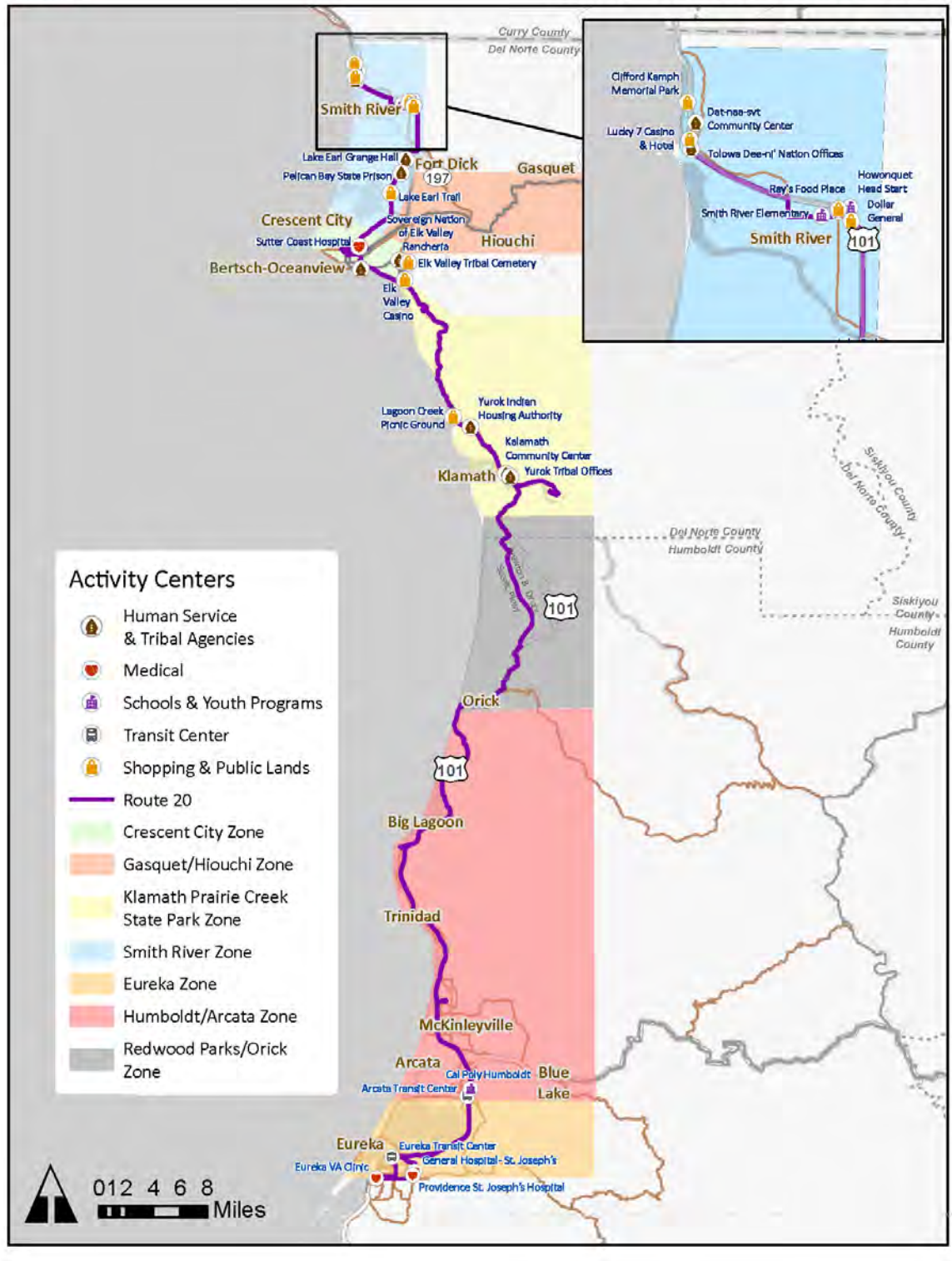
	Service Hours <sup>1</sup>				Start & End Locations		Weekday Service Frequency (Minutes)
	Weekday		Saturday		Start	End	
	Start	End	Start	End			
<b><u>Bus: Fixed Route</u></b>							
Route 1 - Parkway / El Dorado	7:00 AM	5:37 PM	--	--	Cultural Center	Same as start	60
Route 2 - A / Inyo / Washington	7:00 AM	5:25 PM	8:00 AM	4:25 PM	Cultural Center	Same as start	60
Route 3 - Northcrest	8:00 AM	5:25 PM	--	--	Northcrest @ Madison	Cultural Center	60
Route 4 - Bertsch	7:30 AM	5:55 PM	8:30 AM	4:55 PM	Cultural Center	Same as start	60
Route 300 - CEMS & DNHS School Tripper	2:55 PM	3:34 PM	--	--	Crescent Elk Middle	Cultural Center	1 Trip on School Days
<b><u>Intercity Routes - Summer Service</u></b>							
North Segment Route 20 - Crescent City / Smith River	6:05 AM	7:13 PM	6:05 AM	7:13 PM	Cultural Center	Cultural Center	4 Round Trips
South Segment Route 20 - Crescent City / Eureka	7:30 AM	8:31 PM	6:45 AM	7:13 PM	Cultural Center	Cultural Center	3 Round Trips
Route 199 - Crescent City / Gasquet	6:38 AM	5:07 PM	--	--	Cultural Center	Same as start	3 Round Trips
<b><u>Intercity Routes - Winter Service</u></b>							
North Segment Route 20 - Crescent City / Smith River	6:05 AM	7:13 PM	6:05 AM	8:31 PM	Cultural Center	Cultural Center	4 Round Trips
South Segment Route 20 - Crescent City / Eureka	7:30 AM	8:31 PM	6:45 AM	7:13 PM	Cultural Center	Cultural Center	2 Round Trips
Route 199 - Crescent City / Gasquet	6:38 AM	5:07 PM	--	--	Cultural Center	Same as start	2 Round Trips
<b><u>Additional Services</u></b>							
Dial-a-Ride	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	8:00 AM	5:00 PM	--	--	--
Airport Shuttle Service	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	8:00 AM	5:00 PM	--	--	--
Medical Shuttles	8:00 AM	6:00 PM			--	--	--
Note 1: Summary accurate as of October, 2024.							
Note 2: South Segment of Route 20 also has one additional PM trip with service from Crescent City to Klamath year round.							
Note 3: Route 300 operates only during the academic year on school days only. It adjusts operations to between 1:15 PM and 1:49 on Monday's and other early release school days.							
Note 4: Medical Shuttles operates Tuesday & Thursday only with service to Grants Pass or Medford Oregon. Return to Crescent city by 6 PM.							
Note 5: No service on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, or Christmas Day.							
Note 6: Saturday schedule on MLK Day, President's Day, Juneteenth, Indigenous Peoples's Day, and the day after Thanksgiving.							
Source: RCTA							







**Figure 5**  
**Route 20 Smith River to Eureka Route,**  
**Activity Centers, and Fare Zones**



### ***Route 2 –Crescent City A / Inyo / DNHS-College /Wal-Mart***

Route 2 provides local, hourly service within Crescent City (Figure 4). Route 2 serves the west side of the US 101 corridor in a clockwise pattern. Stopping at Del Norte High, Sutter Coast Hospital, Walmart, Shop Smart, Coast Central Credit Union, and numerous residential areas. Route 2 is a Monday through Saturday service that operates hourly between 7:00 AM and 5:25 PM on weekdays and between 8:00 AM and 4:25 PM on Saturdays. Route 2 operates eleven 25-minute round-trips per day on weekdays and nine round-trips per day on Saturdays. Route 2 is interlined with Route 4 at the Cultural Center Transit Hub.

### ***Route 3 –Crescent City Northcrest***

Route 3 provides hourly local service within Crescent City in a North-South pattern along Northcrest Drive (Figure 4). Locations served by Route 3 are Safeway, Shop Smart, Crescent City Senior Apartments, Del Norte Senior Center, and Grocery Outlet, as well as numerous residential areas along the way. Route 3 follows a route that serves lower-density areas that are further north than the other Crescent City local routes, with many shared stops with Route 20. Route 3 operates on weekdays between 8:00 AM and 5:25 PM, with ten round-trips each day.

### ***Route 4 – Crescent City Bertsch Tract***

Route 4 is the main local service connecting Crescent City to the CDP of Bertsch - Oceanview (Figure 4), operating on the hour Monday through Saturday. Service on weekdays begins at 7:30 AM and ends at 5:55 PM, Saturday service begins at 8:30 AM and ends at 4:55 PM. Key stops served by Route 4 include Anchor Beach, Elk Valley Casino, Elk Valley Rancheria, and Safeway. Route 4 operates 11 round-trips on weekdays, and 9 on Saturdays.

### ***Route 20 – Smith River - Eureka***

Route 20 operates along US 101 from Smith River in the county's northern end to Eureka in Humboldt County to the South (Figure 7). The route operates Monday through Saturday, beginning northbound service at the Crescent City Transit Hub at 6:05 AM and southbound service at the Lucky 7 Casino in Smith River at 6:45 AM. It ends service at the Crescent City Transit Hub at 8:31 PM. Communities served by Route 20 from North to South include Smith River, Fort Dick, Crescent City, Klamath, Orick, Trinidad, Arcata, and Eureka. Route 20 also offers stops at the Eureka/Arcata Airport in McKinleyville, plus numerous State and National parks providing access to the world-famous redwood forests, which are major tourism draws for the county. The Eureka end of many Route 20 trips contains a one-way medical loop, providing direct service to both Eureka Hospitals and the VA Medical Clinic.

During the winter months, the route offers two trips between Smith River and Eureka in the southbound direction and 1 in the northbound direction. The evening northbound trip from Eureka/Arcata only travels as far as Crescent City. There are two additional southbound trips from Smith River to Crescent City and 3 additional northbound trips from Crescent City to Smith River. Lastly, there is 1 southbound trip between Crescent City and Klamath. Run times are such that Smith River residents can commute into Crescent City for work or school, but the first trip into Crescent City from Klamath is at 1 PM.

### ***Route 199 – Crescent City / Hiouchi / Gasquet***

Route 199 follows a similar route to Route 1 within Crescent City before providing extended service along US 199, which runs east-west between Crescent City and Gasquet (Figure 6). In non-summer

months, Route 199 completes two round-trips on weekdays. The morning trip departs the Cultural Center at 6:38 AM and returns at 8:00 AM. The afternoon trip departs the Cultural Center at 4:25 and returns at 5:07 PM. Historically, during the busier summer months between June and September, an additional mid-day trip is offered, and service days are extended to Monday - Saturday. Route 199 provides the only public transit option to the communities of Hiouchi and Gasquet. The route also services Jedediah Smith Redwood State Park and Smith River access locations, which are major regional tourist destinations.

### ***Route 300 – CEMS & DNHS School Tripper***

Route 300 is an important service providing after-school rides primarily focused on public school students within Crescent City. Route 300 has evolved since its inception in 2018, and currently operates one trip daily, on school days only. Route 300 adjusts service hours on early release school days but usually operates between 2:55 PM and 3:34 PM. The route stops at many of the locations served by Routes 1, 2, and 3 without the need to transfer between routes. Route 300 begins at Crescent Elk Middle School shortly after PM main bell time, and provides service to Del Norte High, College of the Redwoods, and the Del Norte Senior Center upon request. Additional locations served by Route 300 include Walmart, Sutter Coast Hospital, Del Norte School District Offices, and numerous residential areas. The route eventually ends at the Crescent City Cultural Center Transit Hub, providing ample transfer opportunities to other routes. AM versions of the route have been operated in past years, but ridership was low, so the service was discontinued, perhaps indicating more access to parental transportation in the morning than in the afternoon.

### **ADA Paratransit Services**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires that public transit agencies provide paratransit services to eligible passengers within 0.75 miles of local fixed route services. RCTA operates paratransit, or Dial-a-Ride (DAR), services in the Crescent City area only. Persons who wish to utilize RCTA's DAR service at the lower, ADA Eligible fare must submit an "ADA Paratransit Application for Eligibility", the form asks questions to understand why a person's disability prevents them from using fixed routes. Applicants may be asked to participate in a telephone interview to evaluate eligibility. RCTA admin staff currently provide the Eligibility Screening as part of the RCTA CTSA programs.

Passengers are asked to call and reserve their rides from 1 to 7 days in advance. Same-day appointments are subject to availability. Non-ADA certified users are allowed to make DAR trips but are required to pay the higher "general public" fare rate. Personal care attendants are allowed to accompany ADA-certified passengers free of charge.

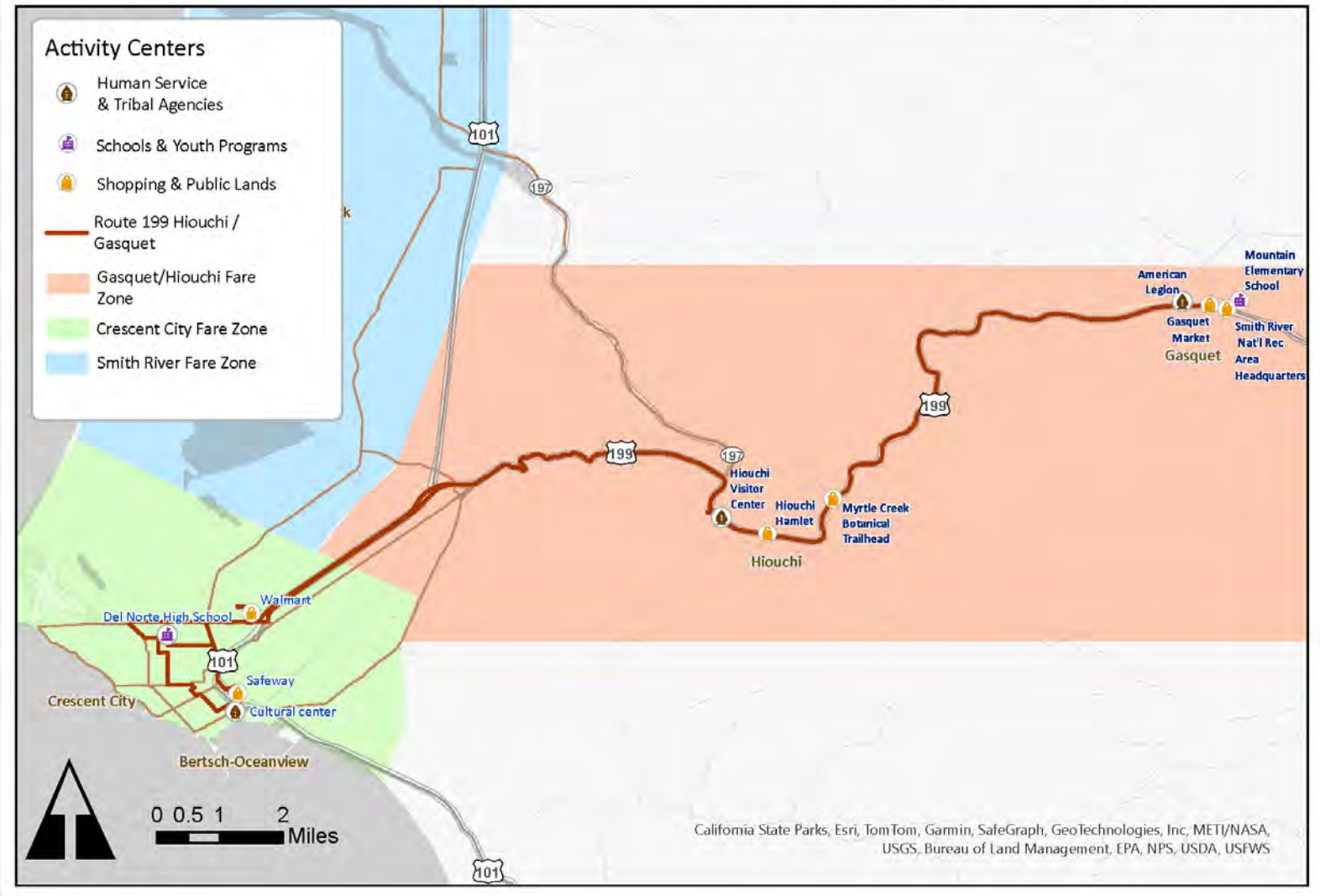
The Crescent City DAR operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM and Saturday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM as shown in Figure 8.

In locations where Dial-A-Ride service is not available, "**Flex stop**" service is available within ¼ mile of RCTA Routes 20 and 199 within Del Norte County. Reservations for flex stop service are encouraged, and same-day requests are subject to space and availability.



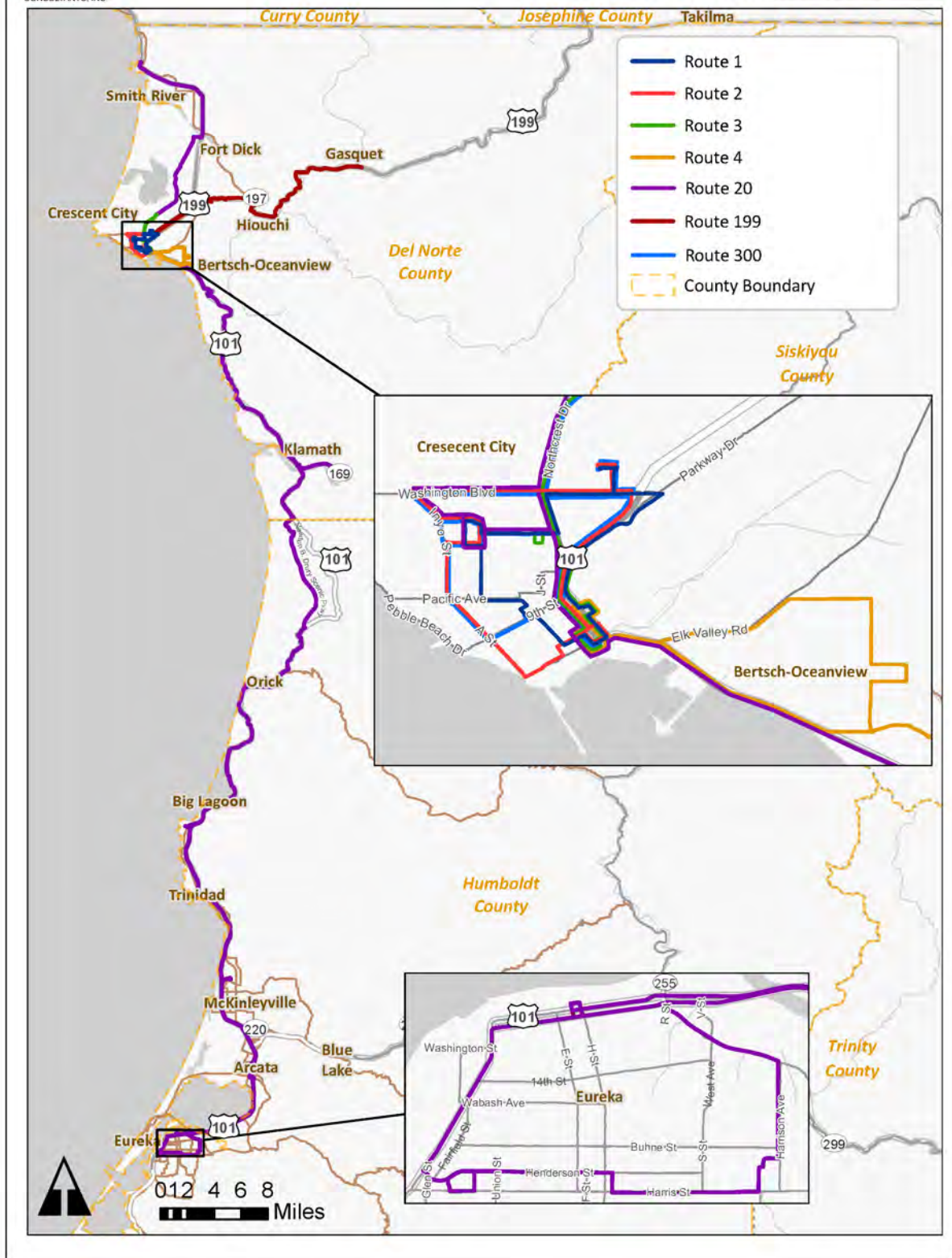


**Figure 6**  
**Route 199 Hiouchi and Gasquet Route, Activity Centers, and Fare Zones**





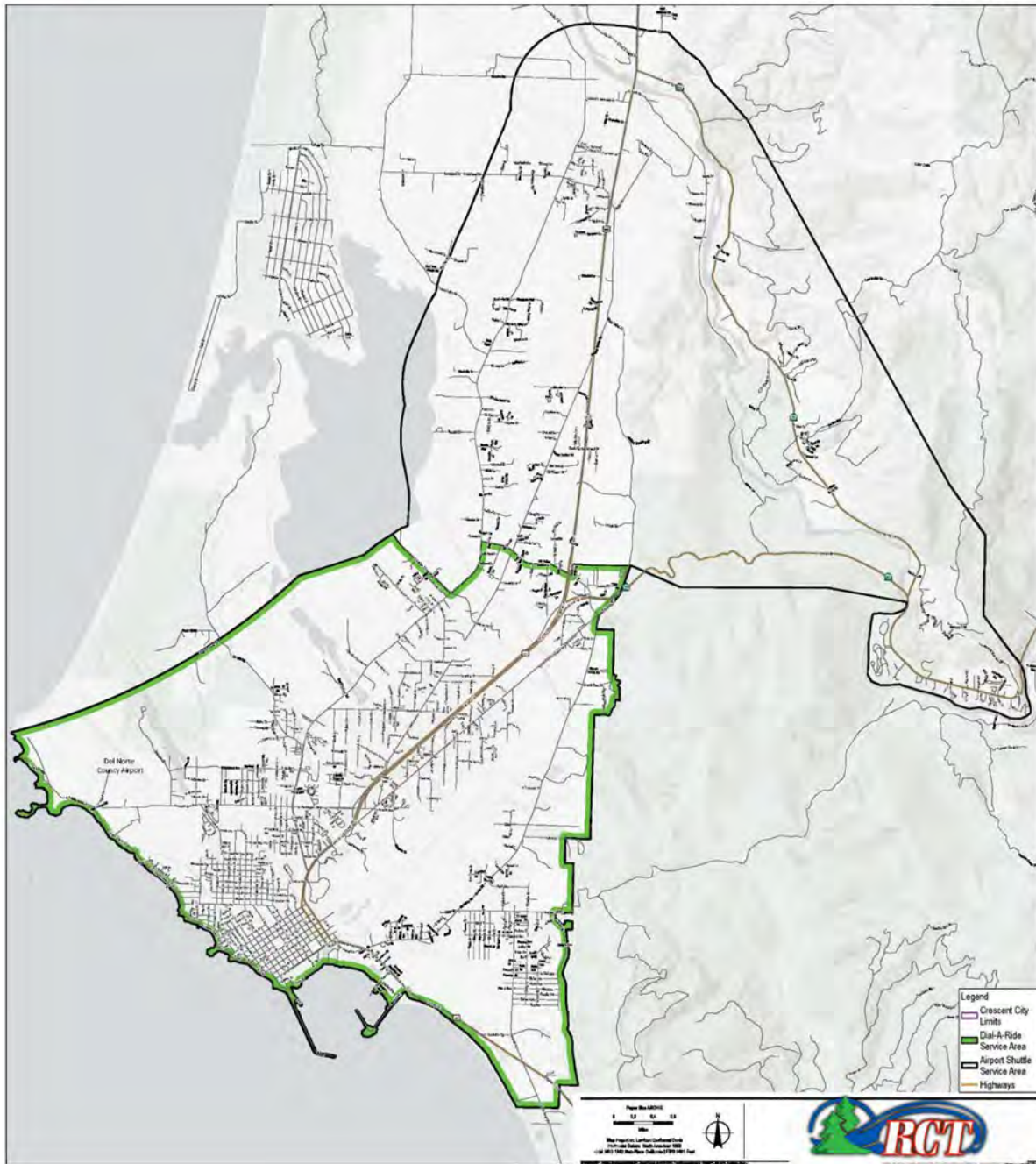
**Figure 7**  
**RCTA Regional Route Map**





**Figure 8**

**Crescent City DAR and Airport Shuttle Zones**



## **Other Services**

RTC also offers other premium demand-based services, which have been implemented in response to unmet transit needs requests within Del Norte County. Those services are detailed below.

### ***Airport Shuttle CEC***

RCTA's Airport Shuttle provides rides to and from Del Norte County Regional Airport (CEC), offering door-to-door service upon 1–7 day advanced request anywhere within its Crescent City DAR zone, plus an expanded Airport Shuttle service area which includes the communities of Fort Dick and areas along US 199 just west of Hiouchi. The service operates during the same days and hours as the DAR service and is generally served by the same vehicles except when large groups require a larger vehicle.

## **RCTA Consolidated Transit Services Agency**

RCTA is the designated Consolidated Transit Services Agency (CTSA) for Del Norte County; as such, it receives CTSA-designated funding utilized to enhance mobility and provide specialized transportation options.

### ***Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle***

RTCA, utilizing CTSA funding and through partnership with the Del Norte County Medical Board (DNCMB), operates a low-cost shuttle tailored to medical appointments, although all trip purposes are welcome. The service operates between Crescent City and Medford, Oregon, 2 hours and 20 minutes away. The shuttle provides door-to-door service from within the Crescent City DAR Zone, leaves Crescent City at 8 AM on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and departs Medford or Grants Pass after the last passenger appointment with a cutoff departure time of 3:00 PM.

### ***Other RCTA-CTSA Functions***

- Administration of a partnership with the DNCMB to provide fare subsidies for trips on Crescent City DAR that begin or end at medical facilities.
- Administration of the ADA- Eligibility screening program that includes application review and applicant interviews as required.
- Administration of the transit training program that provides staff time for the purpose of helping individuals who are not comfortable utilizing public transit; learn how to plan and complete trips on public transit. Transfer Opportunities.

RCTA fixed routes provide a cohesive transit network within Del Norte County and Northern Humboldt County by providing ample transfer opportunities between routes. Some key RCTA transfer locations and the routes served at each include:

- Crescent City Cultural Center Transit Hub – Routes 1,2,3,4,20,199, and 300
- Walmart – Routes 1, 2, 20, and 300
- Del Norte High School – Routes 1, 2, 20, 199, and 300
- Safeway – Routes 1,3,4, and 199
- Inyo St. and Small Ave. (DNHS and College) – Routes 2, 199, and 300

- Crescent Beach Motel – Routes 4 and 20

Transfers to other regional transit providers are also possible. Other regional services that RCTA passengers can transfer to are listed below, as well as the stops where these transfers are possible:

- Humboldt Transit Authority (Redwood Transit) –Trinidad, Arcata/Eureka Airport, Cal Poly Humboldt, Arcata Transit Center, Eureka Transit Center, Eureka VA Clinic
- Curry Public Transit (Coastal Express) – United Indian Health Services (Smith River)
- Yurok Tribal Transit Services – Pem-May (Klamath), several RCTA bus stops in Crescent City
- SW Point – Crescent City Cultural Center, Hiouchi, Gasquet

## **RCTA CAPITAL ASSETS**

### **Facilities and Maintenance**

RCTA’s sole operations, storage, and maintenance facility is located in Crescent City at 140 Williams Drive. RCTA’s administrative offices are open to the public for bus pass purchases, DAR application servicing, and ID card issuance. The Facility was completed in 2004 and remains in good condition. The facility grounds have traditionally been leased for 20-year periods. RCTA is currently in the process of revising its lease agreement; lease expenses are budgeted to be \$62,000 for FY 2025-26.



The facility does not have any renewable energy resources on site; however, there are plans in place to install EV charging stations and solar-powered canopies at the facility in 2026. These improvements are funded by the California Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TRICP). The project is in the “Plans Specs and Estimates” phase as of October 2025.

The facility has been the target of multiple burglaries in recent years. In response, improvements to the existing gates, fencing, and lighting have been made. RCTA intends to make additional security upgrades as part of the 2026 EV Charging facility upgrades.

### **Fleet Inventory**

RCTA has a fleet of 14 vehicles as of October 2025 (Table 9). Vehicles range in size from five-passenger MV-1s to thirty-four-passenger Glaval Freightliners. The agency currently has 4 designated vehicles for each DAR and intercity routes, with the remaining 6 vehicles dedicated to local fixed route service. RCTA’s fleet is aging; nine vehicles are past their replacement schedule age, two more will surpass their replacement schedule age during the planning period, and only two vehicles are scheduled to be replaced in the fiscal year 2031-32-30 and beyond. Vehicle replacement needs will require RCTA to secure a large amount of funding to meet local match requirements for capital grants. Vehicles of cutaway class are expected to have a 6-year useful life in Del Norte County, which is shorter than the 7-year national useful life, due to additional wear and tear from the County’s harsh climate. The organization has buses on order currently to replace 6 buses expected for delivery in FY 25-26 using a

combination of FTA 5339 and local funds; of those buses, 1 will be an EV, 3 will be low-floor buses, and 2 will be diesel.

One difficulty in replacing buses is the continuing issue of manufacturing delays. RCTA is standardizing the bus fleet to be comprised of Ford vehicles to improve the performance of the vehicles and to make it easier to replace parts and maintain the vehicles. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ford was hard hit by the manufacturing issues that plagued many companies and created an order backlog. RCTA ordered 4 buses in 2021 that were delivered in May 2024. RCTA actively pursues and is awarded grants to purchase new replacement vehicles for the fleet, and will continue to do so in the future.

The California Air Resources Board's Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation will come into effect during this planning period. Beginning in 2026, the ICT regulation will require that 25 percent of vehicles purchased each year by small transit agencies, such as RCTA, be zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs). By 2029, all new vehicles will need to be ZEVs. Currently, RCTA does not have any ZEBs, but expects delivery of its first ZEV in early 2026, an Endera Model B, which will serve as a "pilot" electric bus and be used to evaluate and guide the upcoming major purchase of up to 10 ZEVs using TIRCP grant funds in 2026-27.

RCTA has a ZEB Rollout plan in place, which was adopted by the board in June of 2023. The agency also had a Zero Emissions Planning Study completed in March 2021. The key findings were the recommendation to replace buses serving local routes 1,2,3, and 4 at a 2:1 ratio to provide the same level of service due to range constraints, power demands, and length of service. Intercity route 199 is a prime candidate for a ZEB due to the downtime between trips that allows for opportunity charging. Route 20 is unfeasible to serve with a ZEB given current technology due to the length and terrain of its route.

## **Passenger Amenities**

### ***Bus Stop Amenities***

Passenger amenities include features such as benches and shelters that enhance a person's experience while waiting for the bus. Benches and shelters are located at primary stops throughout RCTA's system, available at highly trafficked stops in the denser community centers. The organization currently has 130 active stops along its fixed routes. Eighteen of those are high-boarding stops with shelters, and 4 are moderate boarding stops with benches. Currently, at least 67 of RCTA's 130 fixed route stops are without signage. Many unsigned "flag" stops are along US 101 and 199 in public right-of-way; the staff time requirements associated with obtaining permits for bus stop improvements has been a challenge for RCTA to address this issue.

RCTA's fiscal year 2025-26 draft budget allocates \$60,000 to install 18 Simme Seats within Crescent City, 32 more at various stops across the county, and purchase an additional 40 Simme Seat units for future deployment. Simme Seats are small, easy-to-deploy units that combine seating for waiting passengers with signage. Deployment of these Simme Seats will make stop locations more identifiable and waiting on buses more comfortable. The organization has had issues with vandalism and unauthorized long-term occupancy of its bus shelters in the past, making Simme Seats a good alternative to traditional bus shelters. Should State and County efforts to address the homeless crisis reduce the misuse of RCTA shelters that have occurred in the past, RCTA should revive efforts to purchase and install more shelters at busy stops.

### ***Cultural Center Transit Hub***

RCTA currently utilizes the Cultural Center Transit Hub as the start of most of its routes and as the centralized point of connectivity within the system. The existing site has two small shelters with seating and RCTA signage. In 2022, RCTA initiated the *Redwood Coast Transit Hub Location Study* to assess the feasibility and optimal design of a new transit center in Crescent City. The study identified a lack of convenient access to restrooms for passengers and drivers, and the lack of space for a ticketing and information booth as the primary issues with the current site. The study identified a municipal parking lot located just across Front St. from the current Transit Hub as the preferred site for a new transit hub. The project has lined up over \$4M in TIRCP funding to do further planning, environmental assessment, design, and construction.

As of October 2025, RCTA is in the Project Approvals and Environmental Document phase of the project, using TIRCP and SB 125 funding. Planning for this project is expected to conclude in FY 25-26, design will then occur in FY 26-27, with construction to be completed by 2028.



**Table 9: RCTA Vehicle Fleet**

Service	Agency ID	Make	Model	Year	Fuel	Mileage	Capacity	Est. Retirement Date
DAR	210	Ford	MV-1	2017	Gas	125,500	4 + 1W	2023/24
DAR	212	Ford	MV-1	2015	Gas	56,621	4 + 1W	2023/24
DAR	213	Ford	MV-1	2014	Gas	60,980	4 + 1 W	2023/24
DAR	214	Chevrolet	Chrysler Braun	2022	Gas	30,148	6 + 1 W	2029/30
CC Local	220	Ford	Eldorado	2017	Gas	245,375	17 + 2W	2023/24
CC Local	221	Ford	Eldorado	2015	Gas	308,717	19 + 3W	2021/22
CC Local	230	Ford	Champion	2019	Gas	148,975	20 + 2W	2025/26
CC Local	231	Ford	Champion	2019	Gas	144,524	20 + 2W	2025/26
CC Local	232	Ford	ARBOC Spirit of Mobility	2023	Gas	45,025	20 + 2W	2031/32
CC Local	233	Ford	ARBOC Spirit of Mobility	2023	Gas	50,425	20 + 2W	2031/32
Intercity	292	Freightliner	Glaval	2013	Diesel	494,674	32 + 2W	2019/20
Intercity	293	Freightliner	Glaval	2013	Diesel	475,611	32 + 2W	2019/20
Intercity	294	Ford	Eldorado	2017	Diesel	292,390	28 + 2W	2023/24
Intercity	295	Ford	Eldorado	2017	Diesel	260,312	28 + 2W	2023/24
Source: RCTA								
Note 1: Information accurate as of November, 2025								

## **RCTA FARE STRUCTURE**

RCTA has a fare structure with varying prices depending on a passenger's age, disability status, and trip length. A simplified summary of the fare structure is presented in Table 10. The regular, one-way fare for local trips within Crescent City along Routes 1, 2, 3, 4, and 300 is \$1.75 for adults. Youth (ages 6-18 years old), Seniors over age 65, college students, veterans, and disabled persons with a valid ID may ride RCTA free of charge with ID. On Routes 20 and 199, fares increase progressively with the trip length. Fares begin at \$2.50, with the most expensive regular one-way fare being \$14 for a trip from Smith River to Eureka on Route 20. DAR fares are \$2.00 for disabled individuals with a valid RTCA ADA Card and \$6.00 for individuals who do not have an RCTA ADA Card (but have submitted a successful application for ADA Eligibility).

Passengers can pay for fares with cash or a contactless payment-enabled bank card. Monthly physical passes are sold by bus drivers onboard and at RCTA's offices at 140 Williams Rd. in Crescent City. The monthly passes offer a significant discount for passengers who ride the bus frequently.

RCTA conducted a five-question online survey of passenger opinions on increasing fares to ensure the continuation of existing services in July 2024. Riders were generally understanding of the need for a modest fare increase, and the RCTA Board approved a \$0.25 adult fixed route increase, \$0.50 per zone on the regional routes, and \$.25 per trip for ADA-eligible on the DAR service. General Public DAR riders' fare increased from \$5 to \$6 per one-way trip. These changes were effective October 1, 2024.

**Table 10: RCTA Fares**

Fare Type	Adult (18-64)	Seniors (65+) / Disabled	Youth (6-18) <sup>1</sup>	Special <sup>2</sup>	Children <sup>3</sup> (Under 6)
<b><u>One-Way Fares Fixed Routes</u></b>					
(Local Routes 1, 2, 3, and 4)	\$1.50	Free	Free	Free	Free
Local Route 300 School Tripper	\$1.50	Free	Free	Free	Free
County Route 199	\$2.50	Free	Free	Free	Free
County Route 20	\$2.50- \$12.00	Free	Free	Free	Free
<b><u>Monthly Passes</u></b>					
Crescent City (Local Routes)	\$35.00	Free	Free	Free	Free
County	\$55.00	Free	Free	Free	Free
<b><u>Crescent City DAR<sup>4</sup></u></b>					
With RCTAA ADA ID	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.00	--	\$2.00
Without RCTAA ADA ID	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00
16- Ride Punch Pass	\$28.00	\$28.00	\$28.00	\$28.00	\$28.00
<b><u>Airport Shuttles</u></b>					
Within Airport Zone	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$5.00	\$6.00	\$6.00
<b><u>Medical Shuttle</u></b>					
Grants Pass	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00
Medford	\$14.00	\$14.00	\$14.00	\$14.00	\$14.00
<i>Source: RCTA</i> Note 1: Route 20 youth pay \$1.50 in county and Adult fare for trips beyond Del Norte County. Note 2: All Seniors, Students, Youth, and U.S. Armed Forces Veterans ride free within county with Valid ID. Supported by LCTOP Grant Funding. Note 3: Up to two small children (age 6 or under) may ride free with an adult. Note 4: DAR services only open to paratransit qualified individuals who are unable to use the fixed routes.					

## RCTA MARKETING

Effective marketing can improve current passenger satisfaction as well as recruit new people to the transit system. This section briefly discusses RCTA's current marketing strategies.

### Online Materials

RCTA's website is comprehensive and provides good information for all services. The main page shows a map of all RCTA routes and includes a real-time bus location system map, plus a trip planner window. Service alerts, transit news, and RCTA Board meeting packets are also linked. Each fixed route has its own page that includes an interactive real-time web map and schedule timetable. The webpage for Routes 20 also has a map of fare zones and information on possible transit connections that could be made in Smith River and Eureka/Arcata. There is a separate page dedicated to the DAR services.

RCTA's website has other pages with information on fares, rider policies, holiday schedules, and connecting services. There are pages for planning documents, the Title VI program, the board of directors, and ADA information, among other topics. The website is overall informative and generally easy to navigate, with only a few updates needed to make information more accurate and easier to understand.

## **Print Materials**

Printed route guides and service information are very important for passengers without devices that can access the internet. There is a downloadable PDF available for the overall system that was published in the fall of 2025. It includes all fixed route maps and schedules except Route 300, fare details, and advertising for other RCTA services. The latest consolidated RCTA Schedule Brochure is dated September 29, 2025, and is effective through late May 2026. RCTA has traditionally, and continues to, update the riders' guide with each major service change, which typically occurs twice annually in the early fall and late spring to adjust for seasonal demand.

## **Phone Information**

Passengers with limited internet access can also get transit information by phone. RCTA has a new call center customer service line that passengers can call to ask questions or for trip planning assistance, and its legacy local number. Both numbers lead passengers to RCTA dispatch, where they can request DAR information, schedule a ride, get fixed route info, and reserve a spot on the CEC Airport Shuttle or the South Oregon Medical Shuttle service.

## **Social Media**

Social media has become an important tool for transit outreach. Platforms such as X and Facebook can be used to share information on real-time service updates, public input opportunities, upcoming promotional events, and future schedule changes. RCTA has a Facebook account with 99 followers that is used to notify the public of service changes (holiday schedules, temporary bus stops, etc.), promotional events, and chances to provide public comments. RCTA also has an Instagram account with 12 followers, where it posts rider alerts and requests for public input. RCTA also maintains an X account.

## **Outreach Activities and Events**

RCTA occasionally organizes or supports events for public outreach. One recent example was tabling at the Crescent City 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade in 2024 to gather feedback for proposed fare increases. RCTA operates a bus in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade to promote its services. RCTA's ability to organize additional outreach events is limited by staffing and managerial availability, and funding capacity.

## **OTHER TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS**

Multiple other transportation providers operate in Del Norte County besides RCTA. As well as opportunities for connections in Arcata and Eureka within Humboldt County at the southern end of RCTA's service area. These services are described below.

### **Regional Providers**

#### ***Humboldt Transit Authority***

The Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) is the primary public transit provider in Humboldt County, to the south of Del Norte County. The HTA operates multiple local and intercity services within the county. In January 2024, the agency implemented the North Coast Express (NSE:101), which travels between the Eureka Transit Center and Ukiah, connecting RCTA with the Mendocino Transit Authority and the Bay Area. The idea behind the NSE:101 is to provide a missing public transit link from Smith River, California, to the Bay Area, in response to the June 2024 decision by Greyhound to terminate service along the US 101 Corridor in the North Coast. The route offers one round-trip a day, Monday through Saturday, from

Eureka to Ukiah, where HTA's NSE:101 meets MTA's NSE:101 for the final southbound leg of the trip to Santa Rosa.

### ***Curry Public Transit***

Curry Public Transit (CPT) is the public transit provider for Curry County, Oregon, Del Norte County's neighbor to the North. The CPT's Coastal Express provides intercounty service between the Cities of Smith River and North Bend, Oregon, operating three round-trips Monday through Friday. Del Norte County residents can board the Coastal Express at the United Indian Health Services bus stop in Smith River, which is the northernmost stop on RCTA's route 20. RCTA has timed its Route 20 schedule to meet with Curry Public Transit's Coastal Express four times daily, meeting in a 15-minute transfer window at the shared bus stop at United Indian Health Services.

### ***Yurok Tribe***

The Yurok Tribe operates non-emergency medical transportation, fixed route, and dial-a-ride services Monday through Friday from 6:45 AM to 6:30 PM. Its medical transportation service serves Smith River, Crescent City, Arcata, and Eureka. Its fixed route and dial-a-ride services serve Klamath, Crescent City, and the Yurok tribal lands, which extend well into Humboldt County, fronting the Klamath River. The tribe's transportation services are open to the general public and are free of charge to children under 5, elders, and veterans. General public fares are \$1.50 for a one-way trip. They also offer 5 ride passes for \$7.00, and 10 ride passes for \$14.00. Information on available services and fixed route schedules is not readily available to the general public online or at the Yurok Tribe Visitors Center.

### ***Southwest Point***

Southwest Point is part of the Oregon Point transit network, which offers a daily fixed route between Brookings and Klamath Falls with two buses operating in opposite directions. Stops are also made in Crescent City, Cave Junction, Grants Pass, Medford, and Klamath Falls. The eastbound route begins in Brookings at 10:45 AM and ends in Klamath Falls at 7:30 PM. The westbound route begins in Klamath Falls at 10:00 AM and ends in Brookings at 5:25 PM. Both routes provide ample transfer opportunities with RCTA in Crescent City, Hiouchi, and Gasquet. The current schedule requires an overnight stay for Del Norte-based passengers wishing to travel to Southern Oregon. Adult fares range from \$3 to \$52, and free transfers to RCTA are provided upon request.

## **Social Service Providers**

### ***Del Norte Senior Center***

Del Norte Senior Center has a volunteer driver program that helps connect seniors with volunteer drivers for non-emergency medical transportation or shopping trips. While still in operation, the program does not have any active volunteer drivers as of September 2024.

### ***United Indian Health Services, Inc.***

United Indian Health Services is a healthcare provider that serves registered tribal members. The organization provides non-emergency medical transport to its clients within Del Norte and Humboldt Counties. Transportation services are limited and offered on a first-come, first-served basis and must be arranged 48 hours before the appointment. Transportation can only be provided for 10 AM and 2 PM appointments; it also provides its clients with transportation to outside providers within Del Norte and Humboldt Counties.

### ***Partnership Health***

Partnership Health of California (Medi-Cal) coordinates and pays for non-emergency medical transportation and non-medical transportation to and from Medi-Cal covered appointments for Medi-Cal recipients. This organization does not provide an in-house fleet or personnel but rather contracts for transportation services with registered transportation brokers. Non-emergency medical transport can be provided by a non-emergency ambulance, gurney van, wheelchair van, passenger car, taxi, bus, train, or other public transportation. A key point to note is that there are Del Norte County residents who are unable to drive themselves to medical appointments but are not eligible for Medi-Cal. This is where RCTA's CTSA Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle Services are needed.

### **Private Providers**

#### ***Coastal Cab Company LLC***

Coastal Cab Company LLC provides on-demand taxi services between 10 AM and 10 PM Sunday through Thursday, and 10 AM to 12 AM Friday and Saturday. They are based in Crescent City and provide service primarily within Del Norte County. Rates begin at \$4.00 and increase by \$3.00 per mile traveled. They also charge for wait time at a rate of \$30.00 per hour.

#### ***Redwood Sightseeing Tours***

Redwood Sightseeing Tours offers full and half-day guided Redwood Tours departing from Crescent City from late spring through early fall. Tours make stops at many of the nearby State and National parks. Half-day tours are \$69.99 for children and \$89.99 for adults; full-day tours are \$99.99 for children and \$149.99 for adults.

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## **OUTREACH INTRODUCTION**

As part of the existing conditions analysis, LSC conducted extensive public outreach to gather information and opinions from Del Norte County residents and visitors. Those efforts included an on-board survey, an online community survey, and RCTA contract staff. An eight-member project Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was attempted to be formed to steer the project. Due to a lack of interest in participating or response from stakeholders after several attempts to foster engagement, the TAG concept was scrapped in favor of one-on-one stakeholder interviews with those interested in participating.

### **On-Board Survey Summary**

The Redwood Coast Transit Authority (RCTA) retained LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc., to prepare the 2024 Short Range Transit Plan (SRTDP). As a part of this effort, LSC conducted onboard passenger surveys on all fixed Redwood Coast Transit (RCTA) bus routes and Dial-A-Ride (DAR) trips during the time frame of September 18<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup>, 2024. During this week, trained survey staff were on board buses to distribute and collect surveys, as well as to assist passengers with taking the survey. The on-board survey period spanned from Wednesday to Saturday during the academic year. This period allowed surveyors to capture a realistic picture of the core ridership. A complete analysis of the on-board survey results is available in Appendix C.

### **Fixed Route Results**

#### ***Demographics***

Data indicates that transit-dependent groups like youth, seniors, and low-income individuals make up a large proportion of RCTA ridership and that the system primarily serves local residents.

- 22.0 percent, or 24 out of 109 participants, were under the age of 18.
- 17.4 percent, or 19 out of 109 participants, were seniors over age 65.
- 72.5 percent of participants had an income of less than \$19,999.
- 25.5 percent or 26 out of 102 participants were employed.
- 42.8 percent or 44 out of 102 participants were disabled individuals or students who qualify for the free fare program.
- 83.9 percent or 78 out of 93 participants reside in Del Norte County, and 10.8 percent or 10 out of 93 participants reside in Humboldt County.

#### ***Trip Purpose and Alternative Transportation***

Responses indicate that many participants lack alternative options for trips outside of a walkable distance.

- Shopping, Personal Errands, and Work were the most common reasons for transit trips combined, making up 53.3 percent, or 75 out of 141 responses.
- Only 10.8 percent, or 11 out of 102 participants, had access to a vehicle for their trip.

- 82.1 percent, or 92 out of 112 participants, walked to their origin stop.

### ***Transit Use***

Statistics indicate that RCTA is a primary form of transportation for many of its riders.

- 29.9 percent or 32 out of 107 participants ride RCTA daily.
- 47.7 percent or 51 out of 107 participants ride RCTA 2 to 4 days a week.

### ***Travel Patterns***

There are many common travel patterns across the ridership, indicating the most important residential communities and activity centers that RCTA provides service to.

- Routes 2 and 20 were the most commonly used routes, collectively accounting for 52.1 percent or 75 out of 144 routes utilized to complete a trip.
- Route 2 was the most transferred to route in the system, receiving 27.3 percent or 12 out of 44 reported transfers.
- The Cultural Center, Del Norte High School, and Klamath were the most frequently reported trip origins, collectively accounting for 47 percent of origin stops.
- The Cultural Center, Walmart, and Grocery Outlet were the most frequently reported destinations collectively, accounting for 35 percent of reported destination stops.

### ***Additional Transit Service Use***

Statistics indicate the importance of increasing marketing efforts around transfer opportunities and additional services.

- Only 1 participant reported that they would transfer to HTA; they were the only participant to report transferring to another transit system.
- Only 3.7 percent or 4 out of 107 participants had utilized RCTA's Airport or Medical Shuttles, while 58.9 percent or 63 out of 107 participants were not aware of these services.

### **RCTA Fixed Route Passenger Opinions**

Responses indicate that efforts to improve RCTA should focus on information technology and extending hours of service.

### ***Overall Satisfaction***

- 53.9 percent or 55 out of 102 participants rated their overall satisfaction with RCTA services as 5 out of 5 "excellent".
- Only 3 percent or 3 out of 102 participants rated their overall satisfaction with RCTA services as "very poor" or "poor".

These figures indicate that most participants are satisfied with the services provided by RCTA.

### ***Ranking***

- Value of fares, friendliness of drivers, and safety on the bus were the categories most frequently ranked excellent.

- Availability of Information, real-time bus Info, and hours of operation were the categories most frequently ranked as very poor.

### ***Comments / Suggestions***

Common themes in the write-in response portion of the survey were:

- Gratitude for the staff and services that RCTA provides.
- Desire for improved bus stop amenities.
- Requests for increased stops and routes.
- Adjustments to RCTA policies.
- Negative customer service experiences with RCTA staff.

### **RCTA DAR Results**

A modified version of the survey, which was distributed on RCTA fixed routes, was also distributed on board RCTA Dial-a-Ride (DAR). Trip responses were recorded on September 20<sup>th</sup>. The primary difference between the surveys was the change of some logistical questions that do not apply to both services; for example, “Where did you board this bus?” was replaced with “What was your reservation time for this ride?”. The DAR survey in total contained 17 questions and a write-in comments suggestion section, provided in English on the front and Spanish on the back. In total, the survey received 9 responses, all of which were in English. DAR passengers qualify for the service because of a disability that prevents them from utilizing RCTA fixed routes; therefore, survey staff were onboard to assist. A complete analysis of DAR survey results is available in Appendix C, following the fixed route results.

### ***Demographics***

- 4 out of 8 participants were over 60, and 1 out of 8 were under 18.
- Only 3 participants provided their income, all selected the lowest category \$0-\$19,999.

### ***Transit Use***

- 7 out of 9 participants reported using RCTA DAR more than once a week.
- 1 out of 6 had used RCTA’s airport or medical shuttle; only 1 out of 6 was not aware of these services.

### ***DAR Passenger Opinions***

- Overall Satisfaction was ranked Excellent by 8 out of 8 participants.
- Ease of Scheduling was the only category ranked Fair by any participants.
- 3 out of 6 participants wished to reach destinations outside of the existing DAR zone, 2 wished to go to Brookings, and one wished to go to “SF”.

### **Boarding and Alighting**

During the onboard survey, LSC survey staff recorded boarding and alighting information for all stops for all fixed route stops throughout the RCTA system, as well as the time of departure from fixed route

stops, and the time of arrival at the Cultural Center Transit Hub. A full analysis of boarding and alighting results is provided in Appendix D.

- Similar to the survey participant data, boarding and alighting data showed that the Cultural Center, Del Norte High School, and Walmart were the top boarding locations.
- The RCTA system had on-time performance during the three-day survey effort due to both early and late departures from stops, especially for routes 2,4, and 20. This appears to have been an isolated issue with on-board technology recording stronger on-time performance over the summer of 2025.

### **Driver and Stakeholder Interviews**

As part of the outreach effort, RCTA contract staff and community organization stakeholders were provided the opportunity to participate in short interviews to provide their input into the SRTDP process. Staff interviews were conducted in person, and confidentiality was safeguarded. Additional community organization stakeholder interviews took place over the phone. An in-depth report on interview efforts is available in Appendix E

### ***Contract Staff Interview Findings***

- DAR scheduling software and radio communication technologies may need to be upgraded.
- Bus stop improvements like clear signage, route, and schedule information would help passengers and drivers alike.
- Unauthorized occupancy of bus shelters and bad behavior on buses put added pressure on contract staff.
- Several specific operational difficulties for bus maneuvering and on-time performance were identified.
- Contract staff have expressed that their pay rates have remained stagnant while inflation has caused the cost of living to rise dramatically. This perception may not be entirely accurate, as RCTA staff have experienced salary increases ranging from 50 to 100 percent over the past five years.

### ***Community Stakeholder Interview Findings***

- Many of the important destinations for residents and visitors alike are served by RCTA.
- Unauthorized long-term occupancy of bus shelters is a major issue and reduces the implementation and availability of these needed shelters, given Del Norte's harsh climate.
- The soon-to-be-built new transit center has the potential to increase RCTA ridership, tourism, and improve bus stop safety at the location.
- Collaboration with the Yurok Tribe and coordination with the Yurok Tribe Transit system should be considered wherever possible to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize available services.

## **Community Survey**

An online community survey was provided to allow the public who wished to provide RCTA feedback on the SRTDP process. The survey remained available online from August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024, to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The survey contained 26 possible questions and garnered a total of 48 responses. A detailed report of the community survey results with graphics is available in Appendix F.

### ***Demographics***

Community survey demographic data paints the picture that participants of the online survey had a very different background and are much less transit-dependent than most participants in the onboard survey.

- Working-age adults between the ages of 25 and 64 made up 81 percent of responses, those over 65 comprised 12.5 percent of responses, and only one person under the age of 18 participated. This survey captured fewer youth and senior participants than did the onboard survey.
- The income of those who participated in the online survey was much higher than the onboard survey, with \$75,000 or more being the most frequent answer choice, a stark contrast with the onboard survey, in which \$0 – \$19,999 was the most frequent answer choice.
- Occupations in healthcare and white-collar jobs were the most reported, though a majority of participants were retired.
- 87.5 percent of participants lived in a household with others, but only 25 percent had someone in their household who was mobility impaired.
- Only 3 out of 31 participants did not have an operational vehicle for their household, while 19 out of 31 had 2 or more vehicles for their household.

### ***Public Transit Use***

Community survey participants use RCTA services much less frequently than their onboard counterparts and use the services more frequently for recreational and social outings. Common themes between the two surveys include the use of RCTA services for shopping trips and high utilization of routes 2 and 20.

- 58.33 percent or 28 out of 48 respondents reported that they did not use public transit. 22 out of the 28 did not ride transit because they had alternative means of transportation. Other frequent answer choices that drew 3 responses each were lack of knowledge about RCTA services, and that RCTA does not offer services during the times that participants wished to travel.
- The three most commonly used public transit services used by participants were RCTA fixed routes, Redwood Transit System (RTS) in Humboldt County, and Amtrak. RCTA currently offers connectivity with RTS and Amtrak routes in Eureka. Amtrak has been reducing services in the region in recent times, creating gaps in the transit system. This highlights the importance of RCTA's ongoing efforts to coordinate with other regional providers to maintain transit connectivity.

- The most commonly used RCTA route among survey participants was Route 20, followed by the Crescent City local routes 1, 2, and 3.
- Most participants were occasional transit users, a stark contrast from the onboard survey, where most participants used transit very frequently. This suggests that community survey participants are less dependent on the organization's services to meet their transportation needs.
- Medical appointments and shopping trips were the most common purposes for transit trips among participants. Recreation and social activities were other popular answer choices. Shopping was the most popular answer choice in the onboard survey as well, which indicates that access to shopping opportunities should be prioritized when considering adjustments in RCTA services.
- Reported transit use on weekdays was much more widespread than on weekends, which aligns with RCTA's current ridership statistics and indicates that service levels on weekdays should take priority over weekend service levels.

### *Desired Trips*

Responses are in line with the other findings throughout the outreach process, indicating that RCTA's existing services function well. Priorities for improvement are bus stop amenities and expanding the community's knowledge of RCTA's existing services.

- Responses were split down the middle, with 50 percent or 20 out of 40 people reporting that there were destinations that they wished to reach with public transit but could not with existing services.
- Places that people wanted to go included:
  - Medford Airport
  - Brookings
  - Arcata
  - Smith River
  - Redwood's State Park Hiking Areas

Most of the trips that participants requested are currently accessible via public transit, but some require transfers to other providers like Curry Transit or SW Point, suggesting knowledge about regional public transit options is limited. It could be possible that the times that these services are provided are not convenient for riders, but most responses said they would like to make the trip in the morning and afternoon, with Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays being the most frequently reported days for these trips. All these times and days are within RCTA's current scope of operations. The most common purposes for these trips were recreation and social activities, highlighting that these are unmet transit wants, rather than needs.

## ***Ranking***

Participants were asked to rank a variety of statements on a 5-choice scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”.

- 31 out of 33 participants strongly agreed that RCTA is an important community service.
- Answers were across the board in response to the Cultural Center Transit Hub being adequate; the most common response was “no opinion”.
- Most participants “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they would be interested in an RCTA route to Medford.
- Some participants “strongly agreed” or “agreed” (13 out of 32) that they would ride more if bus stop seating were more abundant, but most had “no opinion” (14 out of 32).
- Over half “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that “I would ride more if RCTA staff were available at the Cultural Center Transit Hub”; notably, it was the only question to receive no response of “strongly disagree”.
- Answers were across the board as to Zero Emission Buses increasing transit use; most participants had “no opinion” 11 out of 33, 10 were in some form of agreement, and 11 were in disagreement, with 9 of those “strongly disagreeing”.

These ranking answers indicate that community members see value in RCTA’s services even if they do not personally use them, and that exploring expanded RCTA access to Medford is worthwhile and is the greatest potential improvement to be well-received by all community groups.

## ***Open-Ended Response***

Participants were also provided with the opportunity to write in any suggestions or comments they might have for RCTA. In total, 15 descriptive responses were provided. Common themes are provided below.

- Bus Stop Improvements, namely shelters and seating.
- Improved information accessibility, like posting routes and schedules at stops.
- Increased Route 20 frequency.
- Increased access to Medford, specifically the airport.
- Increased evening and weekend service.
- Extra help from RCTA staff for disabled individuals.
- Improved on-time performance and more seamless transfers between local routes.



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## RECENT TRANSIT OPERATIONS AND PERFORMANCE

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### RCTA OPERATIONS

#### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, RCTA's recent operational and financial histories are discussed, revealing the clear impacts of the pandemic on RCTA as well as the evident recovery of ridership post-pandemic. The operations data is then used to conduct a performance assessment of the RCTA system-wide, as well as by service.

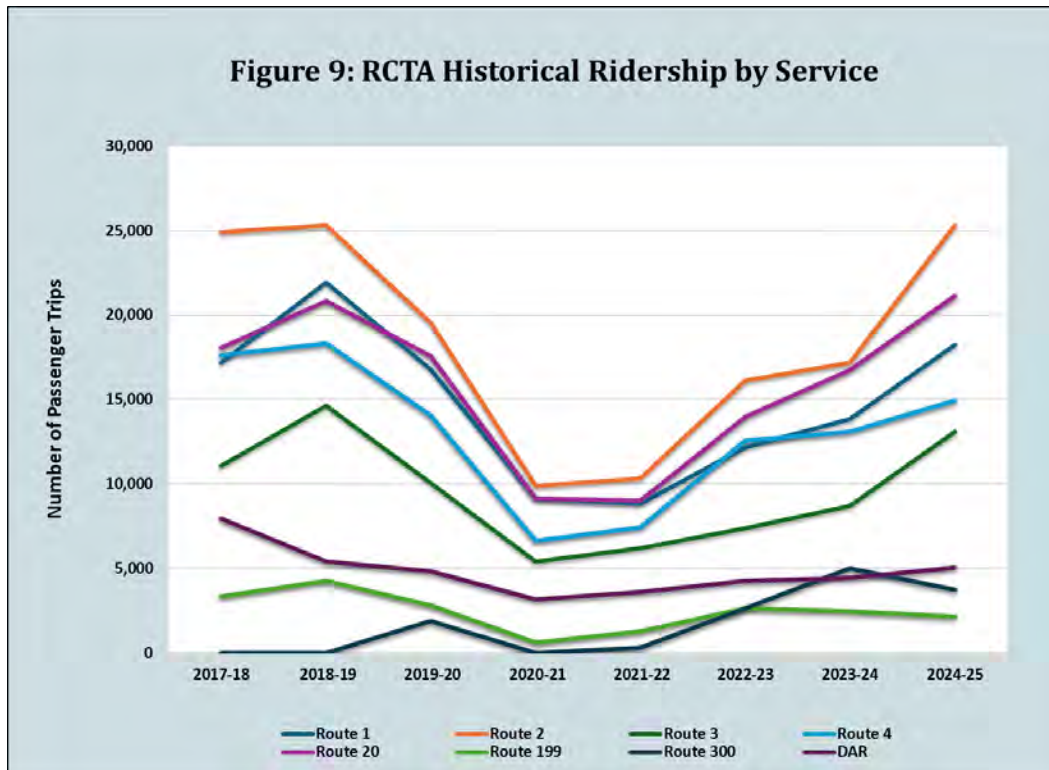
#### Ridership

##### *Annual Ridership*

Much like other transit systems, RCTA's ridership was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As seen in Figure 9, RCTA had been carrying upwards of 100,000 passenger-trips annually prior to the pandemic. The pandemic began in March 2020, causing Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20 ridership to decrease by 21 percent over the previous FY as people were forced to stay home and social distance (Table 11). Ridership then decreased another 50 percent from FY 2019-20 to FY 2020-21, reflecting the continuing impacts of the pandemic on activities that normally drive transit use, such as work, school, recreational travel, and medical appointments.

As pandemic restrictions began to lift in FY 2021-22, RCTA ridership began to slowly rebound, increasing 7 percent over the previous year. FY 2024-25 ridership levels were 138 percent greater than FY 2020-21, approaching pre-pandemic FY 2018-19 performance. This remarkable recovery indicates the continued importance of RCTA to local residents and visitors alike.

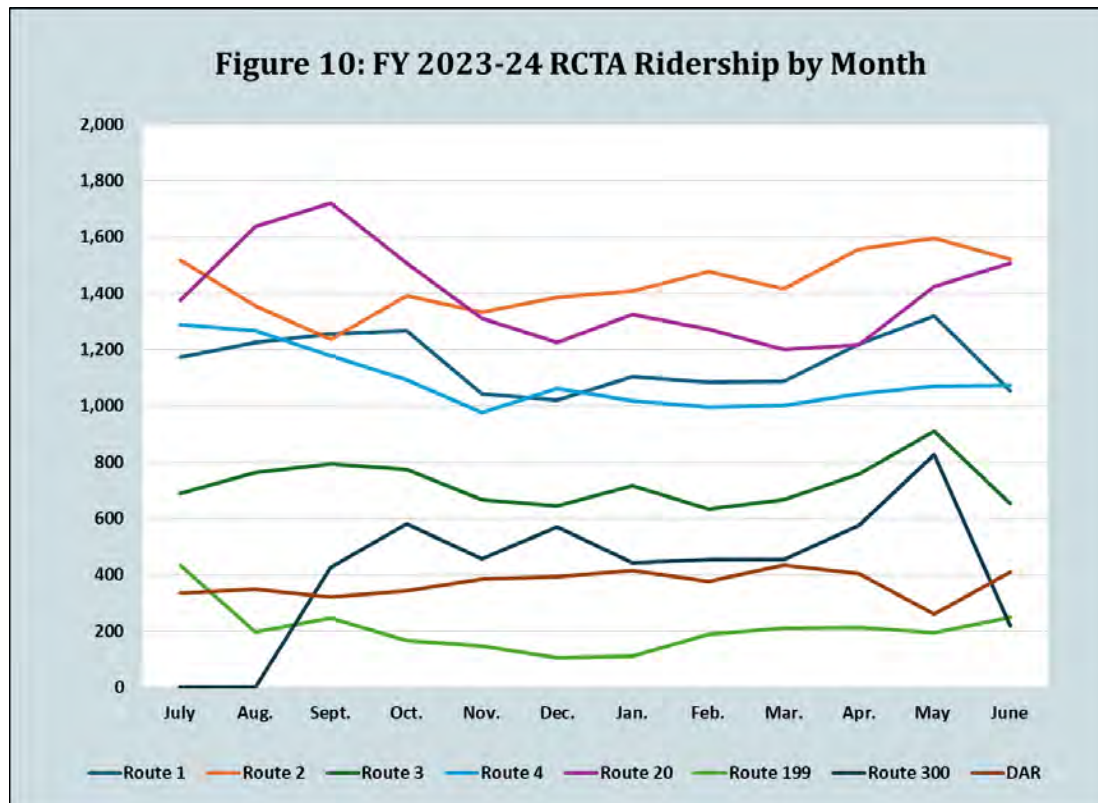
Ridership by service information is shown in both Figure 9 and Table 11. While RCTA has been experiencing a rebound in ridership as a whole, Figure 9 shows that not all routes have seen the same relative return of ridership, but all are demonstrating strong recovery. In terms of raw ridership numbers, Routes 1,2, and 20 are the highest-performing routes, and Routes 3 and 199 are the lowest-performing routes. Concerning post-pandemic recovery rates, Routes 2,3,199, and 300 were the fastest to regain ridership from their pandemic lows.



Routes <sup>1</sup>	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Change (2020-21 to 2023-24)	
									#	%
Route 1	17,154	21,942	16,797	9,121	8,810	12,181	13,853	18,225	9,104	100%
Route 2	24,922	25,293	19,567	9,899	10,306	16,099	17,192	25,296	15,397	156%
Route 3	11,069	14,629	10,064	5,385	6,170	7,370	8,672	13,084	7,699	143%
Route 4	17,606	18,306	14,031	6,614	7,414	12,560	13,066	14,913	8,299	125%
Route 20	18,045	20,817	17,550	9,113	9,000	13,944	16,720	21,127	12,014	132%
Route 199	3,318	4,264	2,822	599	1,274	2,606	2,467	2,130	1,531	256%
Route 300 <sup>1</sup>	--	--	1,880	--	287	2,641	5,009	3,743	3,456	1204%
<b>Fixed Route Subtotal</b>	<b>92,114</b>	<b>105,251</b>	<b>82,711</b>	<b>40,731</b>	<b>43,261</b>	<b>67,401</b>	<b>76,979</b>	<b>98,518</b>	<b>57,787</b>	<b>142%</b>
DAR	7,948	5,396	4,814	3,153	3,595	4,260	4,428	5,033	1,880	60%
<b>Total Systemwide</b>	<b>100,062</b>	<b>110,847</b>	<b>88,188</b>	<b>43,891</b>	<b>46,856</b>	<b>71,661</b>	<b>81,407</b>	<b>103,551</b>	<b>59,660</b>	<b>136%</b>
Source: RCTA										
Note 1: Route 300 was suspended in FY 2020-21, percent change based on 2021-23 to 2023-24										
Note 2: FY 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 Totals include a small number of CTSA special event trips which have not been included in the table.										

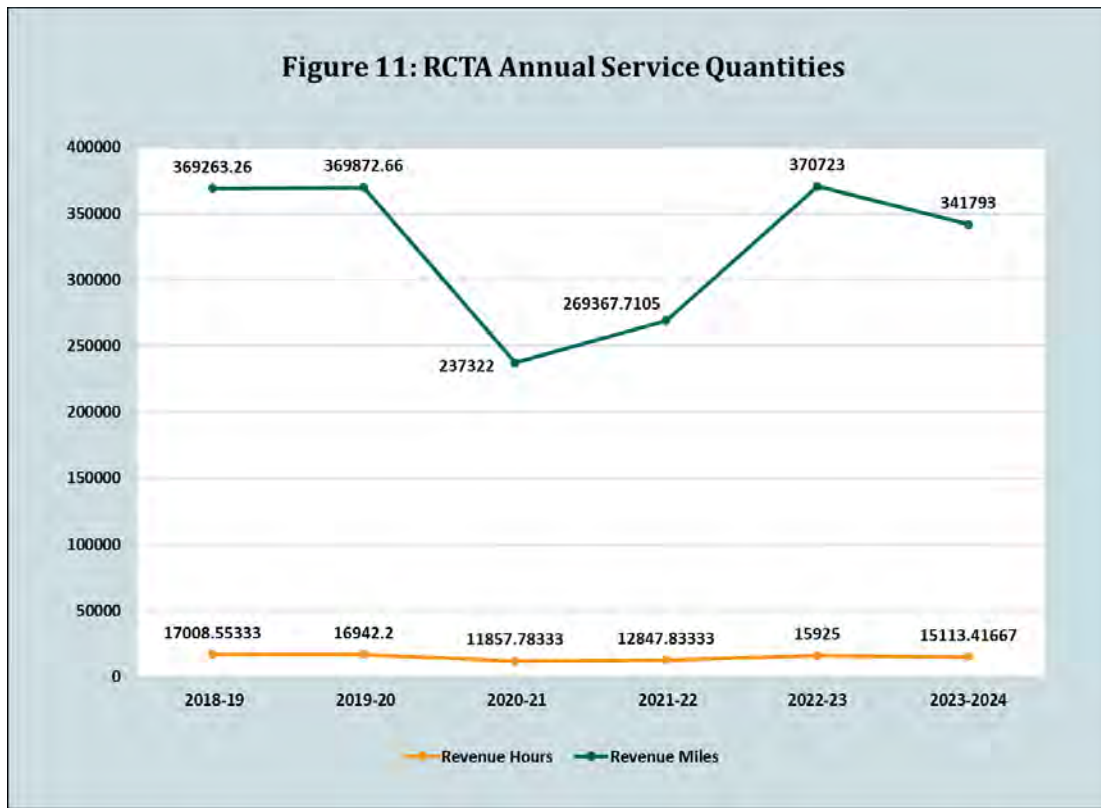
### **Ridership by Month**

Many transit systems experience fluctuations in ridership throughout the year, especially in communities that have a seasonal tourism industry or high school ridership. (Figure 10) depicts RCTA monthly ridership by route for FY 2023-24. While monthly ridership totals fluctuated throughout the year, the figure also shows an obvious upward trend during the warmer months and lower ridership during the cooler months. RCTA expands its Intercity services Route 20 and 199 between May 28<sup>th</sup> and September 28<sup>th</sup>; these routes provide access to numerous State and National Parks, and increased transportation opportunities for local workers during the May-September tourism season.



### **Vehicle Service Miles and Hours**

In recent years, RCTA's service levels have been impacted by schedule changes due to the pandemic (Figure 11). RCTA operated 36 percent fewer vehicle service miles and 30 percent fewer vehicle service hours in FY 2020-21 compared to FY 2018-19 due to widespread schedule reductions during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the last five years, service levels were highest in FY 2022-23, when RCTA expanded its service quantities by 24 percent, by extending its summer schedule, which offers mid-day intercity trips throughout the winter as well as restoring the Route 300 PM school tripper. Despite the 23 percent increase in service mileage between 2021-22 and 2022-23, service hours only increased by 13 percent. In FY 2023-24, RTA reduced service miles by 5 percent and hours by 8 percent by reducing service on intercity Routes 20 and 199 during the winter months, as it had in years prior.



## RCTA FINANCIAL REVIEW

The sustainability of transit services is dependent on the balance between revenues and costs. RCTA's budget is reviewed in this section, and then a cost model is developed to analyze performance by service.

### Revenue Sources

RCTA's operating and capital revenues are presented in Table 12. Local revenue sources include fares and advertising. Local revenues were the most substantially impacted by ridership declines during the pandemic. RCTA received only 6.2 percent of its total operating revenues from fares in FY 2024-25.

A large proportion of RCTA's operating revenues comes from state sources (\$2.7 million or 37 percent). State funding has also been the most rapidly increasing revenue category over the last three years, increasing by 100 percent from FY 2022-23 to FY 2024-25. State transit funding in CA is primarily derived from two sources of formula funding, both of which are generated by provisions of the Transit Development Act (TDA): the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) (sales tax) and State Transit Assistance (STA) funds (fuel tax).

Another state funding source is the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP). LCTOP funds are grant awards intended to provide operational and capital assistance to transit agencies for projects that will ultimately lower greenhouse gas emissions, with a focus on helping disadvantaged communities. In FY 2024-25 and beyond, RCTA plans to use its allocation of LCTOP funds to continue to fund its subsidized fare program for students and veterans.

Revenues from federal sources such as Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants and the Coronavirus Air, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Acts represent 38 percent of RCTA’s operating revenues. These funding sources are available for both operations and capital needs. In total, RCTA will receive about \$2.5 million in COVID-19 relief funds, which are reimbursement-based and only a portion of which can be claimed each fiscal year. The organization expects that its remaining COVID-19 reimbursement funds will last 3 more full years and one additional year of partial reimbursement amount. Overall, federal revenues are expected to increase by 28 percent in FY 2024-25 from FY 2023-24, due to increased public transit funding announced by the U.S. Department of Transportation in April 2024.

**Table 12: RCTA Revenues**

RCTA Revenues	Fiscal Years			
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Adopted Budget	Amended Budget #1	Adopted Budget	Adopted Budget
<b>Local Transportation Revenues</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>	<b>\$117,431</b>	<b>\$177,431</b>	<b>\$197,431</b>
Passenger Fares	\$55,000	\$75,000	\$120,000	\$132,000
5311(f) Route 20 Passenger Fares	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$40,000	\$48,000
Auxiliary Transportation (Advertising) Revenue	\$10,000	\$17,431	\$17,431	\$17,431
<b>Local Cash Grants &amp; Reimbursements</b>	<b>\$955,212</b>	<b>\$873,828</b>	<b>\$741,396</b>	<b>\$795,243</b>
TDA Article 4 Local Transportation Fund	\$955,212	\$873,828	\$741,396	\$795,243
TDA Article 4.5 LTF CTSA (see Fund 691)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>State Cash Grants &amp; Reimbursements</b>	<b>\$797,948</b>	<b>\$1,237,905</b>	<b>\$1,386,347</b>	<b>\$1,106,407</b>
State Transit Assistance	\$265,609	\$401,756	\$508,196	\$388,829
Proposition 1B PTMISEA (carryover balance)	\$243,000	\$243,000	\$75,000	\$0
SB-1 State of Good Repair (bus stops fund balance)	\$64,506	\$83,028	\$86,000	\$40,000
SB-1 State of Good Repair (bus replace fund balance)	\$43,487	\$90,081	\$136,595	\$183,919
Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP)	\$15,000	\$80,000	\$101,500	\$86,632
LCTOP (Capital - Electric Bus)	\$166,346	\$114,792	\$185,056	\$185,056
VW Settlement Fund Capital (electric bus purchase)	\$0	\$160,000	\$160,000	\$160,000
Caltrans Sustainable Communities (SRTP Planning)	\$0	\$28,248	\$134,000	\$61,971
TIRCP Funding - Transit Intercity Rail Cap Projects	\$0	\$37,000	\$0	\$0
<b>Federal Cash Grants and Reimbursements</b>	<b>\$888,014</b>	<b>\$836,955</b>	<b>\$954,998</b>	<b>\$954,998</b>
Section 5311- Operating	\$233,780	\$233,780	\$254,998	\$254,998
Section 5311 - CARES Act/CRRSSA COVID Operating	\$374,264	\$383,175	\$400,000	\$400,000
Section 5311-F Operating	\$279,970	\$220,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
<b>Federal FTA Capital Funds</b>	<b>\$446,116</b>	<b>\$537,845</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>	<b>\$1,274,478</b>
Section 5339 Capital (formula + discretionary)	\$260,000	\$426,000	\$800,000	\$1,274,478
Section 5310 Capital (discretionary)	\$186,116	\$111,845	\$0	\$0
TDA Reserves Allocation to Operating	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$3,177,290</b>	<b>\$3,603,964</b>	<b>\$4,060,172</b>	<b>\$4,328,557</b>
<b>Total Operations Revenue</b>	<b>\$2,213,835</b>	<b>\$2,309,970</b>	<b>\$2,483,521</b>	<b>\$2,423,133</b>
<b>Total Capital Revenue</b>	<b>\$963,455</b>	<b>\$1,293,994</b>	<b>\$1,576,651</b>	<b>\$1,905,424</b>

Source: RCTA FY 23/24 Preliminary Budget

## Expenses and Cost Allocation

Over the last three years, RCTA’s operating budget has grown from \$1.85 to \$2.14 million, representing a 16 percent increase (Table 13). The increase has been in part due to the high rates of inflation experienced in recent years, particularly for its operations contracts and fuel. It is important to note, while viewing Table 13, that in past years the operations and management contract for local fixed routes included Dial-a-Ride services. In FY 2024/25, Dial-a-Ride operations and management were a separate line item in the RCTA budget, but rates were contained in the overall RCTA Operations & Maintenance contract.

**Table 13: RCTA Operating Expenses**

RCTA Expenses	Fiscal Years			
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Adopted Budget	Amended Budget #1	Adopted Budget	Adopted Budget
Communications (SIM cards, AVL/CAD fees, support)	\$6,000	\$48,000	\$60,000	\$62,000
Maintenance - Buses and Shelters	\$36,400	\$37,492	\$37,492	\$0
Maintenance - Structure/Improvements/Grounds Williams Drive			\$5,000	\$5,000
Memberships & Dues & Travel	\$1,030	\$1,030	\$1,030	\$2,800
Printing	\$3,090	\$206	\$206	\$200
Accounting Services and Audits	\$14,270	\$18,540	\$20,000	\$19,000
Marketing & Planning Expenses	\$20,600	\$17,000	\$19,000	\$15,000
Legal Services	\$5,150	\$13,000	\$29,000	\$25,000
Vehicle Maintenance Upgrades	\$40,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Management Contract	\$78,034	\$73,050	\$86,000	\$86,000
O&M Contract - Local Fixed Route	\$968,034	\$572,391	\$720,000	\$700,000
O&M Contract - Dial A Ride	\$0	\$0	\$240,000	\$275,000
O & M Contract - Smith River/ Arcata Intercity Route	\$446,489	\$467,341	\$750,000	\$625,000
Advertising, Brochures, Printing	\$15,450	\$7,146	\$20,000	\$20,000
Misc Dept Services (Website, GTFS, Alarm Svcs)	\$5,150	\$1,701	\$10,000	\$12,000
Fuel	\$80,000	\$77,869	\$120,000	\$100,000
Fuel - Smith River/Arcata Intercity Route	\$90,000	\$87,601	\$120,000	\$100,000
Lease Expense	\$37,080	\$22,289	\$38,192	\$62,508
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$1,850,382</b>	<b>\$1,388,119</b>	<b>\$2,143,451</b>	<b>\$2,109,508</b>

The top annual expense for RCTA is its operations and maintenance contracts. In the last three fiscal years, contracts for management, operations, and maintenance have averaged 79 percent of RCTA's annual operating expenses. Fuel is another significant expense. RCTA's fuel costs in FY 2024/25 are expected to be 12 percent of RCTA's operating expenses in FY 2024-25. Systemwide fuel costs have risen sharply by 51 percent in the last three years, before abating somewhat in FY 2024-25.

To develop a cost model for FY 2023-24, each RCTA budgeted operating expense was allocated to the service quantity (VSHs or VSMs) upon which it is most dependent. The costs, not dependent on service levels, such as printing or legal counsel, were designated as fixed costs. The cost model divided these costs by the actual annual service quantity levels for FY 2023-24. Table 14 details how the cost model was developed, with the resulting formula being:

$$\text{FY 2023-24 RCTA Operating Cost Model} = \$44.80 \times \text{annual vehicle service hours} + \\ \$0.76 \times \text{annual vehicle service miles} + \\ \$1,219,656 \text{ in fixed costs}$$

The cost model is used to calculate the marginal and fully allocated operating costs of each RCTA service in Table 15.



**Table 14: RCTA FY 2023-24 Operating/Admin. Cost Model**

Expense Category <sup>1</sup>	FY 23/24	Variable		
		Hour	Mile	Fixed <sup>2</sup>
Communications (SIM cards, AVL/CAD fees, support)	\$48,000			\$48,000
Maintenance - Buses and Shelters	\$37,492			\$37,492
Memberships & Dues	\$1,030			\$1,030
Printing	\$206			\$206
Short Range Transit Plan Expenses	\$28,248			\$28,248
Misc Dept Services (website, GTFS, Alarm Svcs)	\$8,240			\$8,240
Management Contract	\$93,000			\$93,000
Accounting Services and Audits	\$18,540			\$18,540
Legal Services	\$13,000			\$13,000
Marketing & Planning Expenses	\$17,000			\$17,000
O&M Contract - Local Fixed Route	\$790,686	\$341,269		\$449,417
O&M Contract - Smith River/ Arcata Intercity Route	\$627,560	\$270,862		\$356,698
O&M Contract - Dial A Ride	\$150,588	\$64,995		\$85,593
Advertising, Brochures, Printing	\$20,000			\$20,000
Special Dept Expenses (CalACT Coop Purchase Fees)	\$5,000			\$5,000
Fuel	\$130,000		\$130,000	
Fuel - Smith River/Arcata Intercity Route	\$130,000		\$130,000	
Lease Expense	\$38,192			\$38,192
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,156,782</b>	<b>\$677,126</b>	<b>\$260,000</b>	<b>\$1,219,656</b>
Annual Service Quantity		15,113	341,793	
<b>Cost per Unit by Variable (Cost Model)</b>		<b>\$44.80</b>	<b>\$0.76</b>	
Source: RCTA				
Note 1: Expenses based on 2023-24 RCTA Amended Budget #1.				
Note 2: O&M Contract fixed cost allocated based on the percentage of total O&M Contract expense.				

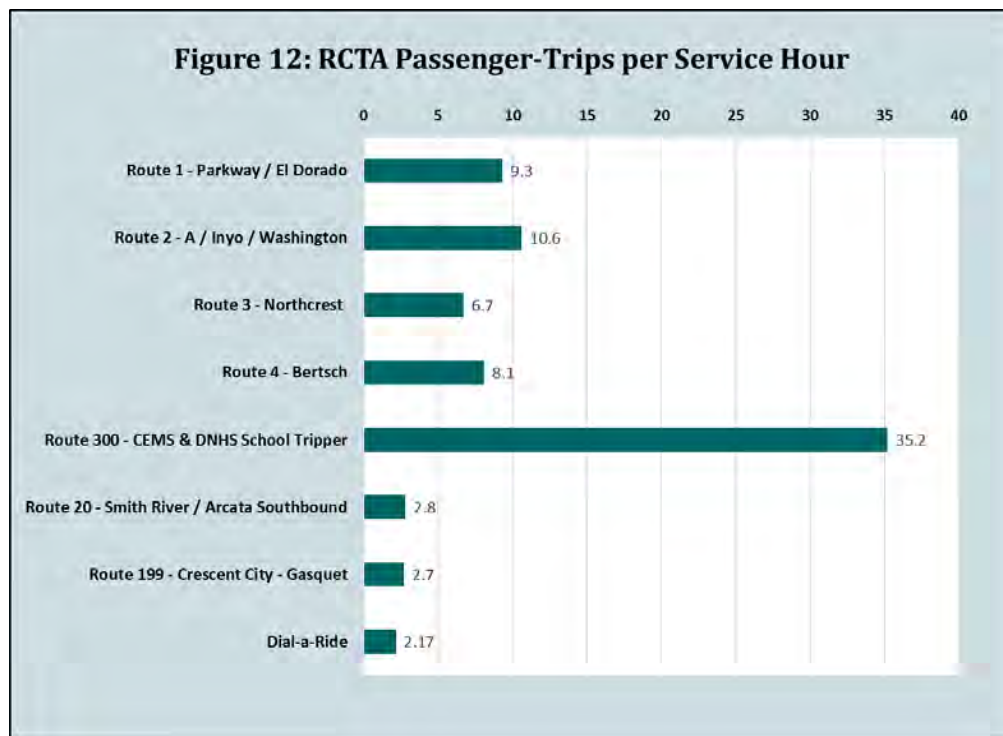
## RCTA PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

To analyze RCTA's performance for FY 2023-24, the cost model was applied to operations data to calculate metrics such as passenger-trips per hour and subsidy per passenger-trip. The performance analysis is presented in Table 15 and Figures 12 through 17.

Table 15: RCTA Service Parameters FY 2023-24													
Routes	Service Parameters							Service Performance					
	Passenger- Trips	Service Hours	Service Miles	Fully Allocated Operating Cost	Marginal Operating Cost <sup>1</sup>	Cash Fare Revenue	Total Fare Revenue	Passengers per...		Operating Cost per Passenger- Trip	Operating Subsidy per Passenger- Trip	Operating Cost per Service Hour	Farebox Ratio <sup>2</sup>
								Hour	Mile				
<b>Local Routes Total</b>	<b>57,792</b>	<b>6,154</b>	<b>90,844</b>	<b>\$841,470</b>	<b>\$344,829</b>	<b>\$10,923</b>	<b>\$28,843</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>\$14.56</b>	<b>\$14.06</b>	<b>\$136.73</b>	<b>3.4%</b>
Route 1 - Parkway / El Dorado	13,853	1,484	20,633	\$201,879	\$82,161	\$2,730	\$7,208	9.3	0.67	\$14.57	\$14.05	\$136.08	3.6%
Route 2 - A / Inyo / Washington	17,192	1,620	23,628	\$221,291	\$90,555	\$3,352	\$8,850	10.6	0.73	\$12.87	\$12.36	\$136.60	4.0%
Route 3 - Northcrest	8,672	1,291	20,141	\$177,402	\$73,182	\$1,785	\$4,713	6.7	0.43	\$20.46	\$19.91	\$137.37	2.7%
Route 4 - Bertsch	13,066	1,617	24,616	\$221,660	\$91,170	\$2,847	\$7,518	8.1	0.53	\$16.96	\$16.39	\$137.08	3.4%
Route 300 - CEMS & DNHS School Tripper	5,009	142	1,826	\$19,238	\$7,761	\$210	\$554	35.2	2.74	\$3.84	\$3.73	\$135.27	2.9%
<b>Intercity Routes Total</b>	<b>19,187</b>	<b>6,883</b>	<b>225,196</b>	<b>\$1,035,200</b>	<b>\$479,704</b>	<b>\$25,560</b>	<b>\$67,493</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>\$53.95</b>	<b>\$50.44</b>	<b>\$150.39</b>	<b>6.5%</b>
Route 20 - Smith River / Arcata Southbound	16,720	5,976	198,399	\$900,884	\$418,648	\$24,575	\$64,892	2.8	0.08	\$53.88	\$50.00	\$150.76	7.2%
Route 199 - Crescent City - Gasquet	2,467	908	26,797	\$134,316	\$61,056	\$985	\$2,601	2.7	0.09	\$54.45	\$53.39	\$147.96	1.9%
<b>Fixed Route Total</b>	<b>76,979</b>	<b>13,038</b>	<b>316,040</b>	<b>\$1,876,670</b>	<b>\$824,533</b>	<b>\$36,483</b>	<b>\$96,336</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>\$24.38</b>	<b>\$23.13</b>	<b>\$143.94</b>	<b>5.1%</b>
Dial-a-Ride	4,428	2,044	25,331	\$275,802	\$110,848	\$3,281	\$8,664	2.2	0.17	\$62.29	\$60.33	\$134.93	3.1%
Special <sup>3</sup>	--	32	422	\$4,310	\$1,745	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>RCT Total</b>	<b>81,407</b>	<b>15,113</b>	<b>341,793</b>	<b>\$2,156,782</b>	<b>\$935,381</b>	<b>\$39,764</b>	<b>\$105,000</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>\$26.49</b>	<b>\$25.20</b>	<b>\$142.71</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
<i>Sources: RCTA, LSC</i> <i>Note 1: Marginal operating costs are based on the calculations shown in Table 16 and do not include fixed costs.</i> <i>ballpark estimation of route level fares and farebox ratio for the purposes of this report. Advertising and LCTOP funding for the free rides program is not included.</i> <i>Note 3: Special represents CTSA special event</i>													

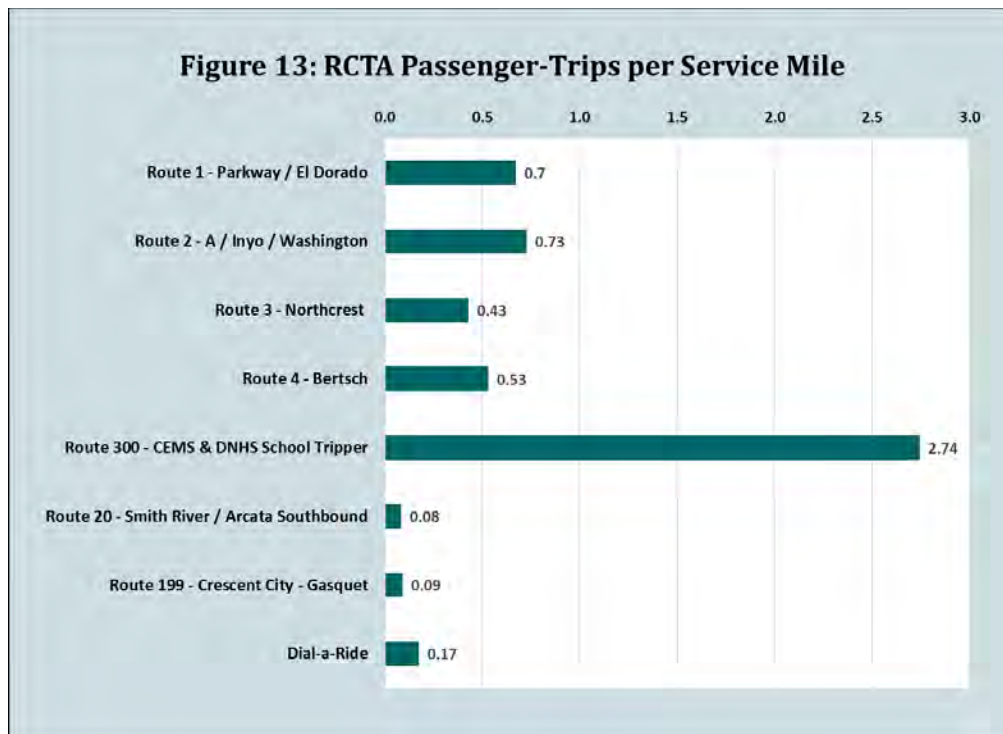
## Passenger-Trips Per Hour

The relative productivity of a transit service can be assessed by calculating the average number of passenger-trips completed per vehicle service hour. Route-level performance is shown in Figure 12. Based on this metric, the most productive RCTA service in FY 2023-24 is Route 300, a local school tripper route that only runs one half-hour trip per day with high ridership that carried 35.2 passenger-trips per hour on average in FY 2023-24 (Figure 12). Other routes that carried high numbers of passengers per hour include Route 2 (10.6 passenger-trips per hour), Route 1 (8.7 passenger-trips per hour), and Route 4 (8.1 passenger-trips per hour). The lowest-performing local route was Route 3, which carried (6.7 passenger-trips per hour). Intercity routes performed worse than local routes, which is typical of a service that travels such long distances. Route 20 carried (2.8 passenger-trips per hour), and route 199 carried (2.7 passengers per hour). The DAR services carried an average of 2.2 passenger-trips per hour in FY 2022-23, which is standard for paratransit services.



## Passenger-Trips per Mile

The number of passenger-trips carried per vehicle service mile is another indicator of transit productivity route level performance is shown in Figure 13. Low mileage services, such as the local routes, tend to carry more passenger-trips per mile compared to high mileage services, such as the intercity routes (Figure 13). On average, the local routes carried 1.02 (passengers per mile) in FY 2023-24. The short-run and high ridership route 300 heavily skews the local route average upwards; it carried the most passengers per mile out of any fixed route (2.74 passenger-trips per mile) (Figure 13). The intercounty routes carried an average of 0.09 (passengers per mile), which is significantly lower than local routes but usual considering the longer distances between stops on these routes.



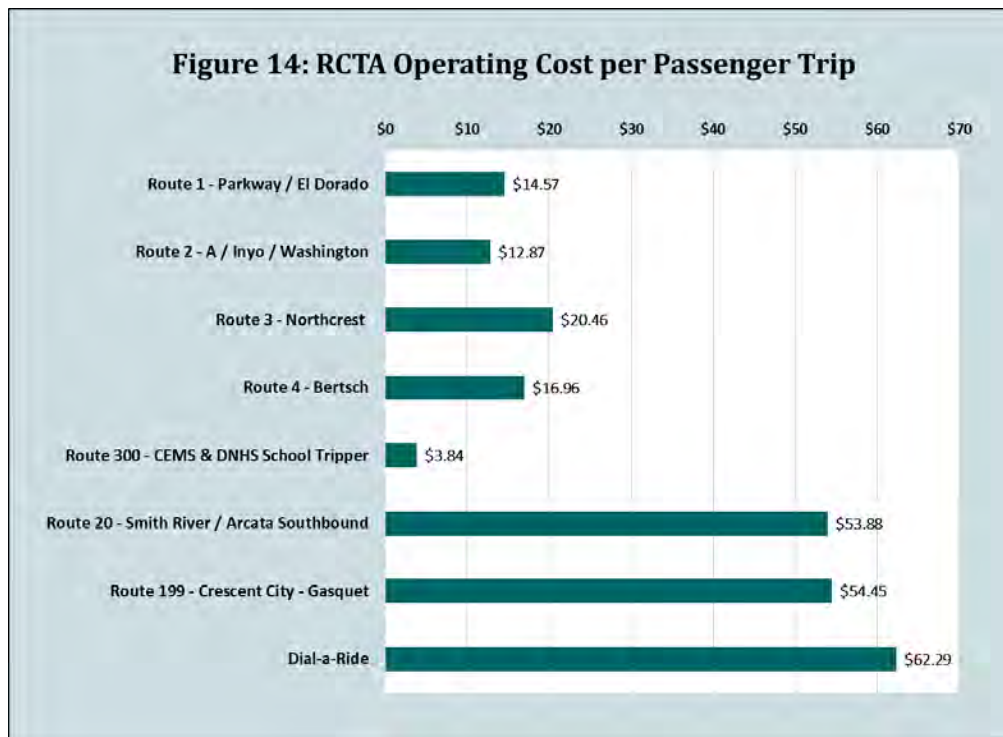
### Operating Cost per Passenger-Trip

One of the metrics monitored by RCTA is the operating cost per passenger-trip route; performance is shown in Figure 14.

The operating cost per passenger-trip includes not only direct operating costs such as operations and maintenance contracts and fuel, but also the other fixed costs included in Tables 13 and 14, such as management, communications, marketing, and legal counsel, etc. The additional costs are allocated to each route based on the proportion of the total systemwide vehicle service hours operated by said service.

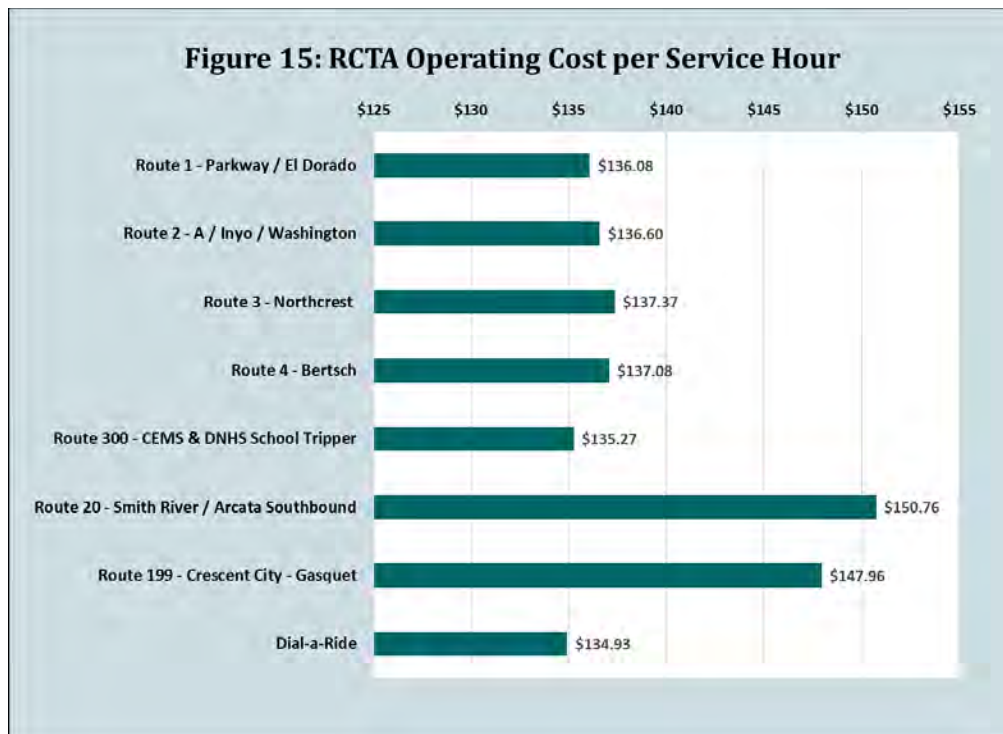
Systemwide, the operating cost per passenger-trip in FY 2023-24 was \$26.49. The lowest average operating cost per passenger-trip was seen on the local routes (\$14.37). Route 300 had the lowest cost per passenger-trip of any RCTA local route (\$3.80), but Route 3 had a significantly higher cost per passenger-trip (\$20.25).

Operating cost per passenger-trip was higher on the intercity services (\$52.62). This trend is largely due to the longer distances operated by the intercity routes. DAR service had an average operating cost of \$62.29 per passenger-trip.



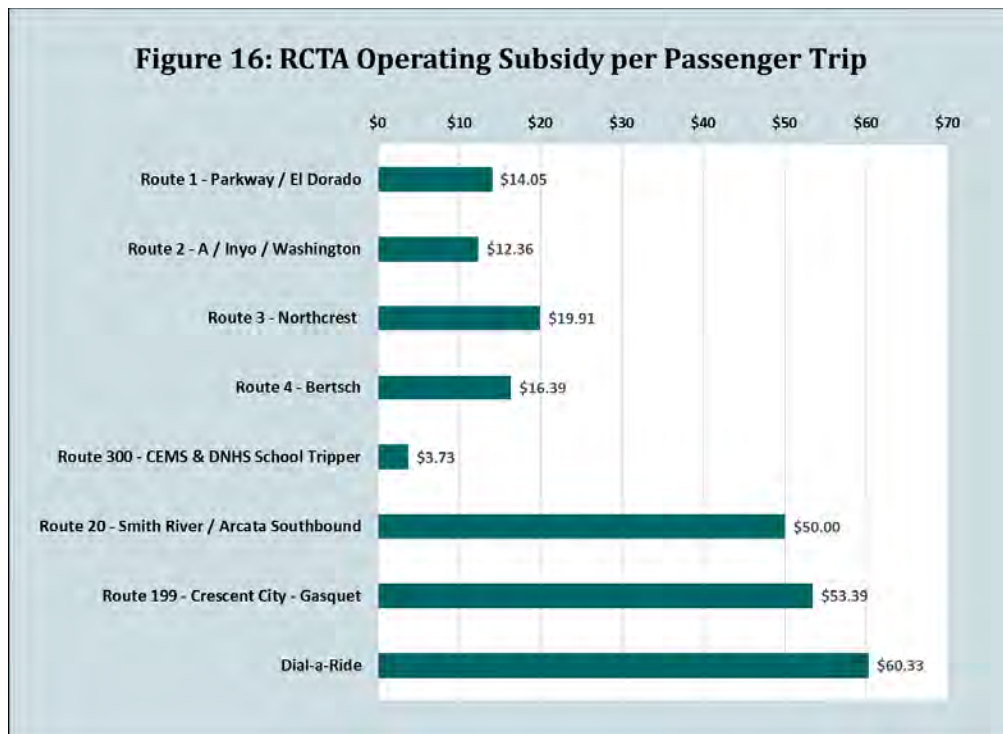
### Operating Cost per Hour

Another metric traditionally monitored when evaluating RCTA transit performance has been the total operating cost per vehicle service hour. Route performance is shown in Figure 15. Similar to the total costs per passenger-trip, the operating costs per vehicle service hour were calculated using the total RCTA operating expenses for FY 2023-24 as shown in Table 15. Based on these calculations, the total operating cost per service hour for RCTA was \$142.71. Route 300 and DAR services had the lowest cost per service hour (near \$135), while intercity route 20 had the highest (\$150.76). For the fixed routes, the total cost per service hour averaged \$147.96.



### Operating Subsidy per Passenger-Trip

The operating subsidy (operating costs minus cash fare revenue) per passenger-trip represents the amount of taxpayer subsidy per passenger-trip required to operate the transit system and is an excellent measure of cost efficiency. Route performance is shown in Figure 16. RCTA averaged an operating subsidy of \$25.20 per passenger-trip in FY 2023-24, as shown in Table 15. The local routes saw the lowest operating subsidy per passenger-trip (\$14.06), and the intercity routes saw the highest (\$50.44). Route 300 had the lowest subsidy per passenger-trip of any RCTA service, given its high ridership and very limited operation (\$3.73) (Figure 16). On the other end of the spectrum, DAR had the highest operating subsidy per passenger-trip of all RCTA services (\$60.33). Intercity routes also faced higher costs than local routes. Route 20 (\$50.44) was less costly than Route 199 (\$53.39) due to its high ridership and fare costs.



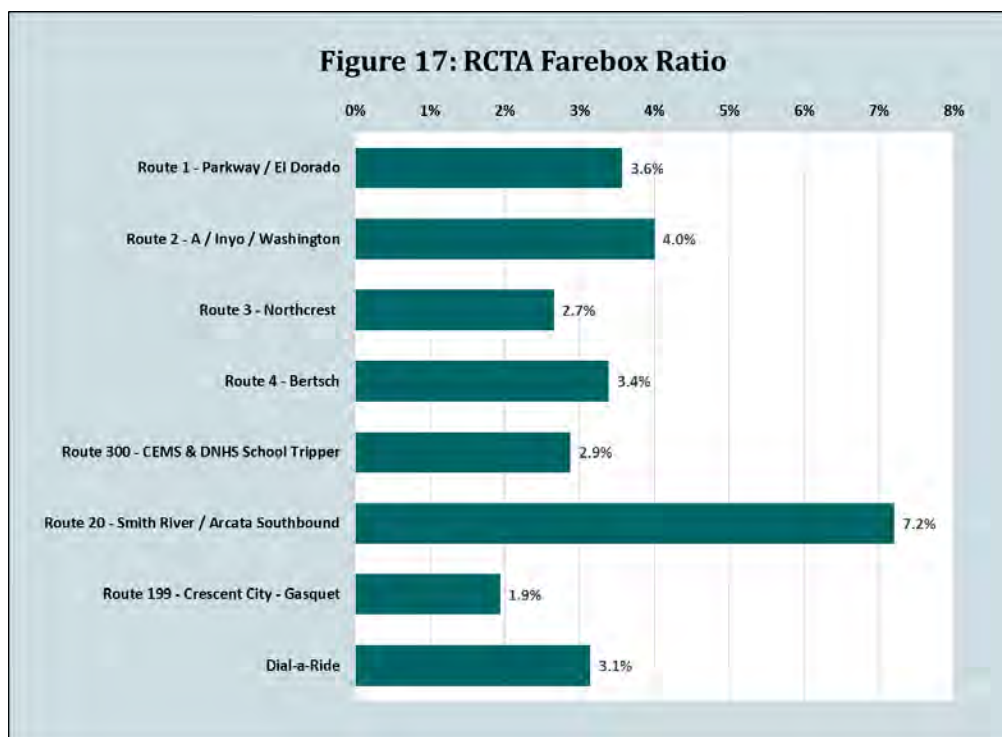
### Farebox Ratio

The farebox ratio represents the proportion of operating costs paid for by fare revenues. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the California Transportation Development Act (TDA) required rural transit agencies (such as Del Norte County) to have a farebox ratio of at least 10 percent (or to make up the difference using local funds). If the 10 percent farebox ratio were not attained, the difference between the amount of actual fare revenue collected and the required amount of fare revenue needed to meet the 10 percent ratio would be assessed as a penalty. One grace year is allowed per TDA. There has been talk in recent years of abandoning this standard, as it does sometimes put pressure on operators to make counterproductive decisions that reduce service levels for much-needed transportation in order to avoid penalties.

During COVID in FY 2019-20, transit operators who did not meet the required minimum farebox recovery ratio requirement could not be penalized (per Assembly Bill 90). This temporary relief was extended through FY 2022-23, per Assembly Bill (AB) 149. AB 149 also set forth additional allowances for calculating the official farebox ratio. These include categorizing federal funds as "local funds" to boost the revenue side of the equation and adding several exemptions on the cost side of the equation. Although the farebox ratio may have less significance going forward in terms of TDA eligibility, the simple ratio of fare revenues to operating costs is still useful for transit planning purposes and, therefore, is discussed here. RCTA standards state all service categories should have farebox ratios of at least 10 percent, which, when bringing in the equation advertising revenue, LCTOP used to subsidize fares, and federal operating grants, is well exceeded.



RCTA's systemwide farebox ratio for cash fares only was 4.9 percent (Table 15); individual route-level performance is shown in Figure 17. Route 20 was the best performing route in terms of farebox (7.2 percent), followed by Route 2 (4.0 percent) and Route 1 (3.6 percent). DAR service has farebox ratios near 3.1 percent, which is on par with paratransit.



### RCTA Transit Peer Analysis

A peer analysis of RCTA's services, performance, and fares was conducted to assess its scope of services and efficiency compared to relative transit operators within the state of California. An in-depth analysis is provided in Appendix G. Selected peers were Modoc Transit Agency, Lassen Transit Service Agency, and Mendocino Transit Authority. These peers were primarily selected due to their similar geographic locations and services offered.

RCTA's fixed route performance metrics frequently ranked first or second among its peers across a variety of categories, indicating that RCTA does an excellent job of providing abundant fixed route public transit services cost-effectively. RCTA's DAR performance metrics frequently ranked below its peers in terms of levels of services offered, but in the middle of the field regarding cost efficiency. Indicating that RCTA's DAR service could have room for improvement in increasing service levels and ridership. However, it should be noted that the DAR service provides specialized transit services which are, by nature, not as efficient.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Chapter summarizes important findings from this initial review of the current transit environment in Del Norte County that were used to identify potential service improvements for RCTA.

## **DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC FINDINGS**

Important takeaways regarding Del Norte County's demographics and economy include:

- Del Norte County's population size is expected to decrease over the next several decades; however, the number of senior adults over the age of 65 will continue to increase significantly.
- Del Norte County has a greater proportion of potentially transit-dependent residents compared to the State of California overall. These residents are concentrated in Crescent City.
- Most Del Norte County residents commute within the county. The top out-of-county destinations that people commute to or from are in Humboldt County and Curry County, Oregon.
- The majority of Del Norte County's major activity centers are located in Crescent City and Smith River.

## **TRANSIT FINDINGS**

Key trends from the analysis of RCTA operations and performance include:

- RCTA ridership recovery post-pandemic has been consistent and gaining momentum; ridership in FY 2024-25 was over double the systemwide low seen in FY 2020-21 and only down 7 percent from FY 2018-19 pre-pandemic highs.
- Route 300 is the best-performing RCTA service across numerous standards, but this is primarily due to the nature of its school-tripper-focused service. The highest-performing standard local route is Route 2. The highest-performing intercity route is Route 20. Both of which meet their respective standards for passenger trips per hour, per the last SRTDP update.
- In FY 2023-24, the local routes generally performed better than the intercity and intercounty routes, primarily due to the long distances the intercity and intercounty routes must travel.
- Although RCTA did not meet 2019 financial performance standards, RCTA performs better than peer transit agencies in terms of operating cost per hour and operating cost per trip.
- RCTA continues to face ongoing staffing challenges. Despite significant wage increases, the agency still struggles to recruit and retain qualified operations staff, contributing to rising operating costs and, at times, unplanned service reductions.

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## GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STANDARDS

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Goals and objectives are important organizational tools used to guide an agency's decision-making. An agency can determine how well it is meeting its goals with performance measures. Setting goals and then developing performance standards is particularly important for public transit agencies for several reasons:

- Transit goals are often contradictory. For instance, the goal of maximizing cost effectiveness tends to focus services on the largest population centers, while the goal of maximizing service availability tends to disperse services to outlying areas. Therefore, to best meet its overall mission, a public transit agency must continually balance the tradeoffs between goals. Adopting policy statements encourages broader discussions of community values regarding transit compared to what is possible when considering issues case-by-case.
- Public transit agency revenue sources stem from taxpayer funds and therefore have a responsibility to provide transparent information on how these funds are spent and whether or not the agency is meeting community goals. Funding partners also have a responsibility to ensure funds provided to the transit program are being used appropriately.

### RCTA GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

The 2019 RCTA SRTDP established RCTA's first official set of goals, objectives, and policies to guide RCTA decision-making. Unfortunately, due to the COVID pandemic, the transit landscape changed significantly, necessitating a 2022 mini-update to the SRTDP, which focused on the agency's COVID response in terms of service modifications and financing activities. The policies set forth in these two documents are summarized below, along with recommendations on how the previously adopted goals and policies should be modified for the current 2025 SRTDP.

#### Mission Statement

The RCTA's mission statement is "To provide safe and cost-effective local and regional public transportation services to provide a mobility option for Del Norte County residents, students, employees, and visitors to the area."

- *Recommendation:* No change. This mission statement continues to exemplify the type of service the RCTA strives to provide.

#### Goals

RCTA has five adopted goals:

1. Provide an effective level of service in response to demonstrated community market needs.
2. Provide public transportation services that are financially sustainable within existing local, state, and federal funding programs in a cost-efficient manner.
3. Ensure that all transit programs can be provided at a high quality of service.

4. Provide safe and convenient transportation services to the residents and visitors of Del Norte County.
5. Within available financial resources, develop supplemental mobility options and services that both encourage better utilization of existing fixed-route and demand response services.

## **Objectives and Policies**

The Del Norte Local Transportation Commission (DNLTC) outlined clear objectives and policies in the 2024 Del Norte Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) relating to regional public transportation namely RCTA services, all of its objectives support the overarching DNLTC goal of: *“Provide for the mobility needs of Del Norte residents, visitors and employees through transit services within the financial constraints of state and federal transit funding.”*

The individual objectives and policies that support them are:

**Objective 6.1:** Tailor public transportation and transit service provisions to the area’s population characteristics.

- **Policy 6.1:** Implement recommendations from the Short Range Transit Development Plan for the RCTA.
- **Policy 6.2:** Implement strategies and recommendations outlined in the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (2020) to address the unmet transit needs of the public. Update the plan as necessary.
- **Policy 6.3:** Consider transit services first in areas where the greatest operational efficiencies exist (i.e., dependent needs, recreational areas).
- **Policy 6.4:** Include the Yurok Tribe, Elk Valley Rancheria, Pulikla Tribe of Yurok People, and Tolowa-Dee-ni’ Nation in planning processes.

**Objective 6.2:** Provide life-line transportation for transit-dependent people.

- **Policy 6.5:** The DNLTC will conduct a minimum of one public hearing annually to consider and take testimony on unmet transit needs prior to expending LTF funds.
- **Policy 6.6:** Ensure that public transit services are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Objective 6.3:** As funding permits, develop transit service as an effective alternative transportation mode choice.

- **Policy 6.7:** Support transit projects that serve visitors and residents for commute and recreation purposes and that enhance economic development.
- **Policy 6.8:** Encourage coordination of inter- and intra-regional transit service.

**Objective 6.4:** Respond to the transit needs of disadvantaged communities, including elderly populations, minority communities, people with disabilities, and low-income communities.

- **Policy 6.9:** Coordinate annual grant programs, such as Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 funding, and assist agencies in preparing applications when applicable.

- **Policy 6.10:** Conduct meetings with the Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC) at least once a year. Involve SSTAC in transportation planning activities as appropriate.

**Objective 5:** Promote the use of renewable and alternative fuels for transit.

- **Policy 6.11:** Purchase renewable and alternative fuel transit vehicles. Actively seek funding that would allow the purchase of fleet vehicles that use renewable and clean alternatives.
- **Policy 6.12:** Promote the use of renewable and alternative-fueled transportation.
- **Policy 6.13:** Develop partnerships with other departments and entities to expand the availability and use of alternative and renewable fuels.

## RCTA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The RCTA Executive Director team prepares and submits annual performance reports to the RCTA Board of Directors and, on request, to the Del Norte Local Transportation Commission. RCTA FY 2024-25 performance was compared to RCTA performance standards adopted in the 2018-19 SRTDP. These performance standards were updated based on the changing public transit landscape, peer data, and current performance. The recommended performance standards are outlined below. These standards will be used to evaluate the performance of service alternatives.

As a starting point, Table 16 details RCTA’s most recently adopted (2019) performance standards for RCTA and compares FY 2024-25 performance to these standards. As COVID and high rates of inflation have changed the public transit landscape in recent years, new performance standards are also recommended in Table 16. The recommended performance standards are based on the existing performance of both RCTA and the peer transit agencies. As seen in Table 16, in FY 2024-25, local routes exceeded their target standard, and Route 20 met its minimum performance standards for passenger-trips per hour as outlined in the 2019 RCTA SRTP. Route 199, Dial-a-Ride, and systemwide performance fell just short of meeting their minimum performance standards.

In the 2019 RCTA SRTP, it was recommended that minimum standards be adjusted by 5 percent per year, and that target standards be adjusted by 4 percent per year to compensate for inflation. Between the completion of the previous SRTP in June 2019 and the latest Consumer Price Index figures published in June 2024, inflation has measured an average of 4.6 percent per year. Therefore, the minimum and target 2019 standards were adjusted by 5 percent annually from 2019. Going forward, it is recommended that future performance standards be adjusted according to the CPI, rather than the flat rate increases recommended in the 2019 SRTP.

None of the RCTA routes meet the cost control standards set in the 2019 SRTP, despite being adjusted for inflation. It should be noted that this is common among rural transit agencies. In general, the recommended financial performance standards reflect maintaining the same level of cost efficiency for the minimum standard and improving this level by 10 percent for the target standard. This SRTP also recommends a new performance standard: marginal operating cost per trip. As noted above, marginal operating cost does not include fixed costs but only costs associated with vehicle hours and miles. This performance indicator is important when evaluating net impacts of potential service improvements (as fixed costs will not change if service hours or miles are increased).

**Table 16: Performance Standards for the RCTA**

Exceeds Target

Meets Minimum

Does Not Meet Standard

Passengers Per Vehicle Service Hour					
	2019 SRTP			Recommended	
Service Type	Minimum	Target	FY 24-25 Values	Minimum	Target
Crescent City Local Routes <sup>1</sup>	9.0	12.0	12.5	9.0	12.0
Route 20 Smith River / Arcata	2.5	4	3.6	2.5	4.0
Bus Route 199 Crescent City / Gasquet	2.5	4	2.4	2.5	4.0
Dial-a-Ride	3	4.5	2.0	2.0	3.0
Systemwide	5.8	7	6.7	5.0	7.0

Cost Per Vehicle Service Hour <sup>2</sup>					
	2019 SRTP			Recommended	
Service Type	Maximum	Target	FY 24-25 Values	Maximum	Target
Crescent City Local Routes <sup>1</sup>	\$103.19	\$88.57	\$134.75	\$138.79	\$124.91
Route 20 Smith River / Arcata	\$103.19	\$93.81	\$145.30	\$149.66	\$134.69
Bus Route 199 Crescent City / Gasquet	\$103.19	\$93.81	\$143.80	\$149.66	\$134.69
Dial-a-Ride	\$103.19	\$93.81	\$134.54	\$138.57	\$124.72
System Wide	\$103.19	\$93.81	\$139.28	\$143.46	\$129.11

Total Cost Per Passenger-Trip <sup>3,4</sup>				Recommended	
Service Type	Maximum	Target	FY 24-25 Values	Maximum	Target
Crescent City Local Routes <sup>1</sup>	\$10.05	\$8.04	\$10.76	\$11.08	\$9.97
Route 20 Smith River / Arcata	\$40.20	\$26.80	\$40.57	\$41.79	\$37.61
Bus Route 199 Crescent City / Gasquet	\$40.20	\$26.80	\$60.93	\$62.76	\$56.48
Dial-a-Ride	\$40.20	\$26.80	\$68.87	\$68.87	\$45.56
System Wide	\$17.42	\$13.40	\$20.72	\$21.34	\$19.21

Marginal Cost per Trip				Recommended	
Service Type	Maximum	Target	FY 24-25 Values	Maximum	Target
Crescent City Local Routes <sup>1</sup>	--	--	\$4.43	\$4.57	\$4.11
Route 20 Smith River / Arcata	--	--	\$18.45	\$19.01	\$17.11
Bus Route 199 Crescent City / Gasquet	--	--	\$27.37	\$19.01	\$17.11
Dial-a-Ride	--	--	\$28.32	\$29.17	\$26.25
System Wide	--	--	\$11.49	\$11.83	\$10.65

Note 1: Crescent City Local routes include Routes 1, 2, 3, 4, 300.

Note 2: Cost per service hour standards adjusted by 5 percent per annum for minimum standard, and 4 percent per annum per the 2019 SRTP recommendations.

Note 3: Cost per passenger trip standards adjusted by 5 percent per annum for minimum and target standards.

Note 4: The cost per passenger-trip was calculated by dividing the fully allocated cost for each service category for FY 2024-25 by total annual ridership.

Source: RCTA 2019 SRTP, RCTA FY 2024-25 Annual Report



## TDA-Required Performance Standards

RCTA has adopted four performance standards to measure the efficiency of transit services. These four standards are also evaluated every three years as part of the Transportation Development Act (TDA) Triennial Performance Audit. The newly recommended efficiency standards are shown in Table 16, discussed below.

- **Passenger-Trips per Vehicle Service Hour** – It is recommended that RCTA reduce its standards for passenger-trips per vehicle service hour for systemwide and DAR performance to better reflect the transit environment post-pandemic. Local and Intercity route standards are recommended to remain unchanged.
- **Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour** – Significant increases are recommended to the fully allocated cost standards to reflect the current conditions, as operations expenses have increased significantly since the last SRTDP and are recommended to be adjusted according to the California Consumer Price Index (CPI) into the future.
- **Operating Cost Per Passenger-Trip** – It is also recommended that the standards for the operating cost per vehicle service hour be increased to reflect current conditions and be adjusted according to the California CPI into the future. This SRTDP also recommends that RCTA adopt standards for the marginal operating cost per vehicle service hour. Marginal costs exclude fixed costs, which will not change if service is increased or decreased. Examples of fixed costs include administrative staff time, utilities, marketing, etc. The recommended marginal cost standards presented in Table 16 were calculated through the development of a cost model for FY 2023- 24 (Table 14). The cost model calculated marginal expenses by breaking out RCTA expenses that are dependent on hours and miles of service. Those per-hour and mile marginal costs were multiplied by current levels of service to determine each route and type of service’s share of total marginal costs. Finally, service level marginal costs were divided by passenger trips to establish the current marginal cost per trip for each type of service. It is recommended that, moving forward, the operating cost per hour standards continue to be updated annually based on the CPI. Essential expenses such as fuel costs and contract expenses targeted at retention of operations employees, which outpace the CPI, may need to be excluded from the calculation.
- **Farebox Recovery Ratio** – The California Transportation Development Act (TDA) previously required that all funding recipients achieve minimum farebox recovery standards, although this requirement was temporarily suspended during the height of COVID-19 impacts. When the farebox performance was reimplemented, significant changes to the calculation of the farebox recovery ratio were introduced. AB 149 (passed in July 2021) redefined local funds, which are allowable per TDA to supplement fare revenue to meet the minimum farebox recovery ratio requirement. Local funds are now defined as “any nonstate grant funds or other revenues generated by, earned by, or distributed to an operator.” Examples include advertising revenue, lease revenue, or funds provided by a local agency. Additionally, beginning in FY 2021-22, federal grant funds can now be classified as local funds. It is recommended that the RCTA continue to monitor system/program farebox recovery ratios to remain above the TDA-required 10 percent.

## Service Reliability Standards and Recommended Updates

RCTA adopted and tracked performance standards with the 2018-19 SRTDP update to ensure the agency is upholding its policies regarding service convenience, reliability, safety, and capital upgrades. These performance standards are summarized below.

- **On-Time Performance** – RCTA has adopted standards for each type of service regarding on-time performance. LSC recommends that these standards allow more flexibility for issues outside of RCTA’s control. The current standards are:
  - The minimum standard for Local Routes is no early departures and 90 percent of scheduled timepoints are on-time, defined as one minute early to five minutes late. The target standard is that 95 percent of all timepoints are on time.
  - The minimum standard for regional is no early departures and 80 percent of all runs are on-time at scheduled timepoints, defined as one minute early to five minutes late. The target standard is that 90 percent of timepoints are on time.
- **Recommended On-Time Performance Standards**
  - The recommended minimum standard for local Routes is no early departures and a minimum of 85 percent on time, and a target of 90 percent on time. This recommendation is due to the high ratios of wheelchair boardings, comparable to other transit operators.
  - The recommended minimum standard for regional Routes is no early departures and a minimum of 80 percent on time, and a target of 85 percent on time. This recommendation is due to road construction projects and severe weather frequently causing delays outside of RCTA’s control.
- **Span of Service** – RCTA adopted span of service standards with the last SRTDP update, which was completed prior to the start of the pandemic, which changed the transit landscape significantly. RCTA’s adopted standards are as follows.
  - Local Routes
    - Minimum Local Route service standard: 7:00 AM to 6:30 PM on weekdays and 8:00 AM to 6:30 PM on Saturdays.
    - Target Local Route service standard: 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM on weekdays and 7:30 AM to 7:30 PM on Saturdays.
  - Route 20
    - Minimum standard: 6:00 AM to 9 PM Monday through Saturday.
    - Target standard: 6:00 AM to 9 PM Monday through Saturday, and 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM on Sundays during the summer season.
  - Route 199
    - Minimum standard: 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM Monday through Saturday.

- Target standard: 6:00 AM to 9 PM Monday through Saturday, and 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM on Sundays during the summer season.
- **Recommended Span of Service** – LSC recommends considerable adjustment to these standards to reflect current passenger demand and operational capacity, given planning period budget projections. These standards should be thought of as a target span of service, but may need to be adjusted based on available revenue.
  - Local Routes
    - Minimum Local Route service standard: 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM weekdays; 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Saturdays.
    - Target Local Route service standard: 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM weekdays; 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM Saturdays.
  - Route 20
    - Minimum standard: 6:00 AM to 9 PM Monday through Saturday.
    - Target standard: 6:00 AM to 9 PM Monday through Sunday.
  - Route 199
    - Minimum standard: 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM Monday through Friday.
    - Target standard: 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM Monday through Saturday.
- **Road Calls for Mechanical Failures** – RCTA’s adopted standards are a minimum of 20,000 miles between mechanical road calls, and a target standard of 30,000 miles between mechanical road calls. LSC recommends that these standards remain unchanged.
- **Preventable Vehicle Collisions** – RCTA’s adopted vehicle collision standard is a minimum of 1 per 100,000 vehicle service miles. The target standard is 1 per 250,000 vehicle service miles. LSC recommends that this standard remain unchanged.
- **Annual number of Passengers Travel Trained** – RCTA is the consolidated transportation services agency CTSA serving Del Norte County. One of the CTSA services that RCTA provides is travel training, which provides staff for the purpose of teaching individuals and groups how to utilize available public transportation options safely and independently. RCTA’s adopted performance standards are a minimum of 20 people travel trained a year, and a target of 50 people trained a year. The program has been contracted out to Transdev for implementation and has been slow to implement due to staffing challenges, other operational responsibilities, and a lack of marketing efforts. RCTA currently pays Transdev \$525 per month to provide travel training services. During FY 2023-24, four small group trainings were provided to schools and the senior center, and two individual trainings were provided as part of ADA eligibility screenings. It is recommended that this standard remain unchanged, and that RCTA explore alternative options for local contractors to provide travel training services who can more effectively market the program and are not time-restricted by day-to-day operational responsibilities.

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## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents potential alternatives to modify RCTA services so that they better meet the mobility needs of Del Norte County residents and operate more efficiently. The service elements presented in this chapter are designed “a la carte”; each alternative is evaluated as a stand-alone option, though when combined, the overall impacts may vary. The combined impacts of the various service elements included in the final five-year plan will be presented in the Draft SRTDP.

The service alternatives discussed in this chapter are organized by service type. First, alternatives impacting Crescent City Local Routes are discussed. This is followed by an evaluation of potential options for RCTA intercity routes. Finally, alternatives that explore cuts to underperforming runs are evaluated in the event that RCTA's financials cannot sustain current levels of service.

For each service alternative, the likely impacts on RCTA ridership and operating costs are estimated. Ridership and cost estimates are based on the following parameters:

1. To estimate operating costs, the RCTA draft operating budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 was used to develop an RCTA cost model, which estimates the FY 2024-25 cost per vehicle service hour and vehicle service mile. The resulting cost factors were then escalated by 3 percent to account for expected inflation to represent FY 2025-26 numbers. The resulting equation is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Change in Marginal Operating Cost} = & \$56.45 \times \text{Change in Vehicle Hours} \\ & + \$0.72 \times \text{Change in Vehicle Miles} \end{aligned}$$

2. Status quo service levels were assumed to be similar to FY 2023-24, unless otherwise noted.
3. Ridership estimates were based on RCTA FY 2023-24 ridership, data from peer systems, and standard transit demand elasticity factors, depending on the alternative. Recent ridership data indicate a 10 percent increase in fixed route ridership from FY 2023-24 and a 16 percent increase from FY 2023-24 to FY 2024-25. Service alternative ridership projections for FY 2025-26 reflect the recent upward ridership trend.
4. Fare revenue estimates are calculated by multiplying the projected increase or decrease in ridership by the FY 2023-24 average fare revenue per passenger for the route.
5. Marginal operating subsidy is calculated by deducting the change in fare revenue from the estimated change in operating cost.

Similar to other rural transit agencies, RCTA is facing rising operating costs primarily from an increase in the transit operating contract (primarily higher labor costs, plus higher fuel costs). With little to no population growth expected and the cessation of emergency Federal Transit Administration (FTA) sources, RCTA is facing a budget deficit in FY 2025-26, given status quo funding sources.

Over the past few years, the state released a new revenue source for transit operators through Senate Bill (SB) 125, which established two funding formula-based funding types: the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and the Zero Emission Transit Capital Program (ZETCP). These funds were provided in an effort to address the ridership and fare revenue loss to transit agencies post-COVID, as well as assist operators in complying with California Air Resources Board (CARB) Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) mandates. RCTA received its first tranche of SB 125 funding of \$1.675 million in 2023, which was programmed to its Downtown Transit Center project and Electric Bus purchases. RCTA expects to receive a second tranche of \$1.678 million in FY 2025-26, which, if utilized for operations, can sustain RCTA's operations at the current status quo level through the planning period. There is a possibility that additional SB 125 funds will be made available in the future.

Therefore, this service alternatives analysis focuses on new transit service options which do not increase service levels significantly unless there are associated service reductions or new funding sources available.

### **CRESCENT CITY LOCAL ROUTE SERVICE ALTERNATIVES**

Crescent City is the primary hub for RCTA operations. The RCTA facility is located on the east side of the city, just off US 101, while the Cultural Center Transit Hub—where most routes begin—is one mile south. Major transit destinations include Walmart, Sutter Coast Hospital, Del Norte Senior Center, Grocery Outlet, College of the Redwoods, Del Norte High School, and Crescent Elk Middle School. The nearby Bertch Tract, southeast of the city, is a dense residential area that includes the Elk Valley Rancheria and Elk Valley Casino.

Currently, Crescent City is served by four RCTA Local Routes, which operate 30-minute loops on hourly headways using two buses which are “interlined”. Current interline pairs are Route 1 and 3, and 2 and 4.

Routes 1 and 2 complete a similar loop in opposite directions, serving much of the key activity centers within the city. These routes are the most productive. Route 3 serves the business core along US 101 and the northern portions of Northcrest Drive. Route 3 is the lowest-performing local route, but it serves important destinations for seniors and social services. Route 4 serves the Bertch Tract, connecting its residents with the rest of the RCTA transit system and downtown Crescent City. Route 4 also serves a key destination, the Elk Valley Casino. In general, hourly service is provided, but the overlap of some routes along main corridors provides for higher frequency for some stops. Crescent City Local routes each provide between 10 and 12 round-trips on weekdays with service from 7 AM to 6 PM, and 9 round-trips of routes 2 and 4 on Saturdays between 8 AM and 5 PM.

### **Challenges and Considerations**

RCTA's Crescent City Local Routes are generally efficient and well-utilized by residents and visitors. The service area covers most of Crescent City, with the majority of residents and activity centers located within a ¼ mile of stops. Due to the high performance of these routes, only minimal changes are discussed below.

Routes 1 and 2 effectively serve the city's main commercial and residential areas. Route 2, in particular, faces on-time performance challenges. On-time performance is hindered by high passenger volume, frequent bike and wheelchair boardings, and traffic congestion at busy intersections. During the

afternoons of the on-board survey effort (September 18–21, 2024), Routes 2 and 4 ran 15–20 minutes behind schedule, while Routes 1 and 3 maintained stronger on-time performance, with no stops served more than 10 minutes late. Due to the high ridership and cohesive coverage network that RCTA’s local routes provide, minimal changes to routing have been considered in order to improve on-time performance. Consistency of services retains existing riders, and any routing changes need to have a strong potential to improve performance to warrant any changes to already productive routes.

Passenger feedback collected during the on-board survey indicates strong interest in expanding the span of RCTA services on weekday evenings, Saturdays, and introducing Sunday service. To address current challenges and accommodate survey requests, several service alternatives are analyzed below, including extending service hours and implementing micro-transit to complement fixed routes. Table 17 outlines these alternatives, along with their potential impacts on service levels, operating costs, and ridership. Any increases in the Local Fixed Route span of service are legally required to be matched by expanded DAR span of service.



**Table 17: Local Route Service Alternatives Analysis (1 of 2)**

**FY 2025-26**

Change in Annual Service													
	Run Parameters		Daily Service			Days per Year	Annual		Annual	Annual Ridership	Fare Revenues	Marginal Operating Subsidy	Additional bus/ driver required
	Hours	Miles	Runs	Hours	Miles		Hours	Miles	Marginal Cost				
Status Quo													
Route 1 - Parkway / El Dorado	0.5	6.69	12	6	80.28	249	1,500	20,600	\$99,600	16,400	\$8,500	\$91,100	
Route 2 - A / Inyo / Washington							1,600	23,600	\$107,400	20,400	\$10,500	\$96,900	
Route 3 - Northcrest	0.5	7.65	10	5	76.5	249	1,300	20,100	\$87,900	10,300	\$5,600	\$82,300	
Route 4 - Bertsch							1,600	24,600	\$108,100	15,500	\$8,900	\$99,200	
Route 300 - CEMS & DNHS School Tripper	0.65	9.77	1	0.65	9.77	180	140	1,830	\$9,200	5,010	\$550	\$8,650	
Crescent City DAR	--	--					2,040	25,330	\$133,500	4,430	\$8,660	\$124,840	
Total							6,140	90,730	\$545,700	72,040	\$42,710	\$502,990	
30 minute Headways Crescent City Routes 1 and 2 - Weekdays 11 AM to 4 PM													
Route 1 - Add 5 runs between 11 AM - 4 PM	0.5	6.7	5	2.5	33.45	249	623	8,329	\$41,200	3,680	\$1,910	\$39,290	
Route 2 - Add 5 runs between 11 AM - 4 PM	0.5	7.4	5	2.5	36.75	249	623	9,151	\$41,800	4,160	\$2,140	\$39,660	
Net Impact							1,245	17,480	\$83,000	7,840	\$4,050	\$78,950	1
30 minute Headways Crescent City Routes 1 and 2 - Weekdays 11 AM to 4 PM, Summer Only													
Route 1 - Add 5 runs between 11 AM - 4 PM	0.5	6.7	5	2.5	33.45	83	208	2,776	\$13,700	1,370	\$710	\$12,990	
Route 2 - Add 5 runs between 11 AM - 4 PM	0.5	7.4	5	2.5	36.75	83	208	3,050	\$13,900	1,270	\$650	\$13,250	
Net Impact							415	5,827	\$27,600	2,640	\$1,360	\$26,240	1
Add one additional PM run on Route 2													
Route 2 - 6:00 PM - 6:30 PM Weekday Run	0.5	7.4	1	0.5	7.4	249	125	1,830	\$8,400	1,320	\$690	\$7,710	
DAR - 6:00 PM - 6:30 PM Weekday Expansion	--	--	--	0.5	12.1	249	125	3,018	\$9,200	270	\$200	\$9,000	
Route 2 - 5:00 - 5:30 Saturday Run	0.5	7.4	1	0.5	7.4	56	28	412	\$1,900	450	\$330	\$1,570	
DAR - 6:00 PM - 6:30 PM Weekday Expansion				0.5	12.1	56	28	679	\$2,100	50	\$40	\$2,060	
Net Impact							305	5,938	\$21,600	2,090	\$1,260	\$20,340	2
Extend hours of Saturday Service (Weekday schedule for Routes 2/4)													
Route 2 - A / Inyo / Washington (Add 1 AM and 1 PM RT)	0.5	7.4	2	1.0	14.7	56	56	823	\$3,800	440	\$230	\$3,570	
Route 4 - Bertsch (Add 1 AM and 1 PM RT)	0.5	7.7	2	1.0	15.3	56	56	859	\$3,800	100	\$60	\$3,740	
DAR - 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM Saturday / Holiday Expansion	--	--	--	2.0	48.5	56	112	2,715	\$8,300	190	\$140	\$8,160	
Net Impact							224	4,397	\$15,900	730	\$430	\$15,470	2
Note 1: Estimated based on FY 2025-26 cost per day of week of current operations contract dispatch services. technology training.													

**Table 17: Local Route Service Alternatives Analysis (2 of 2)**

FY 2025-26

	Change in Annual Service												
	Run Parameters		Daily Service			Days per Year	Annual		Annual Marginal Cost	Annual Ridership	Fare Revenues	Marginal Operating Subsidy	Additional bus/ driver required
	Hours	Miles	Runs	Hours	Miles		Hours	Miles					
Saturday Service (Add Routes 1 and 3)													
Route 1 - Parkway / El Dorado (8 AM - 5 PM)	0.5	6.7	9	4.5	60.2	56	252	3,372	\$16,700	1,160	\$600	\$16,100	
Route 3 - Northcrest (8 AM - 5 PM)	0.5	7.7	9	4.5	68.9	56	252	3,856	\$17,000	910	\$490	\$16,510	
Net Impact							504	7227	\$33,700.00	2,070	\$1,090	\$32,610	1
Local Route Sunday Service (With Existing Saturday Schedule)													
Route 2 - A / Inyo / Washington	0.5	7.4	9	4.5	66.2	51	229.5	3374	\$15,400	2010	\$1,030	\$14,370	
Route 4 - Bertsch	0.5	7.7	9	4.5	69.0	51	229.5	3521	\$15,500	1150	\$660	\$14,840	
DAR				9	218.2	51	459	11126	\$34,000	350	\$260	\$33,740	
Net Impact							918	18,021	\$64,900	3,510	\$1,950	\$62,950	2
Evening Microtransit (Monday-Saturday)													
Weekdays 6 PM - 8 PM	2.0	12	1	2	12.0	249	498	2,988	\$30,300	1,990	\$5,970	\$24,330	
Saturdays 5 PM - 8 PM	3.0	18	1	3	18.0	56	168	1,008	\$10,200	450	\$1,350	\$8,850	
One Active Vehicle Software Cost Estimate <sup>2</sup>									\$25,000			\$25,000	
Net Impact							666	3,996	\$65,500	2,440	\$7,320	\$58,180	1
Microtransit Service Sunday													
	Look at Redding or B-line												
Sunday Microtransit (8 AM - 5 PM) - 1 vehicle	9.0	54	1	9	54.0	51	459	2,754	\$27,900	1,840	\$5,520	\$22,380	1
Sunday Dispatch Staffing (Estimated) <sup>1</sup>									\$20,655			\$20,655	
One Active Vehicle Software Cost Estimate <sup>2</sup>									\$25,000			\$25,000	
Net Impact									\$73,555	1,840	\$5,520	\$68,035	
Net Impact							1,071	6,426	\$85,100	3,990	\$5,520	\$68,035	2

Note 1: Estimated based on FY 2025-26 cost per day of week of current operations contract dispatch services. technology training.

### **Increase Frequency on Route 1 and 2 headways to 30 Minutes, Weekdays Year-Round**

Reducing headways from one hour to 30 minutes typically adds significant ridership due to the convenience factor for passengers. Routes 1 and 2 are the highest-performing local routes and serve around 10 passengers per vehicle service hour in FY 2023-24, much higher than many rural transit systems. Increasing the number of runs operated could also help mitigate on-time performance issues for Route 2.

A cost-effective option would be to provide 30-minute service on weekdays during times of highest boarding, generally between 11 AM and 4 PM (according to on-board surveys), instead of for the entire service day.

Under this alternative, one additional bus would interline between Routes 1 and 2, operating five additional runs per route per service day. A potential drawback of this approach is that riders who are accustomed to remaining onboard to transfer to Routes 3 or 4 would need to exit the bus to transfer for the runs added by this alternative. This could cause confusion or inconvenience. This option would add one additional bus and driver shift. It is estimated that this alternative would increase operating costs by \$83,000 and ridership by 7,840 annually, totaling an annual marginal operating subsidy of \$78,950.

### **Increase Frequency on Route 1 and 2 headways to 30 Minutes During Peak Summer (June-September) Season Hours**

Reducing headways from one hour to 30 minutes typically adds significant ridership due to the convenience factor for passengers. Routes 1 and 2 are the highest-performing local routes and serve around 10 passengers per vehicle service hour in FY 2023-24, much higher than many rural transit systems. Increasing the number of runs operated could also help mitigate on-time performance issues for Route 2.

A cost-effective option would be to provide 30-minute service on weekdays during times of highest boarding, generally between 11 AM and 4 PM (according to on-board surveys), instead of for the entire service day. This alternative is targeted at the Summer (June through September) months only when RCTA has historically ramped up service levels to accommodate increased demand from residents and visitors alike.

Under this alternative, one additional bus would interline between Routes 1 and 2, operating five additional runs per route per service day. A potential drawback of this approach is that riders who are accustomed to remaining onboard to transfer to Routes 3 or 4 would need to exit the bus to transfer for the runs added by this alternative. This could cause confusion or inconvenience. This option would add one additional bus and driver shift. It is estimated that this alternative would increase operating costs by \$27,600 and ridership by 2,640 annually, totaling an annual marginal operating subsidy of \$26,240.

### **Increase Route 2 Span of Service to Include One Additional Evening Run**

Route 2 is RCTA's most productive route, with strong boarding activity during afternoon and evening runs throughout the survey period. Extending its service span by one additional evening run—from 6 PM to 6:30 PM on weekdays and from 5:00 PM to 5:30 PM on Saturdays—would give transit-dependent residents and visitors more time to complete errands and social activities. This extension would be a

cost-efficient way to serve more passengers and activity centers compared to increasing service on all Crescent City Local Routes. Due to the increase in the span of local fixed route service, DAR service hours would also need to be expanded as well to remain in compliance with ADA requirements.

This alternative is associated with a \$21,600 increase in annual operating costs. Based on ridership by hour trends on peer transit systems and the average of RCTA DAR passengers per hour, it is estimated that an additional 1,770 passenger-trips would occur, contributing to a marginal operating subsidy of \$20,340.

### **Increase Saturday Service Span on Routes 2,4, and DAR**

“More Saturday Service (Like Weekdays)” was the most frequently selected survey response as to desired RCTA improvements. This answer can be interpreted to mean increased hours on the currently offered Route 2 and 4, and/or the operation of Route 1 and 3 on Saturday. For this reason, both options are analyzed.

Currently, the only Crescent City local routes which operate on Saturdays are Routes 2 and 4. Compared to the weekday service schedule, the span of service on Saturday begins 1 hour later in the morning and ends 1 hour earlier in the afternoon. Given the seven-day-a-week economy, which is heavily service industry-based, especially in the summer months, increasing service would allow transit-dependent individuals additional time to get to and from work, go shopping, or enjoy the many beautiful beaches and parks that are present around Crescent City. This alternative is the most cost-effective way to increase RCTA’s Local Route services on Saturdays. Due to the increase in the span of service, DAR service would also need to be expanded to the same time span.

If one more loop of both Routes 2 and 4 were operated in the morning beginning at 7 AM and in the evening at 5 PM, and DAR service were expanded to the same hours, it would cost on the order of \$15,900 annually. Ridership by hour data for other small transit systems indicates that approximately 730 additional one-way passenger trips could be gained from this additional service, totaling an annual marginal operating subsidy of \$15,470.

### **Increase Saturday Service Scope by Offering Routes 1 and 3**

Currently, Routes 1 and 3 (which interline) do not operate on Saturdays. Many of the destinations served by Route 1 are also served by Route 2 (which does operate on Saturdays). However, Routes 1 and 2 run in opposite directions, generally providing bi-directional service. Route 3 services the portion of Northcrest Drive, north of Washington Boulevard, and other unique stops which are not served by any other Local Routes. This means no Saturday service to the Northcrest Trailer City RV Park, Pinegrove RV Park, or direct service to the Crescent Cove Senior Apartments, all of which are home to many transit-dependent individuals. Therefore, Saturday service between 8 AM and 5 PM was considered for Routes 1 and 3. Additional complimentary paratransit service is not required for this option.

The annual operating cost of this alternative is estimated at \$33,700. Ridership was estimated based on the proportion of Saturday to weekday ridership for Routes 2 and 4, then adjusted to reflect a shorter service day. Consideration was also given to the fact that most Route 1 and 3 riders are served by Routes 2 and 4; however, having all four routes operating on Saturdays would increase frequency and reduce travel time for some passengers. Ridership would be increased by 2,070 one-way passenger trips, for an annual operating subsidy of \$32,610.

### **Sunday Service on Routes 2, 4, and DAR**

Sunday Service was the second most popular desired improvement selected by participants during the onboard survey, receiving 19 percent or 29 of the 153 responses. RCTA does not operate services on Sunday currently. Most transit agencies operating Sunday service experience limited ridership, which is generally about 50 percent of Saturday ridership levels. Given the non-traditional 7-day-a-week economy of Del Norte County, RCTA has strong Saturday ridership. Routes 2 and 4 average Saturday ridership was 89 percent of the average weekday ridership during the first five months of FY 2024-25.

Sunday service would mirror the existing local route Saturday service levels, with Route 2 and 4 in operation between the hours of 8 AM and 5 PM. Due to the increase in the span of services, DAR service would need to be offered on Sunday as well, during the same 8 AM to 5 PM span of service.

A dispatcher would need to be available for Sunday service, and hiring additional staff may be required. This may also mean RCTA's operations contract would need to be amended. Assuming a loaded rate of \$45 per hour for a dispatcher, Sunday dispatch services would add around \$20,655 per year. It is likely that this alternative would be most effective when considered as a package with Route 20 Sunday service expansion discussed later in this chapter, which would help to absorb the increase in dispatching costs.

The annual operating cost of this alternative is estimated at \$85,555; annual ridership is estimated to increase by 3,510 one-way passenger trips based on 50 percent of the projected FY 2025-26 Saturday ridership. Requiring an estimated additional marginal operating subsidy of \$83,605.

### **Crescent City Microtransit Service**

Microtransit has become an increasingly popular service option for providing transit coverage over areas not served efficiently by fixed routes. Microtransit has also been found to be an effective service option in areas with high demand for short trips.

Microtransit applies the app-based technology developed for transportation network companies (such as Uber and Lyft) to provide real-time, on-demand service. Most microtransit passengers typically request rides and pay their fares through an app downloaded on their smartphone or computer. Once a ride has been requested, a routing algorithm assigns the ride request to a specific driver/vehicle, and the passenger is provided with an estimated service time. Microtransit is a shared-ride service; therefore, multiple passengers may ride the vehicle at the same time.

To ensure equitable accommodation, most agencies allow microtransit rides to be requested directly over the phone as well. Requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are met by ensuring enough accessible vehicles are available to serve those who need them. Microtransit can be operated as a "comingled" service, with the general public and paratransit passengers sharing rides in the same vehicles. Comingling can reduce costs by serving additional people in periods when paratransit demand is low, like evenings. Comingling meets the requirements of the ADA by prioritizing persons with disabilities, yet allows for the expansion of general public service without the cost of operating a separate service. The micro transit service would operate as a curb-to-curb service and be provided with the current DAR vehicles, which are accessible, and ADA rides could be prioritized and provided with door-to-door service through advanced booking requirements, which would allow for the expansions in service span without the need to add paratransit-specific service as well.

For the RCTA, the cost of obtaining and maintaining microtransit software would be determined through an RFP process. Based on other programs, it is estimated that offering microtransit would incur upfront costs of about \$3000 for staff training and \$700 per vehicle in hardware costs, in addition to a software license fee. Typically, software licensing fees have a fixed component as well as a per-vehicle component (software is tethered to tablets, which can be readily transferred between vehicles). To account for the annual cost of the individual vehicle license and other fees, an additional \$25,000 has been added to each alternative marginal operating cost estimates of all alternatives considering microtransit. It is estimated to cost around \$4,500 per each additional microtransit vehicle in peak service. Other microtransit start-up costs will be accounted for in the five-year RCTA financial plan if microtransit is recommended for the SRTDP.

As microtransit is a demand-response curb-to-curb service, it is inherently not as productive as a fixed route service, which requires passengers to group at bus stops. The number of passenger-trips per vehicle hour carried on existing microtransit services varies depending on the agency. A high rate of productivity for microtransit in an area such as Crescent City would be on the order of 4 passenger-trips per vehicle hour. On average, Crescent City fixed routes carry 8 – 10 passenger trips per vehicle hour. Therefore, microtransit is not considered an efficient mode of public transit during the day in Crescent City. However, microtransit can often be effective during the evening hours when demand for public transit is lower, yet some residents may still require transportation home from work or other business. RCTA is positioned to provide microtransit service without significant capital start-up costs, as RCTA has acquired a fleet of 4 gas-powered sedans/minivans that are of an appropriate size to provide microtransit and can comingle with complementary paratransit using the same vehicles. In the future, small electric vehicles can be procured to replace the current gasoline DAR fleet and provide both DAR and microtransit.

The Crescent City micro transit service would have the following characteristics:

- The recommended service area, which would be the same as the current DAR zone. This area covers nearly all major developments and neighborhoods in Crescent City.
- Reservations would be placed through a phone app or through a call to dispatch.
- It would be reasonable to charge a general public fare of \$3.00 per trip, which is higher than the fixed route fare but lower than the general public DAR fare, which would not be operating at the time. The discounted fare for senior adults ages 65 and older and passengers with disabilities would be \$1.50. No free fare programs like the one currently in place for fixed routes would be implemented for this service to ensure the availability of rides for all who need the service. App-based reservations could pay fares digitally, while those who reserved over the phone would pay in cash, DAR punch pass, or via the contactless card readers RCT has introduced on its fixed route buses.

### ***Monday – Saturday Micro transit Service to Extend Span of Service to 8 PM***

A frequent survey request was for extended evening service hours. Microtransit provides an operational model that allows for the full coverage of the Crescent City area for all riders, even those with mobility impairments, with a single vehicle. Service hours would be from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM on weekdays and 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Saturdays.

An RCTA dispatcher is currently available as late as 8 PM, due to Route 20 operations; therefore, additional dispatch staff would not be required to operate the later service. It is estimated that evening microtransit service would cost on the order of \$65,500 annually. This includes the annual cost of the technology license, which is estimated to be \$25,000. This cost would be slightly offset by the higher fare rate for microtransit, bringing the required operating subsidy to \$58,180.

In an effort to keep costs low, only one vehicle would be used both on weekdays and Saturdays. This effectively limits the ridership the service can carry. Assuming a maximum productivity of four passenger-trips per vehicle hour, the maximum annual ridership would be roughly 2,440.

### **Pros**

- Dispatch is already in operation until beyond 8 PM due to Route 20 Operations.
- Existing DAR Vehicles can be utilized for this service.
- Top survey requests for improvements were increased weekend and evening service.
- Can legally offer expanded service hours without the need to match with DAR service span expansions, which is a notable advantage.
- Introduces a new form of public transit to Crescent City.

### **Cons**

- Potential need for an additional driver shift.
- Need to purchase app-based microtransit software, which increases operating costs.
- Initially, potential increased demand on dispatch staff who would need to schedule rides for individuals not competent with app-based ride scheduling. However, this would likely improve with time.

## ***Crescent City Microtransit on Sundays***

### ***Sunday Microtransit 8 AM to 5 PM***

Offering microtransit service on Sundays is a potential way to meet public demand for increased weekend transit. However, projected ridership under this model is 1,840 (as ridership is limited by the fact that only one vehicle is assigned to the service). The estimated demand for Sunday microtransit service is estimated to exceed the operational capacity of one microtransit vehicle, which could lead to long wait times and not all rides being met within the preferred 30-minute window.

ADA riders would schedule rides in advance to receive priority, and other users could request rides through the app, which would mitigate increased demand on dispatch staff. As noted earlier in this report, implementing Sunday service of any type would require an operations contract amendment that should be expected to increase operating costs by a minimum of \$20,655 annually to staff dispatchers on Sundays. It is estimated that operating one microtransit vehicle on Sundays from 8 AM to 5 PM would result in an additional operating subsidy of \$73,555.



### *Sunday Microtransit 8 AM to 8 PM*

To maintain consistency with weekday and Saturday service, it may be worth expanding Sunday microtransit hours to run until 8 PM. If an 8 AM to 8 PM Sunday service is implemented with one vehicle in daytime service, operating costs are projected to increase by an additional \$9,300 compared to the Sunday 8 AM to 5 PM service, with an estimated ridership gain of 320. In total, for the 8 AM to 8 PM Sunday microtransit service with one vehicle, operating costs would be \$82,855, with an estimated ridership gain of 2,160. This equates to an additional marginal operating subsidy of \$76,375 for the 8 AM to 8 PM Sunday microtransit service.

## **LOCAL ROUTE ALTERNATIVES PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

To evaluate the relative performance of the alternatives above, key impacts of each alternative were compared. The performance analysis considers impacts on ridership, marginal operating costs, the number of passengers carried per vehicle hour, and marginal operating costs per passenger trip. The performance evaluation gives insight into the relative benefits of the various alternatives.

### **Comparison of Crescent City Service Alternatives**

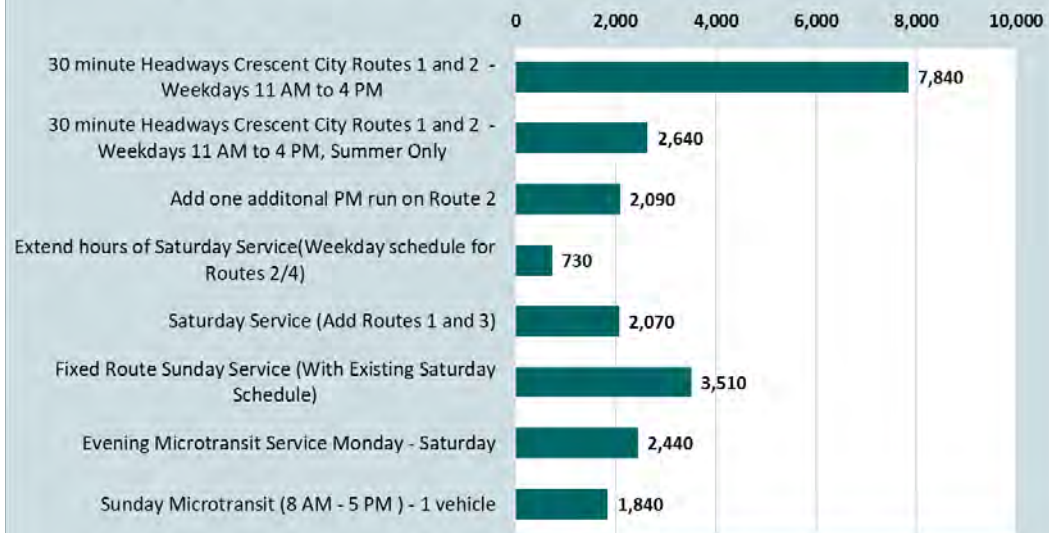
Table 18 and Figures 18 - 20 show the relative performance of the service alternatives considered for Crescent City local services. As shown:

- In terms of ridership, 30-minute headways for Routes 1 and 2 on Weekdays between 11 AM and 4 PM would increase ridership the most (7,840 trips). This is followed by “Add one additional PM run on Route 2” (2,090). The option with the smallest ridership projection is “Extend hours of Saturday service on routes 2 and 4” (730 trips annually).
- In terms of the net increase in marginal operating cost, Sunday Microtransit Service is the most expensive option (\$90,750), while extending Saturday Service for Routes 2 and 4 is the least expensive (\$15,900).
- Currently, Crescent City fixed routes carry around 9.4 passenger-trips per vehicle hour, and this SRTDP recommends a productivity standard of 9.0 trips per hour. Alternatives with a passenger-trip per hour ratio greater than this would increase the overall productivity of the system. Only 30-minute headways on Routes 1 and 2 on weekdays between 11 AM and 4 PM meet this standard.
- Dial-a-Ride carries on average 2.2 trips per vehicle hour. The same performance metric is applied to the microtransit options in Table 18. All the microtransit options are projected to carry 3.5 to 3.7 trips per hour.
- The marginal operating cost per trip standard for local fixed routes is \$6.52. None of the proposed fixed route service alternatives meets this standard.
- When comparing all the local service alternative options, Evening and Sunday microtransit is the only alternative that meets both passenger per hour and cost per trip standards for demand response, which is a much lower bar than local fixed routes are held to.
- Another question to consider: Is Sunday Service better provided by a fixed route or microtransit? The Sunday Service microtransit option is projected to carry fewer passengers

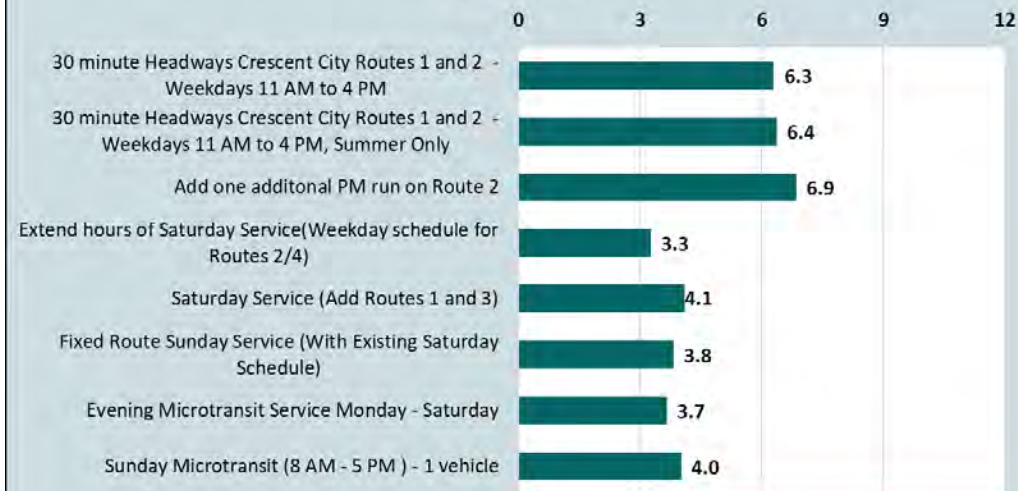
than the Sunday fixed-route option. However, the overall costs would be lower as separate complementary paratransit would not be required. The cost per trip performance indicator would be better with the fixed route option (\$26.62 per trip vs. \$39.98 per trip). Given that RCTA's budget is constrained, implementing microtransit on Sundays may be the preferred option only if Monday–Saturday evening microtransit is also considered. Implementing an on-demand service for Sundays only has seen low ridership in other areas.

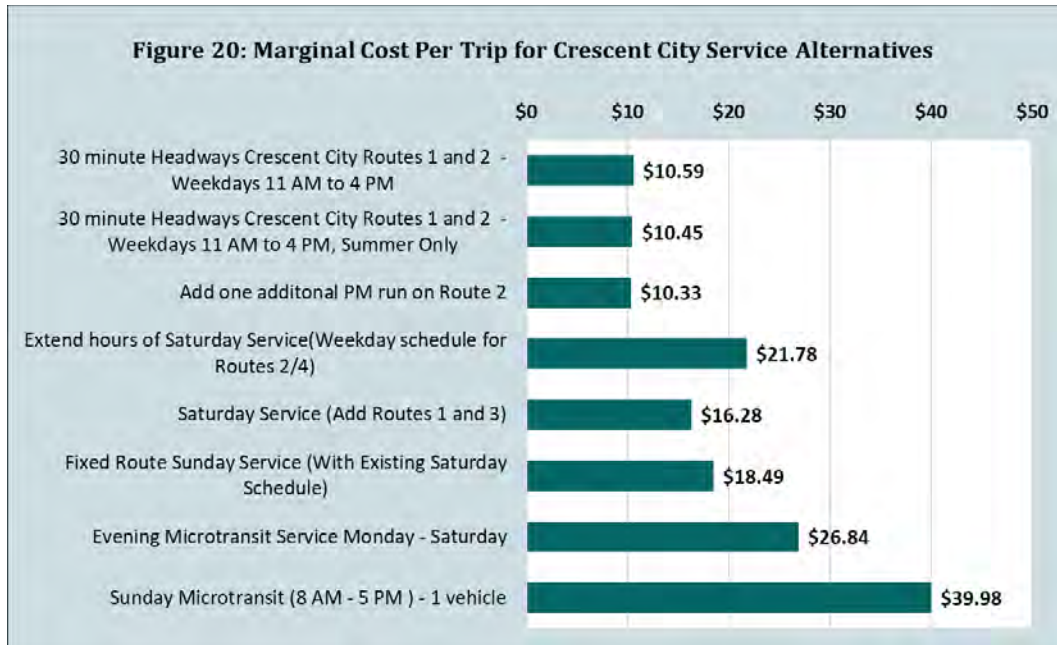
Table 18: RCTA Alternatives Performance - Crescent City Local Routes FY 2025-26					
Service Alternative	Net Impact				
	Annual Ridership	Annual Service Hours	Annual Marginal Operating Cost <sup>1</sup>	Passenger-trips per Hour	Marginal Cost per Trip
	Alternatives Meeting Minimum Standard Shaded in Green <sup>2</sup>				
30 minute Headways Crescent City Routes 1 and 2 - Weekdays 11 AM to 4 PM	7,840	1,245	\$83,000	6.3	\$10.59
30 minute Headways Crescent City Routes 1 and 2 - Weekdays 11 AM to 4 PM, Summer Only	2,640	415	\$27,600	6.4	\$10.45
Add one additional PM run on Route 2	2,090	305	\$21,600	6.9	\$10.33
Extend hours of Saturday Service(Weekday schedule for Routes 2/4)	730	224	\$15,900	3.3	\$21.78
Saturday Service (Add Routes 1 and 3)	2,070	504	\$33,700	4.1	\$16.28
Fixed Route Sunday Service (With Existing Saturday Schedule)	3,510	918	\$64,900	3.8	\$18.49
Evening Microtransit Service Monday - Saturday <sup>3</sup>	2,440	666	\$65,500	3.7	\$26.84
Sunday Microtransit (8 AM - 5 PM ) - 1 vehicle <sup>3</sup>	1,840	459	\$73,555	4.0	\$39.98
Recommended Minimum Performance Standards >	Local Routes (1, 2, 3, 4)			9.0	\$6.52
	Dial-a-Ride / Microtransit <sup>3</sup>			2.0	\$27.35
Note 1: Does not include fixed costs, includes fare revenue offset.					
Note 2: All alternatives increase service.					
Note 3: Microtransit is compared to demand response performance standards, which is a significantly lower standard than local fixed routes are held to.					

**Figure 18: Ridership Impact of Crescent City Service Alternatives**



**Figure 19: Projected Passengers Per Hour for Crescent City Service Alternatives**





## INTERCITY ROUTE SERVICE ALTERNATIVES

### Challenges and Considerations

RCTA's Intercity Routes 20 and 199 connect residents in Del Norte County's outlying areas with Crescent City key destinations such as schools, workplaces, shopping centers, social services, and medical facilities. Route 20 provides an important intercity connection to Arcata/Eureka in Humboldt County and to Curry Public Transit Coastal Express (4x per day) for travel to neighboring Brookings, Oregon.

When considering changes to RCTA's intercity routes, it is important to note the differences in funding sources between Route 20 and Route 199. Route 20 receives a significant annual apportionment of competitive statewide 5311(f) (intercity bus) funding; in recent years, receiving the Caltrans maximum per route funding of \$300,000/year. RCTA Route 20 service levels provide far more service than the 5311(f) funds cover, creating an "overmatch". RCTA is working with Caltrans and its regional transit partners to seek additional funding for Route 20. To date, no new funding has been secured. In contrast to Route 20, Route 199 is wholly funded by RCTA operating funds with no competitive grant support.

There are several service alternatives considered for RCTA Intercity Routes, including small routing changes, added trips, and the introduction of a new regional route between Crescent City and Medford. Table 19 presents Intercity Service alternatives, as well as the anticipated impacts of each alternative on service levels, operating costs, and ridership.

### **Route 20**

Route 20 primarily follows the US 101 corridor, connecting Smith River in the north to Eureka in Humboldt County to the south. It serves key Crescent City destinations, including the College of the Redwoods, Safeway, Walmart, medical facilities, and the Cultural Center Transit Hub. This route is important for residents of Smith River and Klamath in providing access to Crescent City destinations. Route 20 also provides access to trailheads in the Redwood State/National Parks.

Ridership on Route 20 fluctuates seasonally, with higher demand between May and October, likely driven by tourism workers and recreational visitors. Service levels are reduced in the winter months.

Route 20 offers strong connectivity with RCTA's transit partners, including Curry Transit to the north and Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) to the south. Connections to Amtrak are also possible in Arcata and Eureka. Connections with HTA are particularly important, as the combined services from RCTA, HTA, and Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) form the new North State Express Route 101(NSE: 101), enabling public transit travel from Smith River to Santa Rosa to replace Greyhound service that terminated in 2024. In Santa Rosa, the southern end of MTA's service area, there are transportation connections to the greater Bay Area and beyond. Because of Route 20's connection to intercity transit services, roughly half of Route 20's current operating cost is eligible to be funded through an FTA 5311(f) Intercity Bus grant. The remaining half of the Route 20 operating costs NOT reimbursed by 5311(f) is considered "overmatch".

Additionally, the Yurok Tribal Transit Service (YTTS) operates within Del Norte County, with some overlap with Route 20. Although YTTS services are open to the public, schedule information can be challenging to find. RCTA should continue efforts to collaborate with YTTS to ensure comprehensive, efficient transit coverage for all residents of Del Norte County and the Yurok Tribe Reservation.

### **Route 199**

Route 199 provides service between Hiouchi and Gasquet in the Smith River Canyon and Crescent City. Like Route 20, it stops at key Crescent City destinations such as Walmart, schools, Safeway, and the Cultural Center Transit Hub, where transfers to all other RCTA routes are available. Ridership on Route 199 also fluctuates seasonally, with higher demand from May to September, and service levels are adjusted down during the winter months to reflect reduced demand.

Route 199 is RCTA's lowest-performing route across various metrics. Despite this, it provides crucial lifeline services for residents of Hiouchi and Gasquet, who have limited transportation alternatives. Stakeholder feedback highlighted that these areas are home to many low-income residents with little to no transportation available. It was suggested that additional public outreach and travel training be conducted to educate residents on the financial and environmental benefits of using public transit, as well as how to navigate the system independently. Due to Route 199's low performance in recent years, no service expansion alternatives are considered; rather, service reduction is considered in the next section. It is worth noting that if funding is procured for service between Crescent City and Medford through the 5311(f) program (discussed below), it would, by default, increase service along the Rt 199 corridor.

### **Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle**

The Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle (SOMS) is one of RCTA's CTSA services, which began in August 2023 due to feedback from the annual DNLTC unmet transit needs process. The operates on Tuesdays and Thursdays only and has continuously grown its annual ridership. It is hoped that this CTSA project could eventually become a standard fixed route with daily weekday service if additional funding can be secured, which is explored as an alternative on page 95.

**Table 19: Intercity Service Alternatives Analysis**

**FY 2025-26**

	Run Parameters		Daily Service			Days per Year	Annual		Annual Marginal Cost	Annual Ridership	Fare Revenues	Marginal Operating Subsidy	Operating Subsidy with 5311(f) grant	Additional bus/driver required
	Hours	Miles	Runs	Hours	Miles		Hours	Miles						
Status Quo	--	--	--	21.75	722	102	2219	73,657	\$178,500	7274	\$28,229	\$150,271		
Route 20 - Smith River / Eureka (June-September) <sup>1</sup>	--	--	--	16.25	540	203	3,299	109,523	\$265,400	12,222	\$47,435	\$217,965		
Route 20 - Smith River / Eureka (October - May) <sup>1</sup>							5,517	183,180	\$443,900	19,496	\$75,664	\$368,236		
Route 20 Total														
Route 199 - Crescent City - Gasquet (June-September)	1.5	43.5	3	4.5	131	102	459	13,311	\$35,500	1,314	\$1,386	\$34,114		
Route 199 - Crescent City - Gasquet (October - May)	1.5	43.5	2	3	87	166	498	14,442	\$38,600	1,562	\$1,647	\$36,953		
Route 199 - Crescent City - Gasquet Total							908	26,797	\$74,100	2,877	\$3,033	\$71,067		
Total							6,425	209,977	\$518,000	22,372	\$78,696	\$439,304		
Route 20 Morning Klamath Commuter Trip Year Round														
6:45 AM Cultural Center to 7:30 AM Klamath Glenn Trip	0.75	24.3	1	0.75	24.3	305	229	7,412	\$18,300	620	\$2,410	\$15,890		
7:30 AM Klamath Glenn to 8:15 AM Cultural Center Trip	0.75	24.3	1	0.75	24.3	305	229	7,412	\$18,300	570	\$2,210	\$16,090		
Net Impact							458	14,823	\$36,600	1,190	\$4,620	\$31,980		1
Route 20 Add Stops at Sutter Health, and Walmart (Implemented)														
Reroute Route 20 to serve Walmart and Sutter Health	0.2	3.4	4	0.8	13.6	305	244	4148	\$16,800	610	\$2,370	\$14,430		
Net Impact							244	4148	\$16,800	610	\$2,370	\$14,430		0
Route 20 Extend the Evening NSE:101 Northbound Trip to Smith River														
Extend NSE:101 (Route 20) evening trip to Smith River	0.7	20	1	0.67	20	305	203	6100	\$15,900	1,010	\$3,920	\$11,980		
Net Impact							203	6100	\$15,900	1,010	\$3,920	\$11,980		0
Increase Route 20 Service (Existing Summer Schedule YR)														
Route 20 Winter Service Expansion to Summer Service Levels (Add Mid-day Round Trip between Crescent City and Eureka)	6	187	1	6	187	203	1,218	37,961	\$96,200	2,030	\$7,880	\$88,320	\$44,160	
Net Impact							1218	37,961	\$96,200	2,030	\$7,880	\$88,320	\$44,160	1
Route 20- Sunday Service NSE:101 Connecting Runs (2 Round Trips)														
Sunday Two Round Trips to Eureka	--	--	--	12.5	440	51	638	22,440	\$52,200	1,090	\$4,230	\$47,970	\$23,985	
Sunday Dispatch Staffing (Estimated) <sup>2</sup>									\$20,655			\$20,655	\$10,328	
Net Impact							638	22,440	\$72,855	1,090	\$4,230	\$68,625	\$34,313	2
Route 20- Adjust Service (Eliminate Summer Mid-day trip to Eureka, offer Sunday baseline service with NSE:101 connecting trips)														
Sunday Two Round Trips to Eureka	--	--	--	12.5	440	51	638	22,440	\$52,200	1,090	\$4,230	\$47,970	\$23,985	
Sunday Dispatch Staffing (Estimated) <sup>2</sup>									\$20,655			\$20,655	\$10,328	
Reduce Route 20 Summer Service (No Mid-Day Trip to Eureka)			1.0	5.5	183	102	-561	-18,626	-\$45,100	-1,310	-\$5,080	-\$40,020	-\$22,550	
Net Impact							77	3,814	\$27,755	-220	-\$850	\$28,605	\$11,763	2
Route 20- Adjust Service (Eliminate Summer Mid-day trip to Eureka, offer Sunday service at existing winter levels)														
Sunday Service (Winter Service Level)	--	--	--	16.25	540	51	829	27,516	\$66,700	1,460	\$5,670	\$61,030	\$30,515	
Sunday Dispatch Staffing (Estimated) <sup>2</sup>									\$20,655			\$20,655	\$10,328	
Reduce Route 20 Summer Service (No Mid-Day Trip to Eureka)			1.0	5.5	183	102	-561	-18,626	-\$45,100	-1,310	-\$5,080	-\$40,020	-\$20,010	
Net Impact							268	8,890	\$42,255	150	\$590	\$41,665	\$20,833	2
Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle as an Intercity Fixed Route														
Intercity Route 2 days per week	8.5	231.0	1	8.5	231	75	638	17,325	\$48,500	860	\$8,600			
Replace Current Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle <sup>3</sup>	8.0	275.0	1	8	275	60	-480	-16,500	-\$39,000	125	-\$1,250			
Net Impact							157.5	825	\$9,500	985	\$7,350	\$2,150	\$1,075	0

Note 1: Due to the intricacies of Route 20's many partial runs no run-level service quantities have been provided.

Note 1: Estimated based on FY 2025-26 cost per day of week of current operations contract dispatch services.

Note 3: Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle operating expenses shown represent 20 days of service, similar to recent levels.



## **Route 20 Service Alternatives**

### ***Route 20 Morning Klamath Commuter Trip***

Survey findings indicate a need for early morning transportation from Klamath to Crescent City. Currently, with Route 20, the first trip from Klamath doesn't arrive in Crescent City until 1:30 PM, limiting the ability of transit-dependent residents to access the city for work or school. However, there is a Route 20 return trip to Klamath, leaving the Cultural Center at 5:45 PM and arriving at Klamath Glen at 6:26 PM.

Previously, RCTA operated a commuter service to address this need, but it was suspended in 2017 when the YTTS introduced a similar route with lower fares, reducing RCTA ridership to unsustainable levels. Currently, YTTS operates a fixed route that departs the Yurok Tribal Offices at 8:30 AM, arriving at Crescent City Safeway at 9:00 AM, with a return trip at 9:05 AM; however, the route and schedule are not well-marketed, which may limit public knowledge about this service.

RCTA could start the second Route 20 bus earlier to serve a commuter loop between Crescent City and Klamath so that passengers could arrive in either Klamath or Crescent City earlier in the morning hours, which would allow commuters to utilize the service to get to work or school. The trip would be offered at a time that would act as a schedule extension to the second Route 20 bus in service, provided it does not impact driver FTA time regulations. This would require an additional annual operating subsidy of \$36,600 and could generate an additional 1,190 passenger-trips per year, contributing to an estimated marginal subsidy increase of \$31,980.

This option should not be implemented unless there is clear communication between RCTA and YTTS that the two services would complement, not compete with each other.

### ***Reroute 20 SB to Serve Walmart and Sutter Coast Hospital (Implemented)***

Curry Public Transit (CPT) operates the Coastal Express Route between Smith River and North Bend, OR, and has maintained a strong working relationship with RCTA. The two organizations have historically coordinated schedules to enable seamless transfers at the Lucky 7 Stop at the north end of Route 20.

CPT recently completed a Transit Development Plan (TDP), which identified the need to coordinate with RCTA to assess the feasibility of adjusting Route 20 to serve Walmart and Sutter Coast Hospital in Crescent City. These are the closest major stores and regional hospitals for most Curry County residents. Making this adjustment would require minimal changes to the Route 20 schedule and would not affect transfers with HTA in Eureka, an important connection for the NSE:101.

It is estimated that servicing Walmart would add around 9 minutes to each run. In rural counties, Walmart is often one of the largest trip generators and represents up to 15 percent of average daily boardings on Routes 1 and 2. This is the second-highest number of boardings after the Cultural Center. Therefore, it is estimated that serving Walmart could generate an additional 610 trips per year.

For years, Route 20 has maintained a stop at the Lucky 7 Casino and Gas Station. However, this stop is located on private property. In April of 2025, during the writing of this report, RCTA and Curry Transit were asked by the property owners to discontinue service due to issues with people loitering on the property when not actively waiting for the bus. In response, RCTA has established a new transfer point



with Curry Transit in front of United Indian Health Services (across Highway 101 from the Lucky 7 Fuel Stop). As of April 2025, this recommendation has been implemented.

### ***Route 20: Extend the Evening NSE:101 Northbound Trip to Smith River***

Currently, Route 20's evening trip, which is a segment of the NSE:101 northbound trip, terminates upon arrival at the Crescent City Transit Center. Smith River is the northern end of the route during other times of the day. The northern segment of the route is well utilized and showed strong ridership during the three-day sample in September 2024, with 8 passengers getting off in Smith River during the final north segment trip of the day.

This alternative is associated with an estimated \$15,900 increase in annual marginal operating costs. Based on data collected during the onboard survey, it is estimated that an additional 1,010 annual passenger-trips would occur, contributing to a marginal operating subsidy of \$11,980. This does not include the extended span of dispatch operations needed to support the route's extension, which would likely increase the costs further.

### ***Summer Schedule Year-Round***

As mentioned above, RCTA's Route 20 is a key part of the NSE:101, ultimately connecting travelers from the Oregon border to the Bay Area with coordinated services by RCTA, HTA, and MTA, being an integral part of the journey. The goal of the project is to expand. Currently, RCTA connects with HTA's portion of the NSE:101 in Eureka at the Eureka Transit Center (3<sup>rd</sup> and H) at 9:39 AM for southbound travelers and at 6:07 PM for northbound travelers.

RCTA has historically ended the second southbound Route 20 trip in Crescent City instead of Eureka during the winter service schedule (October through May). This means there are only two times a day when RCTA passengers can travel as far as Eureka, instead of three times a day in the summer, and the ability to make a half-day trip for medical appointments is eliminated in the winter. The third (mid-day) run does not currently have a connection to NSE:101. However, the NSE:101 partners are exploring options for funding to operate an additional NSE:101 trip. In the event that additional grant funding is acquired, it is worthwhile analyzing the cost and ridership impacts of maintaining the summer schedule year-round to connect with an additional NSE:101 trip. Additionally, this option would improve regional connections between Del Norte and Humboldt counties. In this scenario, the Route 20 mid-day trip could become a bi-directional component of the NSE:101, allowing southbound trips from Smith River (9:20 AM) to Santa Rosa (6:45 PM) and northbound trips from Santa Rosa (8:30 AM) to Smith River (6:25 PM). A simplified sample Route 20 schedule is depicted and compared to the current October-May Schedule in Table 20. Should this bi-directional trip be facilitated by all partners, it would warrant some minor adjustments to the Route 20 schedule in order to streamline travel for NSE:101 passengers.

This alternative is associated with an estimated \$96,200 increase in annual operating cost. Based on data collected during the onboard survey, it is estimated that an additional 2,030 annual passenger-trips would occur, contributing to a marginal operating subsidy of \$88,320. It should be noted that to complete the NSE:101 mid-day connections, HTA and MTA would need to provide additional services on their end, which could be costly.

### ***Route 20 Sunday Service***

Currently, the NSE:101 operates Monday through Saturday. A potential service expansion would be to introduce the NSE:101 service on Sundays. This expansion would offer more travel options for North Coast residents and college students, making weekend trips to the San Francisco Bay Area. Conversely, it would also enable Bay Area visitors to access the North Coast via public transit on weekends. Prior to Greyhound pulling out of the US 101 Corridor, Sundays were one of their most productive days of the week. NSE:101 expects a strong Sunday ridership if funding can be obtained.

However, implementing the Sunday NSE:101 service depends on all NSE:101 partner agencies extending their services to support necessary connections. At present, MTA is the only NSE:101 partner offering any level of Sunday service. However, the current MTA-operated Sunday service does not include NSE:101 connections. For the Redwood Coast Transit Authority (RCTA) to support Sunday Route 20 service, staffing levels would need to be increased, requiring additional driver shifts and dispatch shifts.

### ***Sunday Route 20 Service with only NSE:101 connecting Runs***

To take advantage of potential FTA 5311(f) funds, Route 20 Sunday service would only include runs that are part of NSE:101 connecting trips. This equates to roughly two round-trips per day. The bus would begin at the Cultural Center at 6:00 AM and arrive in Smith River at 6:45 AM, then make the first southbound trip to Eureka and back to Smith River. In the afternoon, Route 20 would depart Smith River at 2:15 PM, arrive in Eureka at 5:40 PM, and return to Crescent City by 8:31 PM. This would allow for connections with NSE:101 in Eureka at 9:55 AM and 5:48 PM (assuming a Sunday schedule would be similar to the Monday–Saturday schedule). A simplified timetable is presented in Table 20.

Sunday Service is projected to increase annual operating costs by \$58,000 annually. Ridership was projected based on the proportion of passengers boarding the NSE:101 connecting runs obtained from boarding and alighting counts, and applying the ratio of Sunday to Saturday intercity ridership observed on MTA. It is estimated that 1,160 passenger-trips would be generated by this alternative. The fares collected from this increase would slightly offset the operating costs, contributing to an estimated additional annual required operating subsidy of \$53,500.

### ***Adjust Route 20 Summer Service Levels, Offer Sunday Service***

As discussed above, Route 20 operates at different service levels during the summer and winter seasons, with an additional mid-day round trip between Crescent City and Eureka offered in the summer. This alternative explores the option of eliminating the extra summer trip to reallocate resources toward offering Sunday service on Route 20.

Eliminating the summer mid-day trip would reduce daily service hours by 5.5 hours, and it is projected to lower operating costs by \$45,100. According to the on-board survey, an average of 11 passengers used this trip per day over two observed trips, translating to an estimated loss of 1,310 passenger trips across the 102 days of the typical summer schedule when adjusted for projected ridership growth.

Sunday service could be implemented at either the baseline level previously discussed or at the existing winter service level. While both options would increase marginal operating costs, analysis shows that offering Sunday service at winter levels is the more effective alternative. The baseline Sunday service

Under this alternative, Route 20 service would be adjusted by eliminating the summer mid-day trip and introducing Sunday service at winter levels. This change is expected to result in a net increase in operating costs of \$42,225, including higher dispatching costs, and is projected to generate approximately a net increase of 150 passenger trips, with Sunday ridership conservatively estimated at 50 percent of the average Saturday ridership. Overall, this would increase the marginal operating subsidy by \$41,665, or \$20,833 if matched with 5311(f) grant funding.

Table 20: Route 20 Schedule Comparison											
<div><div>Key</div><div>Current NSX Connection</div><div>Potential Route 20 Expansion</div></div>											
Northbound						Southbound					
Eureka	Arcata	Klamath	Crescent City	Smith River		Smith River	Crescent City	Klamath	Arcata	Eureka	
Current Route 20 - October to May Schedule (Winter)											
Trip 1	--	--	--	6:00 AM	6:38 AM	Trip 1	6:45 AM	7:30 AM	8:00 AM	9:19 AM	9:39 AM
Trip 2	--	--	--	8:20 AM	9:05 AM	Trip 2	9:20 AM	10:00 AM	--	--	--
Trip 3	10:58 AM	11:18 AM	12:54 PM	1:25 PM	2:10 PM	Trip 3	2:15 PM	3:00 PM	3:30 PM	4:49 PM	5:09 PM
Trip 4	--	--	--	5:45 PM	6:25 PM	Trip 4	--	5:40 PM	6:25 PM	--	--
Trip 5	6:07 PM	6:27 PM	8:03 PM	8:33 PM	--	Trip 5	6:35 PM	7:12 PM	--	--	--
Proposed Summer Schedule to be extended Year Round if additional NSX connections can be facilitated with HTA and MTA											
Trip 1	--	--	--	6:00 AM	6:38 AM	Trip 1	6:45 AM	7:30 AM	8:00 AM	9:19 AM	9:39 AM
Trip 2	--	--	--	8:20 AM	9:05 AM	Trip 2	9:20 AM	10:00 AM	10:30 AM	11:49 PM	12:09 PM
Trip 3	10:58 AM	11:18 AM	12:54 PM	1:25 PM	2:10 PM	Trip 3	2:15 PM	3:00 PM	3:30 PM	4:49 PM	5:09 PM
Trip 4	1:48 PM	2:08 PM	3:26 PM	4:01 PM	--	Trip 4	--	5:40 PM	6:25 PM	--	--
Trip 5	--	--	--	5:45 PM	6:25 PM	Trip 5	6:35 PM	7:12 PM	--	--	--
Trip 6	6:07 PM	6:27 PM	8:03 PM	8:33 PM	--						
Sunday Alternative NSX Connecting Trips Only											
Trip 1	--	--	--	6:00 AM	6:38 AM	Trip 1	6:45 AM	7:30 AM	8:00 AM	9:19 AM	9:39 AM
Trip 2	10:58 AM	11:18 AM	12:54 PM	1:25 PM	2:10 PM	Trip 2	2:15 PM	3:00 PM	3:30 PM	4:49 PM	5:09 PM
Trip 3	6:07 PM	6:27 PM	8:03 PM	8:31 PM	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Note: Only the primary stop in each community has been listed.											
Eureka - (H St & 3rd St, HTA Transfer Point), Arcata - (Cal Poly Humboldt Library Circle), Klamath (Pem-Mey Fuel Stop), Crescent City (Cultural Center Transit Hub), Smith River (La Joya Market, Curry Transit Transfer Point).											
Source: RCTA Current, and Winter 2024-25 Schedules											

### ***Rebrand Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle as an Intercity Fixed Route***

A key finding from the online community survey was the demand for public transportation between Crescent City and Medford, OR, primarily to access the Rogue Valley International Airport. Medford and Grants Pass are important destinations for Del Norte County Residents to access essential services. Including the Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center, which offers specialized care unavailable in Crescent City or Eureka.

Currently, service between Crescent City and Medford is provided by the RCTA Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle and the Southwest (SW) Oregon Point bus. The Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle operates only on Tuesdays and Thursdays with limited timing, restricting medical appointments and other trip purposes to an 11 AM–2 PM window, and trips must be booked in advance. The SW Oregon Point bus, operating daily year-round, departs Crescent City at 11:25 AM and arrives in Medford at 2:55 PM. To make a round trip using this service requires an overnight stay, as the return trip departs Medford at 12:20 PM. This schedule was implemented by SW POINT just prior to the pandemic and has reduced travel options for Del Norte County residents. The old SW POINT schedule featured an early AM departure from Crescent City and an afternoon return trip, much like the RCTA Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle, which did allow for day trips if errands and appointments could be clustered in the middle of the day.

The RCTA Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle is currently operated utilizing RCTA CTSA TDA Section 4.5 funding, which is ideal for uses that fulfill the transportation needs of seniors and those with disabilities who are transit dependent. While the RCTA Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle allows for non-medical trip purposes, the branding is such that many potential riders do not know they can utilize the service.

One option would be for RCTA to rebrand and design the Medical Shuttle as an Intercity Route. The new service would augment Southwest Oregon Point intercity service between Crescent City and Medford by providing one round trip, two days a week, departing Crescent City at 8 AM with a return trip departing Medford at 2 PM. As long as meaningful intercity connections are made at the airport and Amtrak/Greyhound, this alternative would have the benefit of being eligible for competitive FTA 5311(f) funding, which could potentially subsidize half of the operating costs. It would also allow for Crescent City residents to make a day trip to Medford. Lastly, this intercity route would serve the SR 199 corridor and provide a connection to urbanized services in Grants Pass and Medford for residents of Gasquet and Hiouchi.

The new intercity service could continue to operate only if advance reservations were made. Sage Stage in Modoc County has a similar policy for its intercity routes. However, to be eligible for FTA 5311 (f) funding, the service would need to have published stops at the Rogue Valley Medford Airport and Medford Front Street Station to facilitate intercity transit service connections. Demand response service within Medford could be provided for an additional fee, but would need to tap into a separate funding source for that service.

The Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle operates around 70 days per year. It is also assumed that the new intercity service would operate more frequently at around 75 days per year. (Still less than the possible two days per week).

A very ballpark ridership estimate for this service was projected based on ridership per capita rates for similar intercity services to a major airport and medical services operated by Sage Stage in Modoc County. This intercity service to Medford has the potential to carry 860 passenger-trips per year. A similar fare structure to Route 20 and Sage Stage would be reasonable, such as a \$15 per trip fare for general public passengers, with a discount available for eligible passengers. Assuming an average fare of \$10 per trip, the marginal operating subsidy would be \$2,150 over the cost of the current Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle. This could be reduced by half if FTA 5311(f) funding were secured.

### **Pros of Rebranding**

- Estimated to generate more ridership and increase access to Medford for all travelers.
- Frees up CTSA funding for other programs such as those discussed in the following section.
- Eligible for FTA 5311 (f) funding.

### **Cons of Rebranding**

- It would require passengers making medical trips to plan around fixed stops and timetables or pay an additional fare for door-to-door service.
- Much higher marginal operating subsidy if FTA 5311 (f) funding cannot be secured.

## **INTERCITY ROUTE ALTERNATIVES PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

To evaluate the relative performance of the alternatives above, key impacts of each alternative were compared. The performance analysis considers impacts on ridership, marginal operating costs, the number of passengers carried per vehicle hour, and marginal operating costs per passenger trip. The performance evaluation gives insight into the relative benefits of the various alternatives.

### **Comparison of Intercity Service Alternatives**

Table 21 and Figures 21 - 23 show the relative performance of the service alternatives considered for Crescent City local services. As shown:

- In terms of ridership, expanding Route 20 wintertime service to 3 round-trips to Eureka would increase ridership the most (2,030 trips). This is followed by offering Sunday service at the same historical summer service levels (1,590). The option with the smallest ridership projection is the Southern Oregon Intercity Service (820).
- The alternatives that are eligible for FTA 5311(f) funding are the most cost-effective, as 50 percent of costs could be offset by grant funding if acquired.
- The recommended minimum productivity standard for RCTA Intercity Routes is 2.5 passenger-trips per hour. Only the morning Klamath run meets this standard. However, actual ridership for this service would depend on coordination with the YTTS.

When compared to local route alternatives, only the intercity options which can be subsidized with FTA 5311(f) funds are as cost-effective, in terms of marginal cost per trip, as the local route alternatives.

**Table 21: RCTA Alternatives Performance - Intercity Routes**

FY 2025-26

Service Alternative	Net Impact				
	Annual Ridership	Annual Service Hours	Annual Marginal Operating Cost <sup>1</sup>	Passenger-trips per Hour	Marginal Cost per Trip
Alternatives Meeting Minimum Standard Shaded in Green <sup>2</sup>					
Route 20 Morning Klamath Commuter Trip Year Round	1,190	458	\$36,600	2.6	\$30.76
Route 20 Add Stops at Sutter Health, and Walmart (Implemented)	610	244	\$16,800	2.5	\$27.54
Route 20 Extend the Evening NSE:101 Northbound Trip to Smith River	1,010	203	\$15,900	5.0	\$15.74
Route 20 Winter Service Expansion to Summer Service Levels (Add Mid-day Round Trip between Crescent City and Eureka)	2,030	1,218	\$48,100	1.7	\$23.69
Route 20- Sunday Service NSE:101 Connecting Runs (2 Round Trips)	1,090	638	\$26,100	1.7	\$23.94
Route 20- Adjust Service (Eliminate Summer Mid-day trip to Eureka, offer Sunday baseline service with NSE:101 connecting trips)	-220	77	\$14,303	-2.9	-\$65.01
Route 20- Adjust Service (Eliminate Summer Mid-day trip to Eureka, offer Sunday service at existing winter levels)	150	268	\$20,833	0.6	\$138.88
Rebrand Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle as an Intercity Fixed Route <sup>(3)</sup>	985	468	\$35,600	1.3	\$56.40
<b>Recommended Minimum Performance Standards</b>	Route 20			2.5	\$27.36
	Route 199			2.5	\$27.36

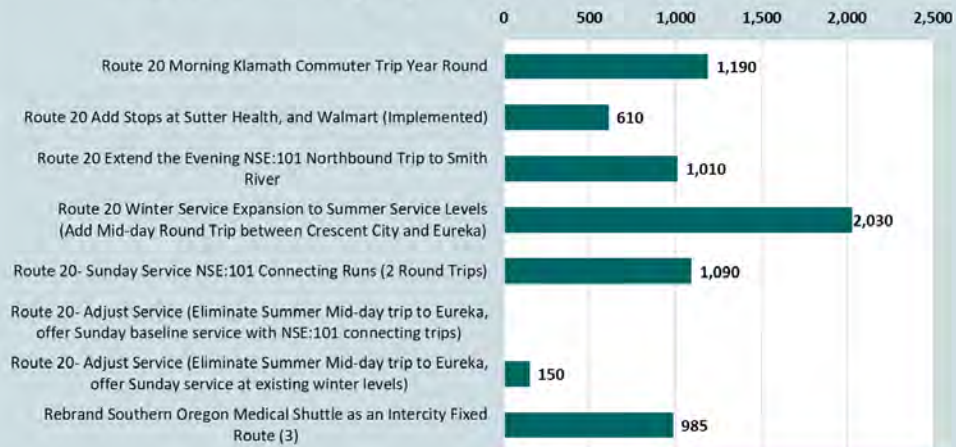
Note 1: Does not include fixed costs, includes fare revenue offset. Accounts for competitive 5311 (f) funding.

Note 2: Meets standards by eliminating a service not meeting the standard, or by increasing ridership while decreasing costs.

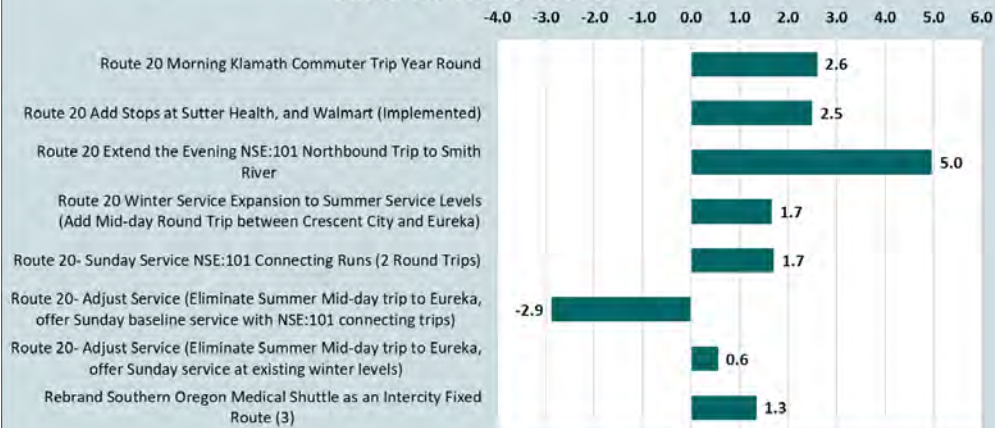
Note 3: No change in Annual Service Hours or Marginal Operating Cost Compared to Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle, Passengers per hour and Marginal Cost per Trip represents route level performance rather than net change, as Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle Data is estimated.



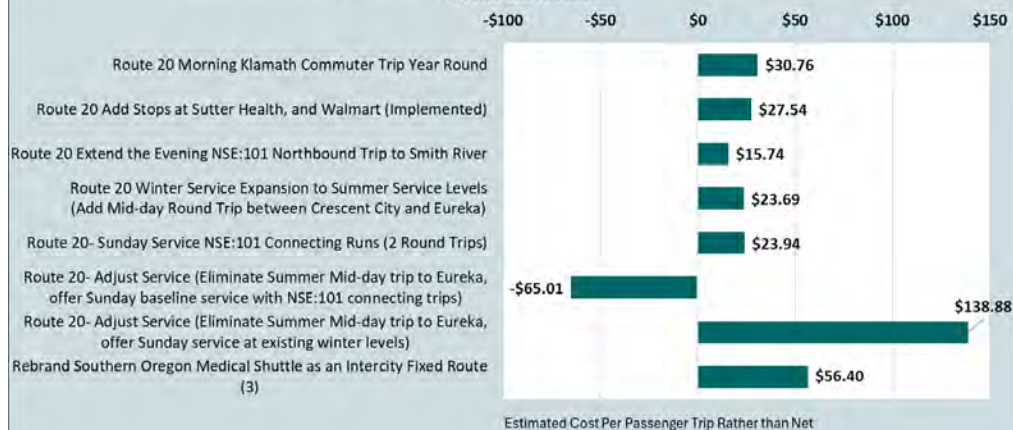
**Figure 21: Ridership Impact of Intercity Service Alternatives**



**Figure 22: Projected Passengers Per Hour Impact for Intercity Route Service Alternatives**



**Figure 23: Marginal Cost per Trip Impact of Intercity Service Alternatives**





## **EXPANDED DEMAND RESPONSE SERVICE AREA ALTERNATIVES**

### **Challenges and Considerations**

More specialized services for residents living outside the DAR service area has been cited as an unmet transit need. According to the 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, there are about 3,067 households comprised of 9,605 Del Norte County residents living outside of the DAR zone. Of those residents, 22 percent are seniors over the age of 65, 18 percent are individuals with a disability, and 10 percent have incomes below the federal poverty line. If RCTA were to expand its Dial-a-Ride service to serve all of Del Norte County, it is estimated that it would cost in the order of \$450,000 annually, which is not realistic for RCTA, nor is it an industry standard for very rural counties.

RCTA is the designated Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) for Del Norte County and is allocated up to 5 percent of Transportation Development Act (TDA) Local Transportation Funds (LTF) after off the top allocations for the purpose of providing for the transit needs of seniors, individuals with disabilities, or individuals who are unable to use conventional transit services due to other mobility restrictions. This funding is currently utilized by RCTA to administer its ADA eligibility assessment program, transit training program, and primarily to operate the Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle.

In FY 2024-25, the budgeted CTSA fund was \$58,853, but due to the limited demand for CTSA offered services, only \$13,890 had been spent as of February 2025. Because RCTA is the only public transit operator in Del Norte County, essentially all TDA funds are funneled to RCTA. However, the DNLTC could designate a new CTSA for Del Norte County if it believes that another organization would be better positioned to meet the needs of individuals who need specialized services.

### **Alternative Transportation Strategies for Residents of Outlying Communities**

Routes 20 and 199 are considered commuter bus services and, therefore, ADA paratransit requirements are not applicable. It is also not standard practice among rural agencies such as Mendocino or Modoc County to provide ¾ mile deviations along long-distance commuter/intercity routes. The county of San Luis Obispo offers a countywide ADA paratransit service. However, the operating cost per trip of this service is on the order of \$150. As a comparison, RCTA DAR is \$62 per trip. Alternative strategies, such as a Transportation Network Company (TNC) reimbursement project or a Mileage Reimbursement program, would likely be more cost-effective strategies for Del Norte County.

#### ***Transportation Network Company (TNC) Subsidy Program***

RCTA could enter into an agreement with a Transportation Network Company, such as Uber or Lyft, to provide vouchers for qualified passengers (individuals with a disability or seniors over the age of 65). The challenge in rural areas for this type of program is that TNCs are not required to be available at specific times or in specific areas. Therefore, it is possible that an Uber or Lyft would not be available when needed for this program. Additionally, finding ADA accessible TNCs could be difficult.

As part of this program, RCTA would have to establish a subsidy cap, which would be either a percentage of fare or a fixed amount over a time period. As an example, the City of Escalon will subsidize up to \$10 per ride on a TNC for a \$2.00 upfront fare for travel anywhere within the Escalon, Riverbank, Oakdale, or Modesto area. This represents an area of around 15 miles per trip. Washoe RCT in Nevada offers a program that provides a monthly \$60 voucher. Only rides within the designated service area are eligible

for voucher use, and any costs beyond the value of the voucher are the responsibility of the passenger. Voucher value cannot be used to provide a tip to the driver, which is a common courtesy for similar services.

For reference, assuming rides are available, the base case fare cost for a trip between Smith River and Crescent City is about \$30, and Gasquet/Klamath to Crescent City is about \$40. Local Taxi Service is even more expensive at about \$45 for a trip between Smith River and Crescent City; Gasquet/Klamath to Crescent City is about \$67. For this program, a \$20 maximum per ride subsidy would be reasonable. With a small amount of LTF funds, in the neighborhood of \$5,000 per year, dedicated to this program, at least 250 trips could be provided.

### ***Mileage Reimbursement Program***

Several CTSA's and transit agencies around the state have offered mileage reimbursement programs for high-need groups, which have been successful in providing for the needs of many rural residents as a ride of last resort. These programs are more cost-efficient than traditional DAR services.

As part of this model, participants are required to find their own volunteer drivers. The volunteer drivers use their own personal vehicles. Each ride is tracked by the participant, and mileage is submitted at the end of each month for reimbursement. This encourages participants to ask for help from friends, neighbors, and other community members while allowing them a means to compensate them for their help. The self-selection of drivers and the use of private vehicles eliminates the need for separate insurance for RCTA.

Program eligibility varies from program to program, as depicted in Table 22. In general, eligible participants include disabled individuals and seniors. A maximum number of miles eligible for reimbursement is established, and the mileage reimbursement rate is set at the federal mileage reimbursement rate, which is currently \$0.70 for 2025. RCTA could establish its own policies to effectively provide this service in Del Norte County while protecting against program abuse. Program performance is shown in Table 23.

For many peer agencies, programs are not administered by the CTSA, and administration is contracted out to a local social service agency with oversight by the CTSA or transit agency. Administrative duties include marketing the program, determining eligibility of applicants, reviewing reimbursement requests and disbursing funds, and compiling reports to submit to the CTSA. This often leads to a more expensive program; however, the number of trips increase.

Upsides to this type of program include a cost-effective way to provide for the needs of rural residents, limited risk for the CTSA, and lots of flexibility for riders. Similar to the TNC subsidy program, \$5,000 in LTF funds could be set aside for this program, which would be administered by RCTA staff. Roughly 5 hours a month of staff time would be required to run this program, after initial setup. It is recommended that RCTA continue to explore this option and have discussions with local social services agencies to gauge interest in collaborating with RCTA to provide this service.

**Table 22: Reimbursement Program Policies**

Policy	Placer Rides	Lake Link (Pay-Your-Pal) <sup>1</sup>	Tuolumne (TRIP)	El Dorado (My Ride)	San Joaquin (My Ride)
<b>Eligible Users</b>	Seniors (60+), Disabled, Low-Income, Without Alternative Transportation Means.	Lake County Residents on a Case by Case Basis (Criteria: Over 55 or Disabled, Low Income, Unable to Drive, Unable to Use Traditional Public Transit.	Seniors (60+), Disabled, Persons of Limited Means, Veterans.	Seniors (60+), Disabled, Veterans.	Transit Agency ADA Certified.
<b>Region</b>	Trips must begin and end in Placer County; out of county medical trips approved on a case by case basis.	Not Stipulated	Trips must begin and end in Tuolumne County; out of county medical trips with pre-approval.	Trips must begin or end in Western El Dorado County (Tahoe Basin excluded from program).	Approved trips within San Joaquin County and counties that share a border.
<b>Eligible Trip Purpose</b>	Medical, essential errands, trips to connect to transit or airport for other valid trip reasons, other essential trips on a case by case basis.	Medical, Grocery Shopping, Pharmacy, Food Bank, Community Events, Religious and Spiritual Ceremonies.	Health care, personal errands, shopping, social visits, school, religious activities, volunteering, dining, recreation, events.	Any	Personal, medical, and essential trips.
<b>Reimbursement Rate</b>	IRS Standard Rate.	\$0.50	IRS Standard Rate.	IRS Standard Rate.	IRS Standard Rate.
<b>Trip Cap</b>	No	No	Sonora <sup>2</sup> : 30 miles per trip All Others : 38 miles per trip.	No	No
<b>Monthly Mileage Cap</b>	200 miles per month.	400 miles per month (Medical Hardship Exemptions).	Sonora <sup>2</sup> : 300 miles per month Others: 375 miles per month.	350 miles per month.	250 miles per month.
<b>Out Of County Cap</b>	N/A	No	Case By Case Approval - No More than 300 Miles per round trip.	N/A	No
<b>Other</b>	If a program participant is unable to arrange for their own volunteer driver, they are eligible to receive two "Last Resort" rides per month via a commercial provider which will be arranged for them.	Mileage cap exemptions are made on a case by case basis for with those with reoccurring persistent medical appointments that would cause them to go over the mileage cap.	Ride sharing encouraged; trips must be made during regular transit operating hours.	Drivers who receive \$600 or more in reimbursements will receive a 1099 (contractor tax document).	Participants are required to provide reimbursements to their drivers and are excluded from the program on the first instance of fraud or abuse.

Note 1: Lake Links Pay-a-Pal increased its reimbursement rate from \$0.40, and its mileage cap from 300 in November 2024.

Note 2: Tuolumne sets lower mileage caps for individuals living within 10 miles of Sonora, where most services and shopping is available within the region.

Source: Transit Agency Pamphlets and Websites

**Table 23: Reimbursement Program Performance**

	Placer Rides (Reimbursement) <sup>1</sup>			Lake Link (Pay-Your-Pal) <sup>2</sup>			Average		
Performance Measures	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2024-25	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
One-Way Passenger-Trips	3,601	5,051	7,797	1,373	6,993	19,550	2,352	6,514	14,179
% Change from Previous Year	--	40.3%	54.4%	--	409.3%	179.6%	--	101.1%	55.7%
Reimbursed Miles	35,748	33,136	58,679	34,753	177,000	300,403	25,643	79,053	142,207
% Change from Previous Year	--	-7.3%	77.1%	--	409.3%	69.7%	--	173.0%	49.1%
Operating Costs <sup>6</sup>	\$161,350	\$111,620	\$114,433	\$13,697	\$70,800	\$150,202	\$53,666	\$67,974	\$112,934
% Change from Previous Year	--	-30.8%	2.5%	--	416.9%	112.1%	--	100.1%	51.6%
Operating Cost per Passenger-Trip	\$44.81	\$22.10	\$14.68	\$9.98	\$10.12	\$7.68	\$22.56	\$17.14	\$14.68
% Change from Previous Year	--	-50.7%	-33.6%	--	1.5%	-24.1%	--	17.6%	-3.9%
Operating Cost per Mile	\$4.51	\$3.37	\$1.95	\$0.40	\$0.40	\$0.50	\$1.73	\$1.21	\$0.96
% Change from Previous Year	--	-25.4%	-42.1%	--	0.0%	25.0%	--	-16.6%	2.5%
Miles Per Passenger Trip	9.9	6.6	7.5	25.3	25.3	15.4	21	22	19
% Change from Previous Year	--	-33.9%	14.7%	--	0.0%	-39.3%	--	39.9%	-6.0%
	Tuolumne TRIP			El Dorado (My Ride) <sup>3</sup>			San Joaquin (My Ride) <sup>4</sup>		
	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23 <sup>5</sup>	FY 2023-24
One-Way Passenger-Trips	129	75	21	--	5,642	13,230	4,304	14,810	30,296
% Change from Previous Year	-24.1%	-41.9%	-72.0%	--	--	134.5%	--	244.1%	104.6%
Reimbursed Miles	5,296	4,488	1,152	--	57,143	146,429	26,774	123,499	204,373
% Change from Previous Year	-27.2%	-15.3%	-74.3%	--	--	156.3%	--	361.3%	65.5%
Operating Costs <sup>6</sup>	\$3,489	\$2,900	\$772	--	\$40,000	\$102,500	\$36,129	\$114,549	\$196,765
% Change from Previous Year	-16.8%	-16.9%	-73.4%	--	--	156.3%	--	217.1%	71.8%
Operating Cost per Passenger-Trip	\$27.05	\$38.67	\$36.78	--	\$7.09	\$7.75	\$8.39	\$7.73	\$6.49
% Change from Previous Year	9.6%	43.0%	-4.9%	--	--	9.3%	--	-7.9%	-16.0%
Operating Cost per Mile	\$0.66	\$0.65	\$0.67	--	\$0.70	\$0.70	\$1.35	\$0.93	\$0.96
% Change from Previous Year	14.3%	-1.9%	3.7%	--	--	0.0%	--	-31.3%	3.8%
Miles Per Passenger Trip	41.1	59.8	54.9	--	10.1	11.1	6.2	8.3	6.7
% Change from Previous Year	-4.1%	45.8%	-8.3%	--	--	9.3%	--	34.1%	-19.1%

Sources: Tuolumne County Transit Agency Triennial Performance Audit FY 2019-20 - 2021-22, El Dorado Transit FY 2022-23 and 2023-24 Annual Internal Reports, and Budgets. San Joaquin Annual CTSA reports, Placer Rides Monthly Invoice Database

Note 1: Program Administrative costs included, RTPA staff costs are not included.

Note 2: Lake Link 2022-23 data is estimated bases on Aril 2023 SSTAC meeting minutes "reimbursing close to 15,000 miles a month", no 2023-24 data available, 2024 -25 data estimated based on November 2024-March 2025 Actuals.

Note 3: El Dorado My Ride began service in FY 2022-23, Operating Costs reflect budgeted amounts not actuals.

Note 4: San Joaquin My Ride total operating costs for FY 2022-23 and FY 2023-24 are estimated based on actual reimbursements plus FY 2021-22 actual administrative costs per trip adjusted for inflation, and marketing and software expenses adjusted for inflation only.

Note 5: Figure Reported in San Joaquin FY 2023-24 Access Annual Report annual report was 1,481. This is assumed to be a typo and has been adjusted to 14,810 as the associated text reads "One-way trips increased considerably compared to the previous year".

Note 6: Operating costs include administrative costs for Placer, Tuolumne, San Joaquin.

### ***Volunteer Driver Program***

In nearby Lake County, the regional CTSA Lake Links offers both a mileage reimbursement program, “Pay-Your-Pal, and recently introduced a volunteer driver program, “Ride-Links”. This program essentially functions the same as the mileage reimbursement program, with the key difference being that Lake Links matches passengers with volunteer drivers rather than requiring the passengers to organize their own driver.

Lake Links actively recruits drivers who need to undergo a background check, provide a clean driving record, vehicle, and insurance information, and sign a confidentiality agreement. Documentation is reviewed by Link Staff before approving drivers for the program. Wheelchair accessible vehicles are not a requirement, as all passengers are required to be able to enter and exit volunteers’ vehicles without assistance.

Lake Links began the process of implementing this program in 2021 and faced several challenges along the way, primarily the need for supplemental insurance for both the organization and its volunteer drivers and the recruitment of drivers. The program soft launched with no advertising in 2023 providing a minimal number of rides due to few volunteers being available, since the program has scaled up with 6 active volunteer drivers, and 39 trips provided between November 2024 and April 2025, the program currently has a waitlist of 27 eligible participants who live in parts of the county that do not currently have a volunteer available.

Del Norte Senior Center operated a volunteer driver program with organization-owned vehicles prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program was never reinstated due to a lack of volunteer drivers. It is likely that RCTA would face a similar challenge in recruiting drivers, especially if they were required to meet stringent eligibility requirements and utilize their own personal vehicle, similar to the Lake Links program.

The total costs of Lake Links transportation programs are not available beyond the direct costs of reimbursement, but they are estimated to far exceed the \$46,967 in LTF Section 4.5 that was apportioned to Lake Links. The program relies upon an agreement with Lake Transit Authority in which FTA 5310 funds are shared between the organizations, other grants, and individual donations. Due to the limited availability of RCTA funds, high insurance costs, and limited success of similar programs, this alternative is not recommended.

### **SERVICE REDUCTION ALTERNATIVES INTRODUCTION**

Given the uncertainty in public transit funding and recent and likely future increases in operating costs, it is relevant to consider service options that reduce service. RCTA received significant financial operating assistance in recent years through the FTA Cares Act; this funding source was made available to support transit operators in keeping services in place through the COVID-19 pandemic. RCTA is only able to claim about \$400,000 per year from this source and has only a few years of remaining funds available for claim, which are expected to be exhausted in FY 2027-28. This operation's funding support has allowed RCTA to maintain service levels. Once those funds are exhausted, preliminary budget projections indicate that RCTA will begin to operate at a deficit in FY 2028-29 if new funding sources cannot be secured or SB 125 funds are not used for operations purposes. The preliminary budget

projections also do not set aside any money for operating reserves; not contributing to a reserve fund is not a recommended and sustainable practice, which would make RCTA more subject to shocks to the economy or grant funding levels. Therefore, this SRTDP has identified several service reduction alternatives which have a low impact on ridership and overall system functionality. Service reduction alternatives are presented in Table 24 and described below.

### **Challenges and Considerations**

Reducing transit service is a difficult decision for any transit agency due to the potential impacts on transit-dependent individuals. Even short-term service reductions can alter passenger travel patterns, often leading to a drop in overall ridership that is hard to recover from, even if the cuts are later reinstated.

Crescent City Local Routes (1 and 3) and (2 and 4) are interlined, meaning any cuts to one of these interlined pairs typically need to be considered as a package, with the exception of the first and last runs of the day. These early and late runs often have the lowest ridership, but could be important for commuters traveling to work or school.

Route 20 is an important and well-utilized route that is part of the recently rolled out NSE:101, which is a collaborative effort between RCTA, HTA, and MTA to provide a public transit connection from Del Norte County to the Bay Area. Therefore, connections with HTA in Eureka should be maintained. Additionally, up to half of Route 20's operating costs, up to a \$300,000 limit, is funded through the Caltrans 5311(f) Intercity Bus Grant, thereby reducing the actual operating costs of this service. Fully allocated operating costs for Route 20 for FY 2025-26 are estimated to be \$862,792, which indicates a significant "overmatch". Only 35 percent of Route 20 operating costs are eligible to be covered by the Caltrans 5311 (f) grant; about \$262,792 must be directly covered by RCTA's general operating budget. NSE:101 partners continue to seek additional funding to support further expansion due to the desire for expansion of the blossoming interagency partnership. This would, in turn, give RCTA a bigger revenue pool to operate intercity transit services. Route 20 service reductions are not proposed.

Route 199 is RCTA's lowest-performing route, often making long and costly trips between Crescent City, Hiouchi, and Gasquet with few to no riders. However, this route serves as an important connection to these communities. Without RCTA's services, residents of Hiouchi and Gasquet, who do not have access to personal vehicles, would have significant challenges accessing medical services, social services, and essential shopping trips. The only other public transit option for these communities is SW POINT to Medford, but it requires an overnight stay. Impacts to student passengers have been considered, and any service reductions will have a limited impact on this group as DNUSD provides Yellow Bus service to these communities, and K-8 students attend Smith River Elementary School. Transit-dependent students of the College of the Redwoods would be most impacted by service cuts. Most classes offered by the College of the Redwoods are offered on a Monday and Wednesday, or a Tuesday and Thursday schedule.

**Table 24: Service Reduction Alternatives**

FY 2025-26

FY 2025-26		Parameters		Daily Service		Days per Year	Annual		Annual	Annual Ridership Impact <sup>1</sup>	Fare Revenue Impact	Marginal Operating Subsidy	
		Hours	Miles	Runs	Hours		Miles	Hours Cut	Miles Cut				Marginal
													Cost Savings
<b>Reduce Local Route Saturday/Holiday Service to 10 AM - 4 PM Year Round</b>													
Eliminate Route 2 ( 8 AM, 9 AM, and 5 PM Trip)		0.5	7.35	3	1.5	22.1	56	-84	-1,235	-\$5,600	-760	-\$390	-\$5,210
Eliminate Route 4 (8:30 AM, 9:30 AM, and 5:30 PM Trip)		0.5	7.67	3	1.5	23	56	-84	-1,289	-\$5,700	-440	-\$250	-\$5,450
<b>Net Impact</b>								<b>-168</b>	<b>-2,523</b>	<b>-\$11,300</b>	<b>-1,200</b>	<b>-\$640</b>	<b>-\$10,660</b>
<b>Reduce Route 1 &amp; 3 Evening Service Year Round</b>													
Eliminate 5:30 PM Trip Route 1		0.5	6.7	1	0.5	6.69	249	-125	-1,666	-\$8,200	-410	-\$210	-\$7,990
Eliminate 5:00 PM Trip Route 3		0.5	7.7	1	0.5	7.65	249	-125	-1,905	-\$8,400	-60	-\$30	-\$8,370
<b>Net Impact</b>								<b>-249</b>	<b>-3,571</b>	<b>-\$16,600</b>	<b>-470</b>	<b>-\$240</b>	<b>-\$16,360</b>
<b>Reduce Route 4 Evening Service Year Round</b>													
Eliminate 5:30 PM Trip Route 4		0.5	7.7	1.0	0.5	7.67	249	-125	-1,910	-\$8,400	-480	-\$280	-\$8,120
<b>Net Impact</b>								<b>-125</b>	<b>-1,910</b>	<b>-\$8,400</b>	<b>-480</b>	<b>-\$280</b>	<b>-\$8,120</b>
<b>Reduce Route 3 and 4 Evening Service</b>													
Eliminate 5:00 PM Trip Route 3		0.5	7.7	1.0	0.5	7.7	249.0	-124.5	-1904.9	-\$8,400	-60	-30.0	-\$8,370
Eliminate 5:30 PM Trip Route 4		0.5	7.7	1.0	0.5	7.7	249.0	-124.5	-1909.8	-\$8,400	-480	-280.0	-\$8,120
<b>Net Impact</b>								<b>-249</b>	<b>-3,815</b>	<b>-16,800</b>	<b>-540</b>	<b>-\$310</b>	<b>-\$16,490</b>
<b>Route 199 - Winter Service Adjustments (3 trips per day 3 days a week)</b>													
Add 1 RT 3 days a week		1.5	43.5	1	1.5	43.5	100	150	4,350	\$11,600	400	\$420	\$11,180
Reduce service to 3 days per week - Winter		1.5	43.5	2	3	87	66	-198	-5,742	-\$15,300	-720	-\$1,650	-\$13,650
<b>Net Impact</b>								<b>-48</b>	<b>-1,392</b>	<b>-\$3,700</b>	<b>-320</b>	<b>-\$1,230</b>	<b>-\$2,470</b>
<b>Reduce Route 199 Summer Service to Current Winter Service Levels (Weekdays 2 trips per day)</b>													
Eliminate Summer Weekday 1:30 Trip Route 199 <sup>2</sup>		1.5	43.5	1	1.5	43.5	83	-125	-3,611	-\$9,600	-170	-\$180	-\$9,420
<b>Net Impact</b>								<b>-125</b>	<b>-3,611</b>	<b>-\$9,600</b>	<b>-170</b>	<b>-\$180</b>	<b>-\$9,420</b>
<b>Route 199 - Year Round Service Adjustments (3 trips per day 3 days a week)</b>													
Winter Add 1 RT 3 days a week		1.5	43.5	1	1.5	43.5	100	150	4350	11600	400	420	11180
Reduce service to 3 days per week - Winter		1.5	43.5	2	3	87	66	-198	-5,742	-\$15,300	-720	-\$1,650	-\$13,650
Reduce service to 3 days per week - Summer		1.5	43.5	2	3	87	52	-156	-4,524	-\$12,100	-350	\$350	-\$12,450
<b>Net Impact</b>								<b>-204</b>	<b>-5,916</b>	<b>-\$15,800</b>	<b>-670</b>	<b>-\$880</b>	<b>-\$14,920</b>
<b>Route 199 - Year Round Service Adjustments (3 trips per day 2 days a week)</b>													
Add 1 RT 2 days a week - Winter		1.5	43.5	1	1.5	43.5	66	150	4,350	\$11,600	270	\$280	\$11,320
Reduce service to 2 days per week - Winter		1.5	43.5	2	3.0	87.0	100	-300	-8,700	-\$23,200	-520	-\$550	-\$22,650
Reduce service to 2 days per week - Summer		1.5	43.5	3	4.5	130.5	69	-311	-9,005	-\$24,000	-510	-\$540	-\$23,460
<b>Net Impact</b>								<b>-461</b>	<b>-13,355</b>	<b>-\$35,600</b>	<b>-760</b>	<b>-\$810</b>	<b>-\$34,790</b>
<b>Reduce Route 199 Service (2 trips per day 2 days a week) Year Round</b>													
Reduce service to 2 days per week - Summer		1.5	43.5	3	4.5	130.5	69	-311	-9,005	-\$24,000	-510	-\$540	-\$23,460
Eliminate 1:30 PM Mid-day Trip - Summer <sup>3</sup>		1.5	43.5	1	1.5	43.5	14	-21	-609	-\$1,600	-30	-\$30	-\$1,570
Reduce service to 2 days per week - Winter		1.5	43.5	2	3.0	87.0	100	-300	-8,700	-\$23,200	-520	-\$550	-\$22,650
<b>Net Impact</b>								<b>-632</b>	<b>-18,314</b>	<b>-\$48,800</b>	<b>-1,060</b>	<b>-\$1,120</b>	<b>-\$47,680</b>

Note 1: Assumed decline in ridership based on trip level ridership data collected during RCTA survey (September 18th to 21st, 2024).

Note 2: Calculated as a full package, does not include Saturday Mid-Day cuts as that is included in the next line. Ridership decline assumed to be a third of ridership increased by 10 percent for less convenience due ridership data constraints.

Note 3: Only represents remaining mid-day trips not cut by reducing from 6 days to 2 days of service during the summer months.



**Table 25: Microtransit Replacement Alternatives**  
FY 2025-26

			Parameters		Daily Service		Days per Year	Annual		Annual Marginal	Annual Ridership Impact <sup>1</sup>	Fare Revenue Impact <sup>(3)</sup>	Marginal Operating Subsidy
			Hours	Miles	Hour			Hours Changed	Miles Changed	Cost Savings			
					Runs	s							
Replace Saturday Local Service with Comingled Microtransit (8 AM - 5 PM)													
Eliminate Route 2	0.5	7.35	9	4.5	66.2	56	-252	-3,704	-\$16,900	-3,670	-\$3,870	-\$13,030	
Eliminate Route 4	0.5	7.67	9	4.5	69	56	-252	-3,866	-\$17,000	-2120	-\$2,240	-\$14,760	
Comingle DAR				9	112	56	-504	-6,246	-\$33,000	770	\$810	-\$33,810	
Replace with Saturday Microtransit				9	206	56	504	11,533	\$36,800	1250	\$1,610	\$35,190	
One Active Vehicle Software Cost Estimate <sup>2</sup>									\$25,000			\$25,000	
Net Impact							-504	-2,283	-\$5,100	-3,770	-\$3,690	-\$1,410	
Replace Weekday Evening Local Service with Comingled Microtransit (4 PM - 8 PM)													
Eliminate Route 1 (4:30 PM and 5:30 PM Trip)	0.5	6.7	2	1	13.4	249	-249	-3,332	-\$16,500	-750	-\$390	-\$16,110	
Eliminate Route 2 (4:00 PM and 5:00 PM Trip)	0.5	7.35	2	1	14.7	249	-249	-3,660	-\$16,700	-5,480	-\$2,820	-\$13,880	
Eliminate Route 3 (4:00 PM and 5:00 PM Trip)	0.5	7.7	2	1	15.3	249	-249	-3,810	-\$16,800	-1,250	-\$680	-\$16,120	
Eliminate Route 4 (4:30 PM and 5:30 PM Trip)	0.5	7.67	2	1	15.3	249	-249	-3,820	-\$16,800	-1,990	-\$1,150	-\$15,650	
Comingle DAR				2	24.8	249	-498	-6,172	-\$32,600	1080	\$1,140	-\$33,740	
Replace with 4-8 Microtransit				4	45.8	249	996	11,396	\$64,500	2900	\$3,740	\$60,760	
One Active Vehicle Software Cost Estimate <sup>2</sup>									\$25,000			\$25,000	
Net Impact							-498	-9,397	-\$9,900	-5,490	-\$160	-\$9,740	
Replace Weekday Evening Local Service with Comingled Microtransit (5 PM - 8 PM)													
Eliminate Route 1 (5:30 PM Trip)	0.5	7.7	1	0.5	7.65	249	-125	-1,905	-\$8,400	-250	-\$130	-\$8,270	
Eliminate Route 2 (5:00 PM Trip)	0.5	7.35	1	0.5	7.35	249	-125	-1,830	-\$8,400	-2,240	-\$1,150	-\$7,250	
Eliminate Route 3 (5:00 PM Trip)	0.5	7.7	1	0.5	7.67	249	-125	-1,910	-\$8,400	-750	-\$410	-\$7,990	
Eliminate Route 4 (5:30 PM Trip)	0.5	7.67	1	0.5	7.67	249	-125	-1,910	-\$8,400	-500	-\$290	-\$8,110	
Comingle DAR				1	12.4	249	-249	-3,086	-\$16,300	540	\$570	-\$16,870	
Replace with 5-8 Microtransit				3	22.9	249	747	5,698	\$46,300	2450	\$3,160	\$43,140	
One Active Vehicle Software Cost Estimate <sup>2</sup>									\$25,000			\$25,000	
Net Impact							0	-4,943	\$21,400	-750	\$1,750	\$19,650	

Note 1: Assumed decline in ridership based on trip level ridership data collected during RCTA survey (September 18th to 21st, 2024).

Note 2: Estimated annual cost to license one active microtransit vehicle at a time based on microtransit cost proposals received by other transit operators. Does not include one time start up costs estimated to be \$700 for onboard hardware, and \$3,000 for onsite technology training. Additional vehicle costs estimated at \$5,000 per year.

Note 3: Assumes existing fare structure.

## **Service Reduction Alternatives**

### ***Reduce Local Route Saturday/Holiday Service to Peak 10-4 Time Year-Round***

Most transit agencies typically experience lower ridership on Saturdays compared to weekdays, with higher demand during morning and evening commuting hours. However, Crescent City routes have relatively high ridership on Saturdays, about 85% of weekday ridership. On Saturdays, boardings peak between 10 AM and 4 PM, rather than in the early morning or evening hours.

Reducing Saturday service could be a way to cut costs without significantly impacting access to essential services like medical or social services, which are typically closed on weekends, or students' ability to get to school or after-school activities. However, this would likely be an unpopular move, as many survey respondents requested more Saturday service. The cuts would most likely affect workers in the tourism and hospitality industries who rely on RCTA to commute to work, as well as the local businesses that depend on these workers.

Under this alternative, the 8 AM, 9 AM, and 5 PM trips of Routes 2 and 4 would be eliminated on Saturdays. This would save around \$11,300 in operating costs, and 1,200 passenger-trips would be lost, contributing to an operating subsidy savings of \$10,660.

### ***Reduce Route 1 and 3 Evening Service Year-Round***

During the survey period, ridership was very low on the 5:00 PM Route 3 trip and the 5:30 PM Route 1 trip. Since these routes are interlined, these run cuts are considered together. If these runs are eliminated, the reduction in ridership from the 5:00 PM Route 3 trip is significantly smaller than that of the 5:30 PM Route 1 trip, which serves the core area of Crescent City.

The reductions would most heavily affect traditional commuters and students attending after-school activities who rely on the bus for their trips home. Residents along Northcrest Drive north of Washington Blvd. would need to use the 4:00 PM Route 3 trip, while Route 1 commuters could take the 4:30 PM Route 1 trip or the 5:00 PM Route 2 trip, which operates in a similar but reversed direction. These reductions in service are expected to reduce operating costs by \$16,600 and ridership by 400 annual trips, and contribute to a savings of \$16,390 in operating subsidies.

### ***Reduce Route 4 Weekday Evening Service Year-Round***

Route 4 serves the Elk Valley Rancheria and Bertch Tract, with very few riders on the 5:30 PM trip. Cutting this trip on weekdays would force residents of the Bertch Tract to return home on the 4:30 PM trip. While this cut would slightly affect travel options, it still provides a viable alternative without significantly disrupting Route 4 service. This would save around \$8,400, and 480 passenger-trips would be lost, contributing to an operating subsidy savings of \$8,120.

### ***Eliminate the Last Run of Route 3 and Route 4***

Another combination would be to eliminate the last runs of Routes 3 and 4. In this case, the bus which operates Route 2/4 would finish the last Route 1 run instead of operating the last Route 4. Basically, switching the interlining for the final route run. Under this option, roughly 540 trips would be lost for a cost savings of \$16,490.

### ***Route 199 Winter Service Adjustments (3 Trips Per Day, 3 Days Per Week)***

During the summer, Route 199 operates Monday through Friday with three trips daily: early morning, midday, and afternoon. In winter, the midday trip is suspended. This change limits convenience for riders who need to travel to Crescent City for short shopping or appointments, as they must stay in Crescent City for almost 8 hours between 8:00 AM and 4:15 PM. The current schedule does not support full-time employment in Crescent City due to the late afternoon return trip departing Crescent City a bit too early for most full-time job schedules.

Route 199 does provide school access for Del Norte High School and College of the Redwoods students. However, the yellow bus service is available for high school students in Hiouchi and Gasquet, aligning with the winter schedule's morning and afternoon trips. For College of the Redwoods, only 19 out of 30 courses in spring 2025 can be accessed by students dependent on Route 199, as many course hours extend beyond the return trip's timing. With a later return trip, more classes are accessible. A 6 PM return trip enables 6 additional classes to be attended, and a 9 PM return trip would enable all College of the Redwoods classes offered at the Crescent City Campus to be accessible to those dependent on Route 199 for their transportation.

One option is to reduce the number of days Route 199 operates per week during the winter season, but increase winter service to three trips a day from the current two trips per day. This would still allow residents of Hiouchi and Gasquet to spend less time in Crescent City for shopping or appointments, although they would need to make them on certain days of the week. This scenario could offer modest cost savings for RCTA while minimizing service disruptions. The proposed alternative would be to offer winter Route 199 service Tuesday–Thursday only, with three trips a day, as these are the days of the week that showed the strongest ridership during July 2024– November 2024. When compared relative to existing Route 199 winter services, this change in service would save around \$3,700, and 20 passenger-trips would be lost, contributing to an operating subsidy savings of \$2,360.

### ***Reduce Route 199 Summer Service (2 Trips Per Day, 5 Days a Week, Year-Round)***

Historically, RCTA has ramped up summer service levels for Route 199, increasing trips to three per day and adding Saturday service from June through September (Summer Saturday Service on Route 199 was discontinued effective May 2025). This expansion is driven by the popularity of the Smith River Canyon, which is a major destination for river activities and access to Jedediah Smith State Park. As a result, Route 199 sees a 40% increase in ridership during the summer, with monthly ridership rising from an average of 193 trips in the winter to 269 in the summer.

However, the significant increase in service hours, which rises by 80 percent from 15 service hours per week in winter to 27 service hours per week in summer, may not be justified by the increase in ridership.

Another potential cost-saving measure is to operate the winter schedule year-round. This alternative would eliminate the need to adjust travel patterns and routines between winter and summer schedules. However, the cuts would likely impact recreational visitors to the region more than local residents, as locals are already accustomed to utilizing winter service levels. Reducing Route 199 service by one round trip per day during the summer months would contribute to a \$9,600 decrease in operating costs, and 170 passenger trips would be lost. This contributes to a \$9,420 savings in operating subsidies.

### ***Route 199-Service Adjustments (3 Trips Per Day, 3 days a Week, Year-Round)***

This alternative would standardize Route 199 to operate three round-trips per day, three days a week, throughout the year. In winter, this restores the midday trip that is currently suspended, while also consolidating service to three days per week—targeting the days with the highest average ridership, which in July through September of FY 2024-25 was Tuesday through Thursday. Summer service would also be reduced from six to three days per week. The average daily ridership for Saturday was 8.9 passenger trips per day compared to 11.9 passenger trips per day on weekdays. This option preserves reasonable access to Crescent City for Hiouchi and Gasquet residents, allowing for shorter-duration trips and improved access, while still reducing overall service levels.

Compared to existing service levels, this adjustment would reduce operating costs by about \$15,800 and eliminate approximately 370 annual passenger trips. Contributing to a net annual operating subsidy savings of \$14,810. This is a modest yet balanced approach to improving Route 199 efficiency while maintaining core access.

### ***Route 199-Service Adjustments (3 Trips Per Day, 2 days a Week, Year-Round)***

This more aggressive alternative reduces Route 199 service to only two days per week, while maintaining three round-trips on each operating day year-round. As with the previous option, this includes restoring the midday trip during winter but further limits the number of weekly service days. This change would significantly reduce operating costs but may lead to access challenges for transit-dependent residents with limited flexibility. If adopted, it is recommended that Tuesday and Thursday be the service days as they have historically carried the most passenger trips, and this would preserve access to some College of the Redwoods classes.

This scenario is best suited for a contingency plan should Route 199 remain unfunded by programs such as FTA 5311(f). The change would reduce total operating costs by \$35,600 and eliminate approximately 840 annual passenger trips. Contributing to an annual operating subsidy savings of \$34,710.

### ***Reduce Route 199 to Lifeline Service (2 Trips Per day, 2 Days a Week) Year-round***

This alternative represents the most aggressive approach to cutting Route 199 services. While it's critical for RCTA to maintain service for the communities of Hiouchi and Gasquet, which rely on public transportation to access Crescent City for essential goods and services, the route's low ridership and high operational costs make it a service where cuts could provide substantial savings. In terms of passenger-trips per vehicle hour, Route 199 is not much lower than Route 20. However, Route 20 receives FTA 5311(f) funding, which subsidizes a portion of Route 20's operating costs. Reducing Route 199 to just two days a week with two trips per day would limit access to public transportation for a disadvantaged population and recreation visitors, but it would group riders into fewer, more essential trips.

This alternative would result in a \$48,800 reduction in operating costs, while 1,060 passenger trips would be lost (about 50 percent of the 2023/24 total ridership). This would contribute to a savings of \$47,680 in annual operating subsidies.

If RCTA is successful in obtaining 5311(f) or other sustainable funding sources to support new trips to Medford through Hiouchi and Gasquet (as discussed above), much more service could be provided in

this corridor without causing RCTA to operate at unsustainable service levels. Short of new funding, most likely 5311(f), RCTA may need to consider these substantial service cuts to Route 199 in order to provide this essential service at levels more in line with current demand and projected operating deficit.

## **COMPARISON OF SERVICE REDUCTION ALTERNATIVE PERFORMANCE**

This section outlines the relative performance of each service in terms of passenger-trips per hour and marginal cost per trip, and compares them against the performance standards recommended in Table 16.

### **Comparison of Service Reduction Alternatives**

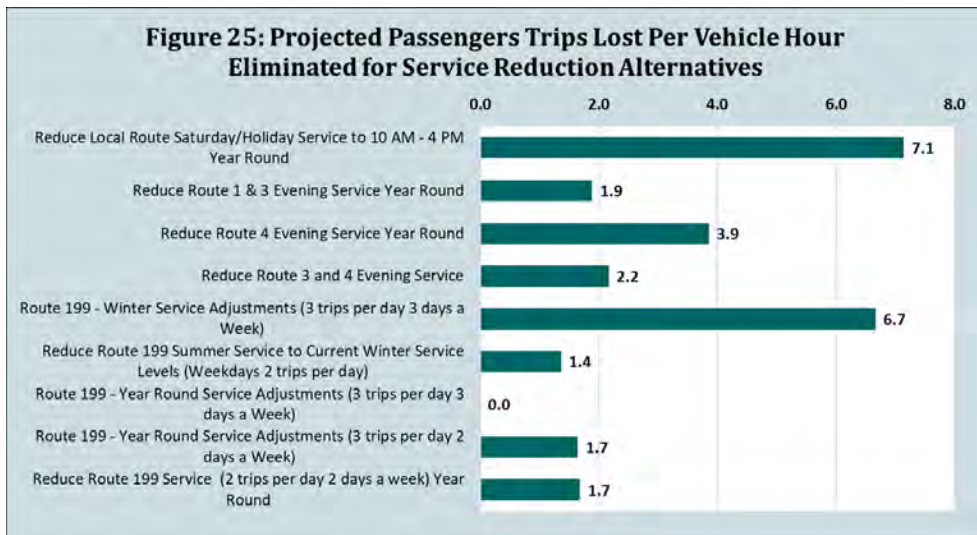
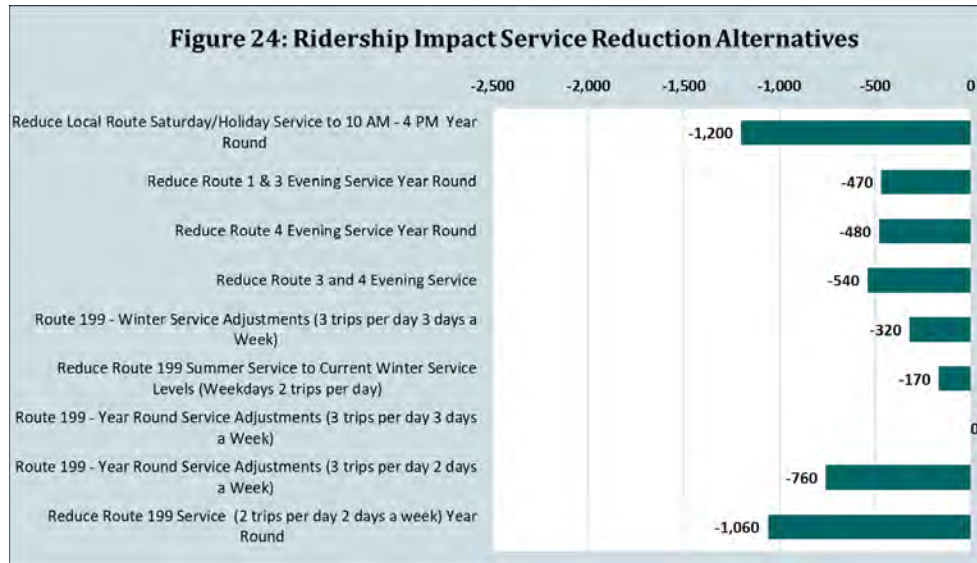
Table 26 and Figures 24- 26 show the relative performance of the service reduction alternatives.

- Reducing Route 199 Summer Service to Current Winter Levels (Weekdays 2 trips per day) offers the strongest potential to improve cost efficiency, with the lowest impact to ridership (170 trips lost) and only 1.4 passenger trips lost per service hour reduced. This option results in a marginal savings of \$56.47 per trip lost. This option would save around \$9,600 in operating costs.
- Reducing Route 1 and 3 Evening Service presents the strongest potential to improve route-level performance, with only 1.9 passenger trips lost per service hour reduced, and yields savings of \$35.32 per passenger trip lost. A total of \$16,600 in annual operating costs would be saved with a loss of 470 trips.
- Reducing Local Route Saturday/Holiday Service to 10 AM–4 PM year-round is the least favorable option for the local routes, with the highest ridership loss (1,200 annual trips), moderate cost savings of \$11,300, and the highest loss in productivity (7.1 trips per hour), along with the lowest marginal savings per trip (\$9.42).
- Reducing Route 199 Service to 2 trips per day, 2 days a week, year-round provides significant cost savings (\$48,800), but reduces the route to lifeline service levels, severely limiting mobility for transit-dependent individuals in Hiouchi and Gasquet. Ridership loss would total 1,260 trips, which is half of the existing ridership. Reducing Route 199 service to 3 trips per day, 2 or 3 days a week strikes a middle ground between cost savings and providing a usable service.

**Table 26: RCTA Alternatives Performance - Service Reduction Alternatives**  
FY 2025-26

Service Alternative	Net Impact				
	Annual Ridership	Annual Service Hours	Annual Marginal Operating Cost Savings <sup>1</sup>	Passenger-trips Lost per Service Hour Reduction	Marginal Savings per Trip Lost
Reduction Alternatives Meeting Minimum Standard Shaded in Green					
Reduce Local Route Saturday/Holiday Service to 10 AM - 4 PM Year Round	-1,200	-168	-\$11,300	7.1	\$9.42
Reduce Route 1 & 3 Evening Service Year Round	-470	-249	-\$16,600	1.9	\$35.32
Reduce Route 4 Evening Service Year Round	-480	-125	-\$8,400	3.9	\$17.50
Reduce Route 3 and 4 Evening Service	-540	-249	-\$16,800	2.2	\$31.11
Route 199 - Winter Service Adjustments (3 trips per day 3 days a Week)	-320	-48	-\$3,700	6.7	\$11.56
Reduce Route 199 Summer Service to Current Winter Service Levels (Weekdays 2 trips per day)	-170	-125	-\$9,600	1.4	\$56.47
Route 199 - Year Round Service Adjustments (3 trips per day 3 days a Week)	-670	-204	-\$15,800	3.3	\$23.58
Route 199 - Year Round Service Adjustments (3 trips per day 2 days a Week)	-760	-461	-\$35,600	1.7	\$46.84
Reduce Route 199 Service (2 trips per day 2 days a week) Year Round	-1,060	-632	-\$48,800	1.7	\$46.04
Recommended Minimum Performance Standards	Crescent City Local Routes (1,2,3, and 4)			9.0	\$6.52
	Route 20			2.5	\$27.36
	Route 199			2.5	\$27.36
Note 1: Does not include fixed costs, includes fare revenue offset.					







## **MICROTRANST SERVICE REPLACEMENT ALTERNATIVES**

As discussed in the local route service alternatives section, microtransit offers a means to add flexibility to services and cover areas or time periods which are low-performing. However, microtransit comes with technology costs (on the order of \$25,000 per year), and productivity (passenger-trips per vehicle hour) is limited by the demand response nature of the service. “Comingling” is the process of combining the general public on-demand microtransit with ADA paratransit. This practice can save money as two separate services are not required to operate. As discussed in general, RCTA’s local routes function well and are highly productive for the majority of the service day. Considering the need to reduce operating costs in the future, it is worth considering whether replacing a fixed route and a comingled microtransit service could offer cost savings while retaining or improving ridership.

As shown in Table 26, replacing local route services does, in some cases, provide a cost savings, but all reduce ridership due to the reduced productivity compared to fixed route services. As shown in the table, the \$25,000 annual technology fee is applied to each alternative. Figures presented in Table 26 do not include the estimated one-time hardware and training charge of \$4,000 needed to implement the technology. The options below assume that the same fixed route rate structure (instead of the \$3 fare referenced for other microtransit options above) would be charged even when microtransit is operating, as these microtransit options both replace and supplement regular fixed route service, which many transit-disadvantaged residents depend on.

### **Replace Saturday Local Service with Comingled Microtransit**

Saturday Local Services currently include Route 2 and 4, which operate as an interlined pair with one bus in service at a time, and the Crescent City DAR, which operates a smaller separate vehicle. Replacing these services with a single vehicle operating would provide microtransit service to all users within the existing Crescent City DAR zone while prioritizing DAR rides through advanced reservation requirements.

Previous Saturday, DAR riders would experience little to no change in their services, aside from more of those trips may have additional riders on board than in the past. Saturday DAR ridership is assumed to be unchanged by this shift in services. Previous fixed route users would experience the increased flexibility of curb-to-curb service, but bookings would be subject to availability, and given RCTA’s historic Saturday ridership, would likely face long wait times for service during peak times. Saturday Ridership for Route 2 and 4 services is about 85 percent of weekday ridership and is estimated to be about 5,790 in FY 2025-26, which far exceeds the operational capacity of microtransit services.

Overall, replacing RCTA’s existing Crescent City Local Services with microtransit would save \$1,490 in annual operating subsidy, but also lead to a ridership loss of 3,770.

### **Replace Weekday Evening Local Service with Comingled Microtransit**

RCTA’s local services ridership tends to decline late in the day on weekdays, and expanded evening service hours were a frequent request for service improvement during the survey effort. Two scenarios are laid out for evening service with microtransit. The difference is the time at which the service shifts from fixed route to comingled microtransit. Both scenarios outlined below would extend the span of Crescent City Local services to 8 PM.

### ***Microtransit Replacement 4 PM -8 PM***

If the shift occurred at 4 PM, it would eliminate the final two weekday trips of Routes 1,2,3, and 4. This would generate a marginal operating subsidy of \$9,740 annually, while also reducing ridership significantly by 5,490 (10 percent decline).

### ***Microtransit Replacement 5 PM -8 PM***

If the shift occurred at 5 PM, it would eliminate only the final weekday trips of Routes 1,2,3, and 4. Unlike the other microtransit replacement alternatives, this would generate a marginal operating subsidy increase of \$19,650 annually. It would also have a much lower impact on ridership, as ridership declines much more significantly during the 5 PM hour. Roughly 750 or 1 percent of annual weekday ridership would be lost due to the operational capacity of microtransit.

**INTRODUCTION**

RCTA's fare structure was presented in Table 10. In summary, fares for the general public adult fares are \$1.50 for local routes 1,2,3,4, and 300, and \$2.50 per zone for regional routes 20 and 199, with a maximum fare of \$14.00 for trips between Smith River and Eureka on Route 20. Fixed route monthly passes are available for \$35 for local routes only, and \$55 for all local and regional trips within Del Norte County. DAR fares are \$2.00 for ADA-certified riders, and \$6.00 for non-ADA-certified passengers and same-day service.

The most recent fare adjustment was approved by the RCTA board in June of 2024 and went into effect in October of 2024. This adjustment was a modest fare increase of \$0.25 for local routes and \$0.50 per zone for regional routes, as well as a \$0.25 increase for ADA DAR Service, and \$1.00 for non-ADA certified passengers and same-day service. This fare increase was targeted at improving RCTA's farebox requirement, which is 10 percent of operating costs per the Transportation Development Act (TDA) requirements, as RCTA is classified as a rural transit agency based on population. Prior to FY 2020-21, this requirement was enforced by reducing the amount of TDA available to agencies that did not achieve their TDA-established farebox recovery ratio.

All California transit agencies have been exempted from TDA farebox requirement penalties since FY 2020-21 per Assembly Bill (AB) 90, this exemption has been extended twice per AB 149 and Senate Bill (SB) 125 with current exemptions through FY 2025-26, these exemptions were put in place to help transit agencies effectively respond to the impacts of the COVID pandemic. State legislature has since considered eliminating the farebox ratio requirement penalties entirely in recent years, as it is thought to encourage counterproductive decisions that can lead to failure to provide public transit services to those who need it most. As of this writing, no permanent adjustments have been made. AB 149 also allowed for the inclusion of federal operating grant funds to be classified as local support when calculating the farebox ratio. TDA farebox ratio calculations are required to be performed annually by an independent fiscal auditor; the most recent fiscal audit was completed for FY 2022-23 and calculated to be 5 percent, which is significantly below the required ratio. However, federal operating grants were not classified as local support in this calculation, which would be expected to significantly boost the farebox ratio well above TDA requirements. RCTA's annual apportionments of FTA 5311 and 5311(f) funds amount to over half a million annual dollars, and inclusion of these funds in the farebox ratio calculation will more than satisfy the 10% standard. However, if this interpretation should change in the future, RCTA may again find itself needing to raise fare revenue or reduce operating costs. In the short term, it is recommended that RCTA work with its fiscal auditor to ensure that farebox calculations include AB 149 allowances beginning in FY 2024-25.

Recently, RCTA has offered a Free Rides Program on all fixed routes to Seniors (65+), Youth (Under 18), Veterans, and Disabled individuals in recent years, made possible by funding through the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP). TDA allows transit agencies to use an amount of LCTOP funds equal to the difference between full fares and free or reduced fares as "fare revenue" in farebox ratio

calculations. In FY 24-25, the Free Rides Program consumed \$61k of its current annual allocation of \$71k. If RCTA's ridership continues to grow as quickly as it has in recent years, it is likely that in FY 2025-26 and beyond, LCTOP funding alone will not be sufficient to support the Free Rides Program.

## **FARE ALTERNATIVES**

### **\$2 Flat Fare on Route 20 Pilot Program**

As mentioned above, the NSE:101 is a partnership between RCTA, HTA, and MTA, which enables passengers to travel between Crescent City and Santa Rosa and ultimately to the San Francisco Bay Area on public transit. Coordination of services is important to the continued success of the partnership. The implementation of contactless payment systems across agencies has allowed greater convenience to passengers and the potential for increased ridership.

Currently, however, each agency has its own fare structure. RCTA charges as much as \$14 for the full southbound leg of its morning Route 20 NSE:101 trip between Smith River and Eureka, and as much as \$12 for its northbound leg of the Route 20 NSE:101 trip between Eureka and Crescent City. HTA fares are \$2 for its portion of the NSE:101 trip between Eureka and Ukiah, and MTA fares are \$18 for its portion of the NSE:101 between Ukiah and Santa Rosa. (MTA is currently running a limited-time promotion for \$2 trips if passengers pay via contactless card reader.) NSE:101 partners have expressed interest in offering a consistent fare structure of \$2 for each leg of the NSE:101 trip.

Table 27 presents RCTA Route 20 fare revenue by passenger type for FY 2023-24 and uses this data to project the impact of a \$2 flat fare. The impact of the fare changes on ridership levels was analyzed using an elasticity analysis, indicating a net increase in ridership of 2,200 passenger boardings per year (13 percent) for Route 20. The overall impact on fare revenue (including both the change in fares and the change in ridership) is estimated to be about \$14,200 per year, or a 50 percent decrease for Route 20.

The decrease in fare revenue could be offset by the utilization of LCTOP funds that offset reduced fare revenue for projects that increase ridership and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, the long-term funding stability of LCTOP may reduce RCTA's ability to implement this alternative initial LCTOP allocation is expected to drop from about \$75,000 in FY 2024-25 to \$46,000 in FY 2025-26. Due to this uncertainty and the potential for the full utilization of LCTOP funds for the existing Free Rides Program, it is recommended that RCTA follow MTA's model and offer the Route 20 fare adjustment as a short-term promotional fare applying only to passengers using contactless payment, and monitor impacts. The alternative has the benefit of simplifying the fare structure, reducing the stress on drivers of having to handle fare issues, and reducing the administrative costs of tracking multiple fare categories.

**Table 27: Impact of a \$2 Flat Fare for Regional Routes on Annual RCTA Fare Revenue**

Route 20

**Percent of Cash Fare Boardings by # of Zones**

Local (Adult)	2%
One Zone (Adult)	49%
Two Zones (Adult)	8%
Three Zones (Adult)	4%
Four Zones (Adult)	14%
Five Zones (Adult)	10%
Humboldt Only (Adult)	8%
Cash Eureka \$12	3%
Cash Eureka \$6	2%

**Avg Full Fare** \$5.87

Effective Change in Average Fare -66%

**Annual Ridership (Cash Fare)**

Existing - Full Fare	4,800
Existing - Free Rides Program	2,700
Existing - Total	7,500
\$2 per trip - Full Fare - Projected Ridership	7,000
\$2 per trip - Discount Pax - Projected Ridership	2,700
\$2 Flat Fare - Total Projected Ridership	9,700
Impact of \$2 Fare on Full Fare Ridership	2,200
Impact of \$2 Fare - Free Rides Program	0

**Impact of \$2 Fare on Total Ridership** 2,200

**Percent Change in Annual Riders** 29.3%

**Annual Fare Revenue**

Current Revenue - Full Fare	\$28,200
Current Revenue - Free Rides Program	\$0
Current Revenue - Total	\$28,200
\$2 Flat Fare - Full Fare Revenue	\$14,000
\$2 Flat Fare - Free Rides Program	\$0
\$2 Full Flat Fare - Total	\$14,000
Impact of \$2 Fare - Full Fare	-\$14,200
Impact of \$2 Fare - Discount	\$0

**Impact of \$2 Fare - Cash Fares** -\$14,200

**Percent Change in Annual Fare Revenue** -50.4%

Source: RCTA 2023-24 Annual Report

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Capital investments include funding allocated for physical components of the transit system, such as vehicles, facilities, and passenger amenities. Capital investments are necessary to provide safe, dependable, and comfortable services, yet they also require substantial planning and funding on the part of the transit agency. While there is always a degree of uncertainty when planning capital improvements, as there may be unanticipated needs or product prices may change, it is still helpful to identify known capital needs to assist transit staff with securing funding.

This chapter presents capital projects for the RCTA to implement throughout the five-year planning period. Ultimately, the recommended capital improvement program included in the SRTDP will enhance the passenger experience, improve RCTA's cost efficiency, and support the deployment of zero-emission buses (ZEBs).

## **TRANSIT VEHICLES**

### **Vehicle Capacity Needs**

Table 28 presents an analysis of the minimum vehicle size needed for the various RCTA fixed route services. The analysis is based on the boarding and alighting counts collected by LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc., during September 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>. First, the peak passenger load recorded on each fixed route during data collection was identified (peak passenger load at peak location). The peak passenger load data for each route was then factored by the ratio of the route's peak monthly ridership during FY 2023-24 to observed September 2024 ridership. The peak passenger load data was also factored by the ratio of the peak passenger load to the average ridership per run observed across all data samples. These calculations resulted in estimates for each route for total ridership at the peak location on the peak run in the peak month. This data was then reviewed based on the following considerations: transit vehicles appropriate for RCTA typically are available with seating capacities of 5, 20, and 28. RCTA ridership may continue to rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic, and there is a desire to minimize transit vehicle size while still providing adequate seating capacity for the large majority of runs over the year. It should be noted that boarding and alighting data for the day Route 3 was surveyed appears to be an anomaly or error; therefore, Route 3 data is not included in this table.

Based on the analysis presented in Table 28, 28-passenger buses are recommended for two routes (Routes 20 and 300), and 20-passenger buses are recommended for Local Routes (1,2,3,4). Smaller vans are recommended for Route 199. It should be noted that this analysis shows what vehicle sizes are needed in peak ridership scenarios and may not reflect what vehicle size is appropriate for typical service days. If the vehicle is equipped with grab rails, a limited amount of standee capacity would be possible on the larger 20 and 28-passenger buses. Standee capacity is limited by the vehicle's gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR). Also, this analysis does not consider any routing changes that may be implemented as a result of the SRTDP.



# Table 28: Analysis of RCTA Vehicle Size Requirements

Assuming No Change in Services

## Fleet Seating Capacities

Capacity	Example Model
5	MV - 1
20	Ford ARBOC
28	Ford F-550

Route	Peak Psgr Load - Peak Location <sup>1</sup>	Peak Month to Sample Month Ratio	Peak Run to Avg Daily Run Ratio	Psgr Load - Peak Location, Run, Month	Recommended Vehicle Size (Seating Capacity)
Route 1 - Parkway / El Dorado	4	1.0	1.3	6	20
Route 2 - A / Inyo / Washington	9	1.3	1.6	19	20
Route 4 - Bertsch	6	1.1	1.6	11	20
Route 20 - Smith River / Arcata Southbound	14	1.0	1.5	21	28
Route 199 - Crescent City - Gasquet	1	1.8	3.0	5	20
Route 300 - CEMS & DNHS School Tripper	17	1.9	1.0	33	28

Note 1: Based on boarding data collected by LSC Transportation Consultants September 18th to 21st.

## **Vehicle Replacement Needs**

Transit vehicles must be regularly replaced to maintain a safe and reliable fleet. As the vehicle procurement process can take multiple years, transit agencies must identify their vehicle needs well in advance. Additionally, the State of California's (CA) Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation will begin impacting transit vehicle procurement in 2026, at which point 25 percent of small transit agency fleet bus purchases will be required to be ZEBs. By 2029, this purchasing requirement will increase to 100 percent. By 2040, all vehicles in the fleet will need to be ZEBs. To meet these standards, transit agencies can purchase either battery-electric buses (BEBs) or fuel-cell hydrogen electric buses (FCEBs).

### ***ZEB Considerations***

Currently, ZEBs are more expensive than gas or diesel vehicles, meaning RCTA will need to secure additional funding to meet local match requirements for capital grants. While ZEBs are more expensive at this point, the ZEB market is constantly changing as new models are released and older models are improved, making it hard to predict future pricing. The RCTA vehicle replacement schedule presented later in this report is subject to change as new ZEB technologies become available and costs stabilize. To consider the current realities of transitioning to ZEBs, RCTA conducted the *RCTA Electric Fleet Transition Study (2021)*.

Local routes are generally served by vehicles that are comparable to 20-passenger cutaway Ford E-450 chassis-type buses. RCTA currently has a fleet of 9 of these vehicles, 7 of which are in good repair. A maximum of 3 vehicles are in service at one time for local route coverage. The *RCTA Electric Fleet Transition Study* found that to maintain current levels of service, vehicles comparable to Cutaway Ford E-450 chassis vehicles, which are the core of RCTA's fleet, would need to be replaced at a 2:1 ratio. However, as BEB technology improves, a lower ratio may be required. Low-floor cutaway buses are the preferred type of vehicle as they greatly reduce wheelchair loading times, which frequently occur on RCTA local routes. Another challenge worth mentioning is that currently, there is only one manufacturer of low-floor ZEVs; this could add to supply chain challenges. However, it is likely that more manufacturers will begin to produce low-floor ZEVs over the life of this transit plan. All these factors are taken into account in the Capital Plan in the following chapters.

Intercity Route 199 also utilizes the same type of vehicles as local routes. The RCTA School Tripper Route 300 is typically served by the same driver shift and vehicle as the 199 trips. The ZEB study did not consider the interlining of Route 300, or the summertime level of service for three runs a day, in its battery capacity needs analysis. However, the study found that vehicles serving the route could be replaced by EVs at a 1:1 ratio, given 2 round-trips a day, and time for top-up charging between runs. Additionally, Route 300 is a busy route designed to meet the needs of students after school along with the general public, and benefits from using the largest vehicles in RCTA's fleet. RCTA should consider keeping the two 30-passenger Freightliner buses in its fleet even after receiving replacement buses for use once daily on the PM 300 route, to allow for ridership growth.

Route 20 was divided into two segments for the purpose of the ZEB study: the stretch north of Crescent City and the stretch south of Crescent City. The study assessed the same vehicle type for this route as well, though during peak runs, larger E-550 diesel buses are utilized for added capacity. The study found that buses could be replaced with ZEBs on the northern segment at a 1:1 ratio and that the southern

segment of the route was not feasible to serve with ZEBs due to the distance and terrain traversed by the route. This portion of the study came with a disclaimer that further analysis would be required as to the logistical reality of serving this route with different buses based on the segment. RCTA plans to procure six F550 Diesel buses in FY 2025-26 through 2027-28 and for exclusive use on Route 20, and intends to use these buses until EV bus ranges and power are improved or Hydrogen Fuel Cell Buses become affordable and hydrogen fuel is readily available in the region.

DAR trips are generally short trips currently provided by five-passenger MV-1 vans. The CARB Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation applies differently to vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) under 14,000 pounds. RCTA's DAR vehicles fall well below this threshold, with GVWRs ranging from 3,680 to 6,055 pounds. Vehicles under 14,000 GVWR are not classified as buses and are not subject to the zero-emission bus (ZEB) purchase mandate. However, per California Code of Regulation (CCR) section 2023.5, agencies may opt in to claim one ZEB credit toward CARB's purchase requirements for every 180,000 miles collectively operated by zero-emission vehicles under the 14,000-pound threshold annually. RCTA's DAR service operates approximately 25,000 miles per year, and even if microtransit were operated using the same vehicles, it is unlikely that the 180,000-mile threshold would be met.

DAR services are only offered in the Crescent City area, while the ZEB study did not assess the feasibility of replacing these DAR vehicles with EVs, and it is not required, the service is assumed to be feasible to serve with EV vans at a 1:1 replacement ratio given its short trips, potential for mid-day top up charging, and ability to switch between vehicles if needed. This makes DAR vehicles realistic candidates for replacement by EVs; however, it is not required, and the limited mileage served by these vehicles will not assist in RCTA meeting CARB purchase percentage requirements.

### ***Vehicle Replacement Schedule***

RCTA has 17 vehicles that are 2 to 14 years old and hold 5 to 32 passengers. Table 29 presents the RCTA's anticipated vehicle needs and purchasing schedule based on the agency's current fleet. The analysis within the table is drawn from the *RCTA Electric Fleet Transition Study (2021)* and the Useful Life Benchmark (ULB) of the different vehicle models, as identified by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and staff input. Table 29 does not include any expansion vehicle purchases nor are any required to support the recommended service plan presented in this SRTDP.

Based on the schedule shown, the RCTA will need to procure 19 vehicles during the next five years. Given current market costs and anticipated inflation, it is expected that vehicle replacement needs will cost the RCTA a total of \$5.5 million over six years (Table 29). The schedule shown in Table 29 reflects the RCTA's current undelivered bus orders, planned bus orders, and assumed compliance with CARB zero-emission bus mandates. It is important to note that buses are typically paid for upon delivery. Therefore, RCTA will have funds in place for these purchases at the time of order, but the funds will be held in reserve until delivery.

TIRCP funding, combined with the first tranche of SB125 funds, has funding for 9 or 10 new electric ZEBs. However, cost increases to the Williams Drive Charging Infrastructure and Downtown Transit Center projects may force RCTA to reduce ZEB purchase funds marginally to cover increasing costs on the two major capital projects. Table 29 shows 10 EV cutaways, but it's possible that the number could be reduced to 6 or 7 to fully fund the other projects.

**Table 29: RCTA Vehicle Replacement Schedule**

		Plan Period (by Fiscal Year) <sup>1</sup>						5-Year Plan Total
		25/26 <sup>3</sup>	26/27 <sup>3</sup>	27/28 <sup>3</sup>	28/29 <sup>4</sup>	29/30 <sup>3</sup>	30/31	
		<u>Vehicles</u>						
Cutaway Electric	\$350,000	1	6	0	0	0	3	10
Low Floor Cutaway (Gas)	\$270,460	3	0	0	0	0		3
32' Diesel	\$295,980	2	2	2	0	0	0	6
32' Electric	\$1,020,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Number of Vehicles		6	8	2	0	0	3	19
Total Cost <sup>2</sup>		\$941,960	\$2,772,719	\$628,010	\$0	\$0	\$1,217,238	\$5,559,927
		<u>Demand Response Specific Vehicles</u>						
Electric - Vans <sup>5</sup>	\$285,300	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gas - Vans <sup>5</sup>	\$154,600	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Total Number of Vehicles		0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Total Cost <sup>2</sup>		\$0	\$0	\$463,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$463,800
Total Vehicle Needs <sup>1</sup>		\$941,960	\$2,772,719	\$1,091,810	\$0	\$0	\$1,217,238	\$6,023,727
Percent of ZEB Purchases <sup>5</sup>		17%	75%	--	--	--		
<p>Note 1: Represents year of purchase order, buses are not paid for until delivery.</p> <p>Note 2: All costs assume 3.0 percent annual inflation.</p> <p>Note 3: Starting January 1, 2026, 25% of new vehicle purchases must be ZEBs.</p> <p>Note 4: Starting January 2029, 100% of new vehicle purchases must be ZEBs.</p> <p>Note 5: Vehicles under 14,000 GVWR are not subject to ZEB purchase requirements and cannot be counted as a ZEB for purchase percentage calculations unless conditions in CCR 2023.5 are met, which are unfeasible for RCTA to meet. RCTA vans are less than 14,000 GVWR.</p> <p>Note 6: CARB ITC vehicle purchase requirements take effect with the start of the calendar year, purchases in 25/26 represent busses which were ordered in FY 23-24 but have not yet been delivered.</p> <p>Note 7: RCTA plans to replace its fleet of demand response vehicles with electric vans, timeline is contingent upon grant funding.</p>								
Source: LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.								

## **TRANSIT FACILITIES**

Transit facilities refer to the sites and infrastructure that directly support administrative, operations, and maintenance functions. This section discusses capital improvements to RCTA facilities.

### **Battery Electric Bus Charging Infrastructure**

RCTA will need to install additional charging infrastructure to meet the midday and overnight charging needs of the agency's future BEB fleet. The agency has secured funding and completed the environmental review process, adopting a negative declaration. As of February 2025, the project is advancing into the design phase, with preliminary plans aimed at providing charging infrastructure in two phases; phase one will enable charging of up to 12 vehicles at a time, and phase two will expand the charging capacity to 20 vehicles or potentially hydrogen fueling capabilities to expand the feasibility of providing intercity services with ZEBs.

Due to the high mileage and rugged terrain of RCTA's intercity routes 20 and 199, along with the current technological limitations of BEBs, the agency intends to continue operating diesel-powered vehicles on these routes, the Route 20 south segment in particular. However, RCTA will continue to monitor advancements in BEB technology and explore the potential adoption of fuel cell vehicles as an alternative.

At this time, it is anticipated that completing the electrical upgrades at RCTA's Williams Drive facility and procuring up to 10 TIRCP-funded BEBs will cost \$7 million in total, most of which will be paid for with new Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) funding made available through California Senate Bill (SB) 125. However, Phase two of this project is unfunded at this time.

### **Administration, Operations, and Maintenance Facility Upgrades**

The RCTA administrative offices and operations facility are located at 140 Williams Drive in Crescent City. The facility is an older structure and in need of significant upgrades.

RCTA currently leases its administration, operations, and maintenance facility site located at 140 Williams Drive in Crescent City. The facility occupies 1.34 acres on the northern end of the Del Norte County Fairgrounds from the State of California who owns the land. The FY 2025-26 budgeted expense for the land lease is \$38,192; the lease agreement allows either party to terminate the lease with 6 months' notice. The lease is being amended to add additional land on the westerly side of the lease to improve bus circulation and EV charging infrastructure spacing.

The RCTA building on the site was built in 2004 and is still generally sufficient for RCTA's needs. There are several general upgrades to the facility in progress, which are included in the ZEB charging infrastructure project, including paving, security upgrades, installation of a backup generator, and solar arrays. However, there is currently limited indoor fleet storage despite the harsh climate of Del Norte County. RCTA is in the process of revising and extending the lease with the Fairgrounds, which is likely to increase lease expenses.

RCTA should be planning for the long-term future when the existing facility is no longer sufficient to meet its needs. With the current building being over 20 years old, coupled with CARB ZEV bus requirements in place that may require a larger fleet to maintain the same level of service due to range

limitations, RCTA should consider purchasing a new site to reduce its dependence on lease costs, which are expected to rise in the long-term future. Seeking a larger site footprint would provide RCTA with room to grow and could enable indoor fleet storage, which could extend the useful life of RCTA's fleet. Not owning the facility makes it challenging and risky to make expensive upgrades, such as EV infrastructure or fleet expansion. The charging equipment being planned for installation at the Williams Drive facility has an estimated 10- 12-year useful life. It is recommended that RCTA plan for the long term by building up its reserves to be able to purchase land for a new operations facility should the opportunity arise.

## **PASSENGER FACILITIES AND AMENITIES**

Passenger facilities and amenities, such as bus stop shelters, benches, signs, and transfer centers, benefit passengers by making the time spent before boarding the bus more comfortable. This section discusses projects to improve RCTA passenger amenities throughout the five-year planning period. Once implemented, these projects will improve the experience of existing passengers as well as increase public awareness of RCTA services and enhance community perceptions of the agency.

### **Cultural Center Transit Hub**

Currently, RCTA's main transfer hub is located on Front Street near the intersection with US 101; the passenger amenities are very basic; they include two small bus shelters with bench seating, and signage indicating the stop is served by RCTA and Oregon Point. The need for an improved Transit Hub was identified in the 2019 SRTDP. In 2022, RCTA undertook the *Redwood Coast Transit Hub Location Study* to assess the feasibility and optimal design of a new transit center in Crescent City. This study considered existing zoning codes and parcel sizes to identify potential sites. The study ultimately identified an existing, city owned parking area across Front Street as a preferred site based on the physical characteristics of the parcel as well as public and stakeholder input.

RCTA has already secured \$4.4 million in TIRCP and SB 125 funding and is currently working to negotiate and secure a land lease for the site from the City of Crescent City, which owns the property. The project expects to complete the planning and environmental determination phase of the project in early 2026, followed by the design phase of the project, expected to be completed in 2027, and construction beginning as early as late 2027. Preliminary plans include bus bays for RCTA, other regional providers, and private tour buses, as well as a ticketing and information kiosk building where dispatching can occur, restroom facilities, real-time bus arrival signage, and ample lighting and seating.

### **Bus Stop Improvements**

For most passengers, bus stop amenities are important to comfort and perception of public transit. The desire for better bus stops was reflected in the onboard passenger survey results, as 13 percent of passengers surveyed requested that RCTA improve its bus stops. Bus stop improvements consist of cleaning and fixing existing amenities as well as installing new amenities, such as benches, shelters, and bus stop signs. Issues with unauthorized long-term occupancy of bus shelters have led to bus shelter removal at the request of businesses and residents at some stops, namely Safeway. The priority of RCTA in recent years has been to expand seating and signage through the purchase of Simme Seats. Simme

Seats are ready to deploy units that are anchored into the ground or sidewalk and are designed to combine basic seating with bus stop signage.

RCTA's 2024 -25 draft budget has a bus stop improvement fund balance of \$75,000 and an expected cost of \$60,000 to deploy Simme Seats that it has already purchased and purchase an additional 40 Simme Seats. It is recommended that RCTA continue to allocate a portion of its capital budget toward bus stop improvements in the future and be on the lookout for opportunities to place shelters in places with public and private support. The survey received many requests for a bus shelter in Klamath Glen. RCTA should also focus on posting updated schedules and agency contact information at its high-traffic stops in addition to the amenities already budgeted for. RCTA has historically programmed its SB-1 State of Good Repair annual allocation to bus stop improvements. Beginning in FY 2022-23, the exhaustion of Prop 1B PTMISEA capital funds forced the agency to switch the SGR funds away from bus stop improvements to bus replacements to cover local match needs on new buses.

### **Bus Passenger Facilities Plan**

Del Norte Local Transportation Commission (DNLTC) and RCTA, in collaboration with the Yurok Tribe, HTA, and the Humboldt County Association of Governments, could develop a Bus Passenger Facilities Plan to inventory existing bus stops throughout Del Norte County and Northern Humboldt County. Improvements would then be recommended for each stop based on the existing amenities, the condition of the existing amenities, and average boarding activity. The key benefits of the Bus Passenger Facilities Plan would be the resulting comprehensive inventory of RCTA stops, as well as prioritized project recommendations to guide how to best use limited capital funds. This plan could be compiled utilizing Carbon Reduction Program funding administered by DNLTC in FY 2026-27.

### **Other Transit Capital Improvements Summary**

Table 30 summarizes non-vehicle replacement capital improvements RCTA anticipates over the next five years. This includes the aforementioned Transit Center, Operations Facility improvements, bus stop improvements, and communication and security improvements. In total \$7.4 million will be needed over the next five years.



**Table 30: RCTA Transit Capital Projects - By Year of Contract Award or Purchase Order**

Category	Project	Plan Period (by Fiscal Year)					5-Year Plan Total
		26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	
Passenger Amenities	Crescent City Transit Center	\$ 250,000	\$4,051,000				\$ 4,301,000
Operations Facility	Williams Drive Facility Improvements	\$ 3,015,000					\$ 3,015,000
Passenger Amenities	Bus Shelter Improvements and Signage	\$ 30,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 70,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 3,295,000</b>	<b>\$ 4,061,000</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>	<b>\$ 7,386,000</b>
Source: RCTA FY 2025 -26 Budget, DNLTC RCTA TIRCP and SB 125 Allocation Plan Draft - Revised June 16, 2025.							

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## **MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Transit marketing is critical for attracting new riders as well as establishing a reliable and recognizable brand. As the RCTA serves the entirety of Del Norte County as well as Northern Humboldt County, multiple marketing strategies are necessary to effectively reach residents and visitors throughout the large service area. This chapter first summarizes the RCTA's existing marketing strategies, then discusses newly recommended strategies aimed at maintaining existing riders, attracting new riders, and improving awareness of available services. As the RCTA has a limited marketing budget and no dedicated on-site marketing personnel (5 hours per month on average remote position), low-cost strategies that can be implemented remotely are prioritized.

### **CURRENT MARKETING STRATEGIES**

#### **Branding**

The RCTA has an attractive, well-designed logo that includes the agency's abbreviated name and a decal reflecting Del Norte County's scenic landscape. The logo is consistently included on RCTA's printed, virtual, and physical marketing materials.

One of the most important tools for marketing a transit system is the agency's physical presence in the community. Physical marketing includes branded buses, information posted at bus stops, and bus stop signage. As RCTA operates throughout Del Norte County, RCTA has a large physical presence, with the logo visible in many different communities on both passing buses and bus stop signs. Currently, RCTA signage is not present at all stop locations, especially those outside of the RCTA core area of Crescent City. Plans are in place to expand RCTA signage. RCTA's efforts to install signage at its bus stops have been limited by the significant staff time involved in acquiring permit approval in Caltrans public rights-of-way.

An additional potential strategy to increase RCTA's visibility within the communities it serves is to add color to its buses. Currently, all of RCTA's buses are white aside from the RCTA logo. As RCTA will be replacing most of its existing fleet of vehicles during the current planning period, this is an opportune time to reinvent its image to increase its visibility in the community. Color could be particularly beneficial in a coastal region that has frequent fog. A color that offers good contrast with RCTA's logo, like blue, yellow, or burgundy, should be used.

#### **Website**

RCTA maintains a website with a large array of valuable information on the Del Norte public transit services. Information that can be found on the website includes:

- Real-time trip planning (by destination and time of day) with Google Maps.
- Service alerts and recent news headlines.
- A page for each fixed route, airport shuttle, and medical shuttle with schedule information and detailed route maps. Transfer opportunities to other regional providers are highlighted

on the Route 20 page. Links to other regional transportation providers' websites are provided as well.

- A fare information page with local and intercity route fares, monthly pass options, transfer policies, accepted payment types, and a contactless electronic payment how-to guide. Along with information about the RCTA free rides program for seniors, students, disabled individuals, and veterans.
- A page summarizing Crescent City DAR services. The DAR page contains the schedule, eligibility, and fare information for both services. Details are also provided on how to reserve a ride.
- There is an “About” dropdown menu, which gives access to the Board of Directors page, including meeting agendas and minutes, which is kept up to date, a documents page with recent planning documents, a page containing procurement policies and any current requests for proposals, and pages containing ADA and Title VI information.
- There is a “Contact Us” page with a general information link about RCTA passenger policies, along with the dispatch and general information phone line, and an email-based contact us form. RCTA dispatch staff are trained to be the one-stop shop for local transportation information, including information about other regional transportation providers.
- At the bottom left of all RCTA website pages, there is a clear button labeled “Translate.” Clicking this button makes an American and Mexican flag option appear, hovering over the Mexican flag icon brings up the label “Spanish,” and when clicked, all RCTA pages are translated into Spanish.
- Links to the RCTA Facebook, Instagram, and X pages.

Overall, RCTA’s website does an excellent job of presenting information about RCTA news, services, and policies to the public. Minor improvements to the website, like providing DAR and airport shuttle service area maps on their respective pages and updating the page's Spanish translation button to be more prominent, reading “translate/traducir” would improve the user experience.

### **Print Materials**

Printed rider guides provide directions for riding the bus in addition to being promotional tools. Passenger guides are especially valuable for people who do not have a mobile device to access service information while on the go. RCTA publishes an updated comprehensive riders' guide in the spring and fall to reflect the changes between peak summer season services and off-peak season services. The rider’s guide is provided in PDF format on the RCTA website and includes a systemwide route map with stop locations, schedule, and fare information. These schedule brochures are to be stocked on every bus every day, and are also distributed throughout the community to businesses, medical facilities, hotels, schools, apartments, etc.

## **Travel Training**

RCTA offers individualized training to teach residents how to utilize its services, including how to read bus schedules, pay fares, and a step-by-step walkthrough of the boarding process. The travel training program is helpful for individuals who are interested in using RCTA services but feel unsure of what services are available or how to ride. The RCTA travel training program is not well-advertised, and the only way the general public can learn about this program is by contacting RCTA directly or through local social service organizations that are made aware of the program by RCTA. Currently, the program is administered by RCTA's operations contractor, Transdev; however, it is recommended that RCTA release a request for proposals for the administration of these services. Organizations or individuals that are not as constrained by the day-to-day operational responsibilities or are active in the local social services sector may be better positioned to advertise and provide this service.

## **Social Media**

Social media is an increasingly important part of transit marketing. A well-organized and regularly updated social media platform can effectively and quickly convey transit information to a broad audience. Transit agencies frequently use social media to provide real-time service alerts, as well as for general promotion of services and events. Social media posts can be designed to engage with the greater community or to recruit new passengers through "pushing" a post.

RCTA has multiple social media accounts, demonstrating that the agency is already utilizing social media to reach riders and provide service updates. The RCTA Facebook account has 114 followers and is kept up to date with service changes and reminders, and includes a link to the RCTA website and information on how to contact staff by phone or in person. The RCTA Instagram has only 15 followers and includes similar content to the Facebook account. RCTA also has an X account, which has only 3 followers and shares the same type of service update information that is hosted on Instagram and Facebook.

Additionally, RCTA provides GTFS-RT, real-time data on bus location, via its AVL/CAD application, Swiftly. This GTFS-RT information is consumed by rider apps such as Google Maps, Transit App, and Moovit. Swiftly is also capable of producing rider alerts for these rider apps to notify riders of unplanned or planned service interruptions. However, RCTA Dispatch needs additional training on how to effectively use this tool when any service disruption occurs.

## **Phone Information**

To ensure information is accessible to everyone, including the visually impaired and seniors, transit providers must continue to offer information over the phone. RCTA has two phone numbers, both of which are answered by RCTA dispatch staff for passengers to schedule DAR reservations and make general information inquiries. RCTA dispatchers are trained to provide information not only about RCTA services but all other regional transportation providers, both public and private as well. The RCTA phone number is posted on the RCTA website in the header, within the "Contact Us" page, prominently displayed on the outside of buses, and included in each rider's guide.

## **Special Events, Promotions, and Partnerships**

Special events and promotions reward current riders and encourage new residents to try transit. Common promotional events for transit include free fare days, discounted seasonal passes, and complimentary transit to and from popular local events. These types of promotions require dedicated

funding sources, one example being LCTOP funds, which RCTA already utilizes to offer free fares to seniors, youth, disabled individuals, and veterans.

RCTA currently provides Del Norte County and northern Humboldt County companies, tourist lodging providers, and businesses with rider guides to promote its services to visitors. RCTA also works with local social service organizations to provide discounted passes that encourage ridership for local residents who benefit greatly from RCTA's services. RCTA also solicits participation in planning efforts and opportunities for feedback on potential service adjustments through local social service organizations. RCTA also participates in the annual Crescent City 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade to promote its services.

RCTA has developed a partnership with Redwood State and National Parks. RCTA is the primary public transit provider to the Redwood Parks system. For a short time, RCTA served a stop at the Jedediah Smith Redwood State Park Campground, which was then discontinued due to safety concerns from the National Park. RCTA is the only public fixed route service to the Newton B. Drury Scenic Parkway, which is world-renowned for its easy access to giant redwood groves. The roadway is often congested, and parking issues persist during the peak summer season. Enhancement of this strategic partnership would benefit both organizations. RCTA should seek to work with the parks to improve park staff knowledge about RCTA's services, which are the only existing public transit resource to these world-famous parks.

### **Active Management**

Active management refers to responsive and adaptive decision-making by transit directors/managers. A recent example of active management at RCTA was the reduction in service levels in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and then the subsequent increase as demand returned. RCTA also had to reduce services over small time periods due to the nationwide driver shortage experienced in the years since the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting staff to make important decisions about which services to prioritize, as well as how to communicate service reductions to the public. RCTA management is also responsible for communicating with neighboring transit providers and improving transfer opportunities between different systems, which are well coordinated, and the collaborative North State Express program continues to expand and streamline intercity public transportation throughout Northern California. In sum, practicing active management has helped RCTA maximize its available resources to provide convenient and efficient public transportation.

### **RCTA MARKETING CHALLENGES**

Overall, RCTA does an excellent job with marketing, given limited staff time and funds. However, one area for improvement, based on the onboard survey results, would be to improve the quality and availability of service information. Low-cost strategies to improve RCTA's information resources include minor improvements to the website, providing a how-to-ride guide online step by step video, increasing access to travel training, strengthening partnerships with the State and Federal Parks, providing signage at more stops, and posting schedule information at high-traffic bus stops.

Attracting new riders has become critically important for RCTA. Every transit system experiences regular turnover in ridership as students graduate, residents move, and people acquire cars and/or driver's licenses. Additionally, RCTA ridership statistics indicate that many individuals who stopped using RCTA during the COVID-19 pandemic have still not returned. Reaching new riders with marketing is a challenge, however, and will likely require RCTA to deploy targeted marketing efforts.

## MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a comprehensive list of recommended marketing strategies and improvements to be implemented by RCTA during the five-year planning period. These strategies reflect affordable options that will help maintain current ridership, attract new ridership, and improve existing information resources, ultimately benefiting existing passengers and increasing awareness of RCTA services to residents and visitors alike. Marketing strategies should be implemented incrementally, as resources allow.

### Physical Marketing

- **Bus Stop Signage:** It is recommended that the RCTA continue to maintain signage at bus stops. RCTA recently had new signs, which are larger, more colorful, and are in the process of placing them at the stops that need them most. Bus stop signs should be installed simultaneously with other bus stop improvements when possible. Bus stop improvements have been tough to implement due to the significant staff time required to obtain necessary permits for stops located in Caltrans public right-of-ways, combined with RCTA's remote managerial model.
- **Bus Branding:** RCTA should continue to procure buses that clearly show the agency's logo, and consider adding color to the buses, which still allows the logo to be visible. Perhaps a blue color and outline the trees in the logo with black for contrast. Both fixed route and DAR services should continue to maintain similar branding.
- **Bus Displays:** Information on vehicle head signs and onboard bulletin displays is highly visible to passengers. The information contained within these displays should be attractive, accurate, and easy to read, and printed rider guides should be on board so drivers can easily distribute schedule information to passengers.
- **Public Presentations:** Public speaking is an opportunity to personalize RCTA and further educate the community about available transit services. Public speaking efforts should be customized for a specific audience, such as seniors, students, social service program clients, or employee groups, among others. Presentations to schools and colleges, businesses, employers, social service organizations, senior residences, senior centers, and neighborhood associations would be great opportunities to promote more specific benefits of RCTA services. In-person presentations are challenging for Redwood Transit as management staff work remotely. However, adding public presentations to the responsibility of the remote marketing staffer, or a new local travel training contractor, could be justified in the future.

### Website

- **DAR Webpage Improvements:** RCTA should update the DAR page with a service area map so users can easily identify if their desired trip is provided.
- **Add a How to Ride Guide and Information on Travel Training:** The RCTA website does not include any how-to-ride information for prospective passengers who may have never utilized public transportation. Providing a bulleted list of how to plan a trip, which includes the already used google map trip planning tool, how to identify and safely wait for a bus at a fixed route stop, board and pay your fare, and general bus rider etiquette could help to



encourage use of RCTA services by timid individuals who are not familiar with utilizing a public transit service. A short video could be provided containing the same information, and a “contact us” form to request one-on-one travel training could be provided at the bottom of the page.

- **Improve Translation Access:** While the website does support translation of all materials to Spanish, a user who does not read English would have a difficult time identifying the translation button and understanding how to toggle this option.

### Print Materials

- **Continue to Update Printed Schedule Information:** The printable PDFs of the fixed route schedules should continue to be updated to reflect the most current service information when schedule changes are made and re-distributed to local partners with each update.

### Travel Training

- **Further Advertise the Travel Training Program:** RCTA’s travel training program could have an even greater impact if the program were advertised on its website and social media. RCTA should also partner with local organizations, such as nonprofits focused on aiding persons with disabilities and senior centers, to easily enroll residents in the program. As mentioned above, RCTA may need to seek a new contractor, as Transdev RCTA’s operations contractor currently fills this role, but day-to-day operational responsibilities, as well as recent changes in general management, have prevented this program from being appropriately marketed and administered.

### Social Media

- **Increase Presence on Social Media:** RCTA should collaborate with local partners, such as the College of the Redwoods, Cal Poly Humboldt, and the Redwoods Parks, to advertise RCTA on their social media channels. As Facebook is where RCTA is most active and has the greatest following already, RCTA should seek to provide QR codes with links to its Facebook page in its print materials and on bus bulletin boards to increase its following and relay important service information to greater audiences.
- **Social Media Campaigns:** RCTA should utilize Facebook advertising to increase awareness of the transit system among non-riders and to attract riders who may have stopped riding transit. These advertising campaigns should be conducted in the spring when visitors and seasonal workers are influxing to the region.

### Special Events and Promotions

- **Special Promotions:** RCTA should continue to offer free fares for seniors, youth, veterans, and disabled individuals. The program is well utilized and helps to boost ridership, and is sustainable as long as LCTOP funding continues. RCTA could consider offering a fare-free day for general public passengers on its first day of expanded summer operations and/or, in conjunction with a Redwood Parks event to bring attention to the agency’s expanded summer service, and the access to the Redwood Parks system that RCTA services provide.

- **Promote New Technology and Projects:** New technologies, such as ZEBs, should be celebrated through concerted marketing efforts, including press releases, newspaper interviews, radio interviews, and social media posts. These campaigns should focus on informing the community about positive changes at RCTA and emphasizing improvements that may encourage some non-riders to reconsider using transit.
- **Testimonial Advertising:** A great way to highlight RCTA's success is to let riders tell their stories. Testimonial advertising can be done through newspaper articles, flyers or posters, social media, or the radio. The benefit of testimonials is that they inspire the public and help to eliminate poor opinions of transit held by some community members.

### Active Management

- **Regional Collaboration:** RCTA directors/managers should continue to collaborate with regional partners to improve transit connections and facilitate increased ridership.
  - RCTA should continue to seek collaboration with its local partners to optimize services for local residents and visitors alike, including the Yurok Tribe, Tolawa Dee-ni' Nation, Elk Valley Rancheria, Del Norte Senior Center, Del Norte Unified School District, and Del Norte Chamber of Commerce.
  - RCTA should continue to work with its North State Express partners to optimize public transit connections between operators and further market the program. RCTA will need to continue to communicate with regional partners to ensure transit connections are optimized and that accurate service information is available to both Del Norte County riders as well as transit passengers living in nearby regions.
  - If RCTA considers implementing a new route that would allow day trips between Crescent City and Medford, Oregon, RCTA should work with Oregon Point to carefully consider the scheduling of the route in order to make medical and other trip purposes, like air travel, possible while augmenting rather than duplicating services that Oregon Point currently offers.
- **Local Administrative Staff –** Another strategy that would make RCTA's marketing program more successful is to have a local (in Crescent City) administrative staff person available to conduct in-person marketing campaigns at community events and outreach to businesses, hotels, and tourism destinations.

### Marketing Strategies for Students

Over the past five years, students comprised a significant portion of RCTA transit ridership as funding was reduced for yellow bus service. Specific strategies to attract high school and college students to transit include:

- Campus visits and presentations at the start of the school year to inform about available services.
- Creating specific promotional materials describing the transit services to each campus and highlighting the student-free rides program.

- Requesting schools and campuses share promotional materials through official email lists and social media.
- Partnering with student clubs and organizations interested in transit or that could benefit from learning more about transit services.
- Kiosks at College of the Redwoods campuses and Cal Poly Humboldt Campus with rider guides.
- While historically challenging, developing a good relationship with DNUSD is important to meet the transit needs of students. High daily ridership on RCTA's Route 300 is proof that developing relationships with schools at the campus level can lead to high ridership, and reduce transportation barriers to education.

## **TRANSIT PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

RCTA's services are well utilized compared to most other rural transit agencies, and the populations it serves are highly dependent on the agency for their mobility needs. The RCTA 2025 SRTDP transit plan addresses an uncertain future shaped by unstable funding and rising costs related to labor and capital. The plan outlines two scenarios: a financially constrained plan and a financially unconstrained plan. The constrained plan emphasizes efficient resource use to preserve and modestly improve RCTA's existing "status quo" services. In contrast, implementation of the unconstrained plan will require securing new outside funding, particularly to support expansion of the NSE:101 multi-agency regional partnership. This service aims to fill the mobility gap left by Greyhound's withdrawal from California's north coast several years ago. The unconstrained plan expands RCTA's Crescent City local services to better serve Del Norte County's unique seven-day-a-week economy.

### **PLAN ASSUMPTIONS**

- Forecasts of annual operating and administrative costs were developed as presented in Tables 31 and 34. "Base case" or "status quo" operating and administrative cost forecasts were estimated based on the RCTA FY 2025-26 Final Budget. An annual inflation escalator of five percent was applied to operations contract expenses for FY 2025-26 and FY 2026-27 due to the need to attract and retain qualified operations staff, as RCTA has faced ongoing driver shortages in recent years. An annual inflation escalator of three percent was applied to FY 2026-27 and future planning period costs to project operating costs for each year of the planning period; operations contract costs follow this escalation for FY 27-28 onward. Projected operations costs include a \$100,000 increase in operating costs in FY 2027-28 for operating and maintenance needs for the new Crescent City Transit Center.
- Ridership and corresponding fare revenue for each SRTDP element was estimated as presented in Table 32 and Table 35. The "base case" ridership represents levels as of FY 2024-25 which were up a remarkable 27 percent over FY 2023-24 ridership levels. Ridership is assumed to grow at a rate of six percent for FY 2025-26, four percent in FY 2026-27, and two percent for future plan years. This reflects the ongoing, but slowing, ridership recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **FISCALLY CONSTRAINED SERVICE PLAN**

Ridership, operating costs, and fare revenue estimates for RCTA Transit service plan elements are shown in Tables 31 and 32 and described below. The reader is encouraged to review the Alternatives Chapter for more detailed information on how each plan element was developed.

# Table 31: RCTA Transit Short Range Transit Development Plan Operating Costs

Base Case (Constrained)

Plan Element	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	FY 27-28 <sup>2</sup>	FY 28-29	FY 29-30	FY 30-31
<b>Base Case Operating Cost<sup>1</sup></b>						
Marginal Operating Costs	\$936,800	\$990,600	\$958,500	\$987,300	\$1,016,900	\$1,047,400
Fixed Costs	\$1,271,700	\$1,317,700	\$1,457,200	\$1,500,900	\$1,545,900	\$1,592,300
Total	\$2,208,500	\$2,308,300	\$2,415,700	\$2,488,200	\$2,562,800	\$2,639,700
<b>Plan Costs</b>						
Route 20 Add Stops at Sutter Health, and Walmart (Implemented)	\$13,900	\$15,200	\$15,600	\$16,100	\$16,600	\$17,100
Reduce Route 199 Summer Service to Current Winter Service Levels (Weekdays 2 trips per day)	-\$7,900	-\$8,600	-\$8,900	-\$9,200	-\$9,400	-\$9,700
Total Service Plan Costs	\$6,000	\$6,600	\$6,700	\$6,900	\$7,200	\$7,400
<b>Total Operating Cost</b>	<b>\$2,214,500</b>	<b>\$2,314,900</b>	<b>\$2,422,400</b>	<b>\$2,495,100</b>	<b>\$2,570,000</b>	<b>\$2,647,100</b>

Note 1: Base Case (status quo) costs based upon FY 2025-26 June 23,2025 draft budget, excluding capital. Assumes 3% annual inflation rate for the planning period.

Note 2: Beginning in FY 2027-28 RCTA expects 100k in additional fixed costs for maintenance and janitorial services for its new Crescent City Transit Center.

Source: LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.

**Table 32: RCTA Transit Short Range Transit Plan Ridership and Fare Revenue**

*Base Case (Constrained)*

	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	FY 27-28	FY 28-29	FY 2029-30	FY 30-31
<b>Annual Ridership</b>						
Status Quo	109,800	114,200	116,500	118,800	121,200	123,600
<b><u>Service Plan Elements</u></b>						
Route 20 Add Stops at Sutter Health, and Walmart (Implemented)	610	630	640	650	660	670
Reduce Route 199 Summer Service to Current Winter Service Levels (Weekdays 2 trips per day)	-170	-180	-180	-180	-180	-180
<i>Subtotal Impact of Plan Service Elements</i>	<i>440</i>	<i>450</i>	<i>460</i>	<i>470</i>	<i>480</i>	<i>490</i>
<b><u>Impact of Fare Strategies</u></b>						
\$2 Flat Fare for Route 20 and 199	1,100	2,200	2,240	2,280	2,330	2,380
<b>Total Ridership</b>	<b>111,340</b>	<b>116,850</b>	<b>119,200</b>	<b>121,550</b>	<b>124,010</b>	<b>126,470</b>
<b>Fare Revenues (Passenger Revenues)</b>						
Fare Revenue Status Quo	\$180,000	\$187,200	\$190,944	\$194,763	\$198,658	\$202,631
<b><u>Service Plan Elements</u></b>						
Route 20 Add Stops at Sutter Health, and Walmart (Implemented)	\$2,370	\$2,460	\$2,510	\$2,560	\$2,610	\$2,670
Reduce Route 199 Summer Service to Current Winter Service Levels (Weekdays 2 trips per day)	-\$180	-\$190	-\$190	-\$190	-\$200	-\$200
<i>Subtotal Impact of Plan Service Elements</i>	<i>\$2,190</i>	<i>\$2,270</i>	<i>\$2,320</i>	<i>\$2,370</i>	<i>\$2,410</i>	<i>\$2,470</i>
<b><u>Impact of Fare Modifications</u></b>						
\$2 Flat Fare for Route 20 and 199	-\$7,100	-\$14,800	-\$15,100	-\$15,400	-\$15,700	-\$16,000
<b>Total Fare Revenue</b>	<b>\$175,090</b>	<b>\$174,670</b>	<b>\$178,164</b>	<b>\$181,733</b>	<b>\$185,368</b>	<b>\$189,101</b>
<i>Source: LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.</i>						

### **Route 20 Reroute to Serve Walmart and Medical Facilities (Implemented)**

In May 2025, the elimination of the Lucky 7 Fuel Stop—formerly the northern terminus of Route 20, removed at the request of the private business hosting the stop—caused a significant operational shift for Route 20. In response, RCTA slightly modified the route to serve Walmart, Sutter Health, and other medical facilities along E. Washington Boulevard. This adjustment aligned with feedback received during the onboard survey and longstanding requests from Curry Transit, which connects with RCTA in Smith River. While the reroute increases costs modestly due to added travel time and mileage, it greatly improves convenience for riders traveling to Crescent City for shopping or medical appointments and is expected to generate a modest ridership increase. A new transfer stop with Curry Transit was also established across the street from the previous Lucky 7 Fuel stop along US-101, the new stop location does not add any time or mileage to the route. This route adjustment to serve the Crescent City Walmart in both the northbound, and southbound directions is anticipated to increase annual operating costs by \$13,900 and ridership by 610 in FY 2025-26.

### **Reduce Route 199 Summer Service to Weekdays Two Trips Per Day**

Historically, RCTA has increased Route 199 service levels (three trips per day) during the busier summer months as Del Norte County sees more visitor activity during this time. Route 199 has low average daily ridership; therefore, keeping Route 199 service levels to two trips per day on weekdays year-round has a minor loss in ridership (180 trips annually) and a modest annual cost savings of \$8,000. This plan still preserves the mobility of transit-dependent residents of Hiouchi and Gasquet, who are accustomed to the winter service model of two weekday trips—one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The primary impact of this reduction would be on visitor use of the route for recreational purposes, which appears to have been limited in recent summers, but was historically well utilized. Most visitors to Hiouchi and Gasquet arrive with personal vehicles and seek to access popular destinations such as the Grove of the Titans, which is not walkable from the Route 199 service area and is infeasible to serve by transit. This service adjustment is planned for implementation in late FY 2025-26.

### **If Further Service Reductions are Required**

The changes to Route 199 service are projected to be enough to maintain a balanced budget over the next five years. However, if there are future shocks to the economy which reduce transit operating revenues, RCTA could consider the following service reduction.

#### ***Reduce Route 1 and 3 Evening Service***

The alternatives analysis showed that this service reduction alternative provides the greatest cost savings among the local route options while minimizing impacts to overall system functionality. Savings of around \$13,800 per year are achieved by ending Routes 1 and 3 one hour earlier each day. Service coverage is largely preserved because Route 2 follows a similar loop as Route 1, operating in the reverse direction 30 minutes earlier. Likewise, Route 3's service area is largely duplicated by Route 20, which serves the same stops in the northbound direction approximately 40 minutes after Route 3's final 5:00 PM trip. Overall, this option produces moderate cost savings with only a modest impact on ridership (loss of 470 trips).



## **Fare Structure Changes**

The North State Express partners have agreed to pilot a regionwide \$2 flat fare (elimination of zone fares) on Route NSE:101 (RCTA Route 20) connecting services as a way of creating more seamless travel and encouraging ridership. As such, RCTA intends to pilot a \$2 flat fare to “full fare” passengers on Route 20 NSE:101 interconnecting trips. Seniors, youth, veterans, and disabled passengers already ride for free. Due to the potential for instability in LCTOP funding and the use of those funds by the existing Free Rides Program it is recommended that RCTA follow MTA’s lead and pilot this fare adjustment at a limited capacity by only applying the \$2 fare to those utilizing contactless payment and monitoring impacts before making this a more expansive and permanent fare adjustment. The fare alternatives analysis demonstrated that with this change to the fare structure, RCTA would lose about \$14,200 in fare revenue and gain around 2,100 passenger trips annually. It is recommended for implementation mid-year FY 25-26.

## **FISCALLY CONSTRAINED FINANCIAL PLAN**

Table 33 presents the 5-Year Fiscally Constrained Operating and Capital Financial Plan for RCTA Transit. Assuming use of RCTA’s second tranche of SB125 funds for operations and incremental growth in reoccurring funding sources, the service plan is funded through the planning period. This is primarily due to operating costs being projected to increase at a faster rate than funding sources, coupled with the exhaustion of CARES Act funding, which has supported transit operators across the state during the impacts and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This constrained plan allows for a small amount of revenue to be set aside for a reserved fund at the discretion of the board.

As shown in the table, sufficient revenue is available for planned capital projects as discussed in Tables 29 and 30, including vehicle replacement and purchase with the assistance of one-time TIRCP funding and ongoing FTA funding. Additional revenue will be required in the later years of the planning period as RCTA completes the Williams Drive Operations Facility improvements, Crescent City Transit Center, and continues vehicle replacement. This means RCTA must not reduce its level of effort in seeking discretionary and non-traditional grant funding. Revenues and expenses associated with CTSA programs such as the Southern Oregon Shuttle are also presented in Table 33. It is projected that there will be sufficient Article 4.5 funding for these services over the next five years.

**Table 33: RCTA Financial Plan - Constrained Plan**

	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	FY 27-28	FY 28-29	FY 29-30	FY 30-31
<b><u>Operating Revenues</u></b>						
Passenger Fares & LCTOP Reimbursements <sup>1</sup>	\$180,000	\$187,200	\$190,944	\$194,763	\$198,658	\$202,631
Auxiliary Transportation (Advertising) Revenue	\$17,431	\$17,954	\$18,493	\$19,047	\$19,619	\$20,207
TDA Article 4 Local Transportation Fund	\$795,243	\$803,195	\$811,227	\$819,340	\$827,533	\$835,808
State Transit Assistance	\$388,829	\$282,065	\$282,065	\$282,065	\$282,065	\$282,065
Proposition 1B PTMISEA (carryover balance)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Section 5311- Operating	\$254,998	\$257,548	\$260,123	\$262,725	\$265,352	\$268,005
Section 5311 - CARES Act/CRRSSA COVID Operating	\$882,282	\$428,370	\$428,370	\$0	\$0	\$0
Section 5311-F Operating	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
SB 125 for Operating	\$1,678,974					
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$4,497,757</b>	<b>\$2,276,332</b>	<b>\$2,291,222</b>	<b>\$1,877,940</b>	<b>\$1,893,227</b>	<b>\$1,908,717</b>
Available Operating Balance	\$551,611	\$2,829,958	\$2,778,760	\$2,572,803	\$1,878,812	\$1,122,949
<b>Status Quo Operating Expenditures<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>\$2,208,500</b>	<b>\$2,308,400</b>	<b>\$2,477,700</b>	<b>\$2,552,000</b>	<b>\$2,628,600</b>	<b>\$2,707,500</b>
SRTP Plan Elements	\$6,000	\$6,600	\$6,700	\$6,900	\$7,200	\$7,400
SRTP Fare Revenue	-\$4,910	-\$12,530	-\$12,780	-\$13,030	-\$13,290	-\$13,530
<b>Balance</b>	<b>\$2,829,958</b>	<b>\$2,778,760</b>	<b>\$2,572,803</b>	<b>\$1,878,812</b>	<b>\$1,122,949</b>	<b>\$303,237</b>
<b><u>CTSA Operating Revenues</u></b>						
CTSA Passenger Fares	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$6,500
Partnership Reimbursements (S. Oregon Shuttle, Me	\$21,078	\$22,828	\$23,513	\$24,218	\$24,945	\$25,693
TDA Article 4.5 LTF CTSA (see Fund 691)	\$41,855	\$42,274	\$42,696	\$43,123	\$43,554	\$43,990
<b>Total CTSA Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$69,433</b>	<b>\$71,601</b>	<b>\$72,709</b>	<b>\$73,841</b>	<b>\$74,999</b>	<b>\$76,183</b>
<b>Status Quo CTSA Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>\$61,200</b>	<b>\$64,260</b>	<b>\$66,188</b>	<b>\$68,173</b>	<b>\$70,219</b>	<b>\$72,325</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>\$8,233</b>	<b>\$7,341</b>	<b>\$6,521</b>	<b>\$5,668</b>	<b>\$4,781</b>	<b>\$3,858</b>
<b><u>Capital Revenues</u></b>						
SB-1 State of Good Repair (bus stops fund balance)	\$40,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000
SB-1 State of Good Repair (bus replace fund balance)	\$183,919	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
LCTOP (Capital - Electric Bus)	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
VW Settlement Fund Capital (electric bus purchase)	\$160,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SB 125 (Fund 1653) - Capital purposes	\$1,675,501	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
ZETCP	\$401,773	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Section 5339 Capital (competitive)	\$1,274,478	\$0	\$873,448	\$0	\$0	\$973,790
Starting Capital Fund Balance	\$8,041,000	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Total Capital Recurring Revenue</b>	<b>\$323,919</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>
<b>One Time Grant Funding</b>	<b>\$11,552,752</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$873,448</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$973,790</b>
<b>Capital Plan Expenditures Status Quo</b>	<b>\$2,081,460</b>	<b>\$6,067,719</b>	<b>\$5,152,810</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$1,227,238</b>
<b>Capital Balance with Discretionary Funding</b>	<b>\$9,795,211</b>	<b>\$3,772,492</b>	<b>-\$461,870</b>	<b>-\$426,870</b>	<b>-\$391,870</b>	<b>-\$600,317</b>

Source: FY 2025-26 RCTA Draft Budgets.

Note 1: Passenger fares escalated at 6 percent for FY 2025-26, 4 percent for FY 2026-27, and 2 percent for FY 2028-29 though FY 2031-32. RCTA ridership continues to recover from its pandemic lows, however ridership growth is expected to slow.

Note 2: \$100,000 increase in additional operating expenses each year beginning in FY 2027-28 for janitorial and antiacne needs at the new transit center.

Note 3: Status Quo operating expenditures assume 5% annual inflation to operations contract expenses in FY 2025-26, and FY 2026-27, and 3% annual inflation to all other expenses throughout the planning period.

## **FISCALLY UNCONSTRAINED SERVICE PLAN**

Ridership, operating costs, and fare revenue estimates for RCTA Transit service plan elements for RCTA Transit are shown in Tables 34 and 35 and described below. The reader is again encouraged to review the Alternatives Chapter for more detailed information on how each plan element was developed. This scenario focuses on improving both local and regional mobility and is largely contingent on the NSE:101 regional inter-agency partnership securing new funding sources that will allow the regional partnership to continue to fully implement the intercity vision of seven-day-a-week service.

### **Route 20 Reroute to Serve Walmart and Medical Facilities (Implemented)**

Carried forward from the fiscally constrained version of the plan, refer to the above section or the alternatives chapter for more information.

### **Route 20 Extend the Evening NSE:101 Northbound Trip to Smith River**

The northbound Route 20/NSE:101 trip currently terminates in Crescent City. The commuter-focused Route 20 trip that serves this segment of the route about two hours before the NSE:101 trip would be well utilized. Extending the final trip of the day, which is the NSE:101 trip, has the potential to perform well and allow residents of Smith River to access the benefits of increased mobility that the NSE:101 intends to provide.

It is anticipated that this plan element will increase ridership by around 1,010 one-way passenger-trips annually for an additional operating subsidy of \$11,980. This does not take into account the need for an additional dispatch span that would be associated with this alternative.

### **Crescent City Local Routes 1 and 2 - 30 Minute Headways, Weekdays 11 AM to 4 PM, Summer Only**

Routes 1 and 2 are the highest-performing local routes and served around 10 passengers per vehicle service hour in FY 2023-24, much higher than many rural transit systems. In an effort to build on successful routes, this plan element will increase frequency on the most popular routes during peak times of day during peak season. In addition, this alternative would help improve on-time performance across all local routes during the summer season, when heavier traffic and increased boardings—particularly between 11 AM and 4 PM—can affect schedule reliability.

It is anticipated that this plan element will increase ridership by around 2,640 one-way passenger-trips annually for an additional operating subsidy of about \$26,000.

### **Route 20 Sunday Service – NSE:101 Connection Runs (2 Round-trips)**

Currently, the NSE:101 provides a public transit intercity connection from Smith River to the San Francisco Bay Area, operates Monday through Saturday. The NSE:101 partners (Redwood Coast Transit, Humboldt Transit Authority, and Mendocino Transit Authority) are searching for a new revenue source which would provide funding for Sunday service and an additional daily trip in the alternative below. This expansion would offer more travel options for North Coast residents and college students, making weekend trips to the San Francisco Bay Area. Conversely, it would also enable Bay Area visitors to access the North Coast via public transit on weekends. This plan element also increases mobility for transit-dependent residents of Klamath, Fort Dick, and Smith River who are cut off from most shopping and

employment opportunities on Sundays when neither RCTA's Route 20, Curry Transit Coastal Express, or the Yurok Tribe Transit Service operates.

As part of this plan element, Route 20 would begin to operate a limited schedule prioritizing the NSE:101 connecting trips, which enable southbound travel to Santa Rosa in the morning hours, and northbound travel in the afternoon. The service could continue to expand to offer a bi-directional midday trip if there is demand for the service. This would allow for connections with NSE:101 in Eureka at 9:55 AM and 5:48 PM (assuming a Sunday schedule would be similar to the Monday–Saturday schedule). It is estimated that Sunday Route 20 Service would increase annual ridership by 1,090 trips and increase marginal operating subsidy by around \$47,000 per year. As there is currently no dispatcher on Sunday, an additional \$20,000 in operating revenue would be required.

### **Increase Route 20 Service – Summer Schedule Year-round**

This service plan element focuses on making RCTA's Route 20 more consistent year-round while expanding connection opportunities with NSE:101 partners. In the past, RCTA has increased Route 20 service during the summer to provide a mid-day round trip from Crescent City to Eureka, which is not offered in the winter. Establishing uniform service levels throughout the year would improve reliability for regular riders. In addition, NSE:101 partners are interested in expanding their current partnership, which now provides southbound travel between Smith River and Santa Rosa in the morning, and northbound service from Santa Rosa to Crescent City in the evening. This service expansion would allow for an NSE:101 bi-directional mid-day trip. This enhancement would create better travel options for intercity passengers along California's north coast. For additional information, see the expanded alternative description in Chapter 8. This plan element is anticipated to cost on the order of \$91,000 to operate annually and carry 2,030 one-way trips per year.

### **Crescent City Local Routes Sunday Service – Saturday Schedule**

If connections to Eureka and beyond are made possible with additional funding, the local route service in Crescent City should also operate on Sundays, to allow for local connections. Local routes are already well utilized, and the addition of Sunday service was one of the most frequently requested improvements in the passenger survey. If service hours mirrored those operated on Saturdays, this plan element is anticipated to cost on the order of \$37,000 annually and carry 3,510 passenger-trips per year.

### **Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle as an Intercity Fixed Route**

Should additional 5311(f) become available, it is recommended that RCTA transition the SOMS to an intercity fixed route service. RCTA would need to establish a schedule and route alignment that prioritizes connections with Josephine Community Transit, and Rouge Valley Transportation District, as well as serves directly key activity centers like the Rouge Valley International Airport, as well as hospitals and specialty medical facilities in Grants Pass and Medford. This new route would enable Del Norte County residents to make single-day trips to Medford and Grants Pass for medical care or shopping and facilitate connections to many other transportation options. The service is suggested to run only two days a week, similar to the existing SOMS, and progressively expand to additional days a week given demand and funding. At baseline levels, it is expected that operating costs would be about \$44,800 annually and ridership would be about 900 passenger trips. Another benefit to implementing this

alternative is that it would free up CTSA funding for new services or programs to increase the mobility of underserved Del Norte County populations.

### Fare Structure Changes

The North State Express partners have agreed to implement a regionwide \$2 flat fare (elimination of zone fares) for connecting services as a way of creating more seamless travel and encouraging ridership. This plan element is also included in the constrained plan and explained in greater detail above.

Table 34: RCTA Transit Short Range Transit Development Plan Operating Costs (Unconstrained)						
Plan Element	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	FY 27-28 <sup>2</sup>	FY 28-29	FY 29-30	FY 30-31
<b>Base Case Operating Cost<sup>1</sup></b>						
Marginal Operating Costs	\$936,800	\$990,600	\$1,020,300	\$1,050,900	\$1,082,400	\$1,114,900
Fixed Costs	\$1,271,700	\$1,317,700	\$1,457,200	\$1,500,900	\$1,545,900	\$1,592,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,208,500</b>	<b>\$2,308,300</b>	<b>\$2,477,500</b>	<b>\$2,551,800</b>	<b>\$2,628,300</b>	<b>\$2,707,200</b>
<b>Plan Costs</b>						
Route 20 Add Stops at Sutter Health, and Walmart (Implemented)	\$13,900	\$15,200	\$15,600	\$16,100	\$16,600	\$17,100
Route 20 Extend the Evening NSE:101 Northbound Trip to Smith River	\$0	\$15,200	\$15,600	\$16,100	\$16,600	\$17,100
30 minute Headways Crescent City Routes 1 and 2 - Weekdays 11 AM to 4 PM, Summer Only	\$0	\$25,100	\$25,800	\$26,600	\$27,400	\$28,200
Local Route Sunday Service (With Existing Saturday Schedule)	\$0	\$37,000	\$38,100	\$39,200	\$40,400	\$41,600
Route 20- Sunday Service NSE:101 Connecting Runs (2 Round Trips)	\$0	\$46,600	\$48,000	\$49,500	\$50,900	\$52,500
Sunday Dispatch Services	\$0	\$22,800	\$23,500	\$24,200	\$24,900	\$25,600
Increase Route 20 Service (Existing Summer Schedule YR)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$91,400	\$94,100	\$96,900
Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle as an Intercity Fixed Route	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$46,200	\$47,600	\$49,000
<b>Total Service Plan Costs</b>	<b>\$13,900</b>	<b>\$161,900</b>	<b>\$166,600</b>	<b>\$263,100</b>	<b>\$270,900</b>	<b>\$279,000</b>
<b>Total Operating Cost</b>	<b>\$2,222,400</b>	<b>\$2,470,200</b>	<b>\$2,644,100</b>	<b>\$2,814,900</b>	<b>\$2,899,200</b>	<b>\$2,986,200</b>
Note 1: Base Case (status quo) costs based upon FY 2025-26 June 23, 2025 draft budget, excluding capital. Assumes 5% inflation 3% annual inflation rate for the planning period. Note 2: Beginning in FY 2027-28 RCTA expects 100k in additional fixed costs for maintenance and janitorial services for its new Crescent City Transit Center. Source: LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.						

**Table 35: RCTA Transit Short Range Transit Plan Ridership and Fare Revenue (Unconstrained)**

	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	FY 27-28	FY 28-29	FY 2029-30	FY 30-31
<b>Annual Ridership</b>						
Base Case	109,800	114,200	116,500	118,800	121,200	123,600
<b>Service Plan Elements</b>						
Route 20 Add Stops at Sutter Health, and Walmart (Implemented)	610	630	640	650	660	670
Route 20 Extend the Evening NSE:101 Northbound Trip to Smith River	0	1,050	1,070	1,090	1,110	1,130
30 minute Headways Crescent City Routes 1 and 2 - Weekdays 11 AM to 4 PM, Summer Only	0	2,750	2,810	2,870	2,930	2,990
Local Route Sunday Service (With Existing Saturday Schedule)	0	3,650	3,720	3,790	3,870	3,950
Route 20- Sunday Service NSE:101 Connecting Runs (2 Round Trips)	0	1,130	1,150	1,170	1,190	1,210
Increase Route 20 Service (Existing Summer Schedule YR)	0	0	0	2,070	2,110	2,150
Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle as an Intercity Fixed Route	0	0	0	880	900	920
<i>Subtotal Impact of Plan Service Elements</i>	<i>610</i>	<i>9,210</i>	<i>9,390</i>	<i>12,520</i>	<i>12,770</i>	<i>13,020</i>
<b>Impact of Fare Strategies</b>						
\$2 Flat Fare for Route 20 and 199	1,100	2,200	2,240	2,280	2,330	2,380
<b>Total Ridership</b>	<b>111,510</b>	<b>125,610</b>	<b>128,130</b>	<b>133,600</b>	<b>136,300</b>	<b>139,000</b>
<b>Fare Revenues (Passenger Revenues)</b>						
Base Case	\$180,000	\$187,200	\$190,944	\$194,763	\$198,658	\$202,631
<b>Service Plan Elements</b>						
Route 20 Add Stops at Sutter Health, and Walmart (Implemented)	\$2,370	\$2,450	\$2,480	\$2,520	\$2,560	\$2,600
Route 20 Extend the Evening NSE:101 Northbound Trip to Smith River	\$0	\$4,080	\$4,150	\$4,230	\$4,310	\$4,390
30 minute Headways Crescent City Routes 1 and 2 - Weekdays 11 AM to 4 PM, Summer Only	\$0	\$1,420	\$1,450	\$1,480	\$1,510	\$1,540
Local Route Sunday Service (With Existing Saturday Schedule)	\$0	\$1,990	\$2,030	\$2,070	\$2,110	\$2,150
Route 20- Sunday Service NSE:101 Connecting Runs (2 Round Trips)	\$0	\$5,500	\$5,400	\$5,400	\$5,400	\$5,400
Increase Route 20 Service (Existing Summer Schedule YR)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,030	\$8,190	\$8,340
Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle as an Intercity Fixed Route	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,800	\$9,000	\$9,200
<i>Subtotal Impact of Plan Service Elements</i>	<i>\$2,370</i>	<i>\$15,440</i>	<i>\$15,510</i>	<i>\$32,530</i>	<i>\$33,080</i>	<i>\$33,620</i>
<b>Impact of Fare Modifications</b>						
\$2 Flat Fare for Route 20 and 199	-\$7,100	-\$15,100	-\$15,700	-\$16,000	-\$16,300	-\$16,600
<b>Total Fare Revenue</b>	<b>\$175,270</b>	<b>\$187,540</b>	<b>\$190,754</b>	<b>\$211,293</b>	<b>\$215,438</b>	<b>\$219,651</b>
<i>Source: LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.</i>						

**Table 36: RCTA Financial Plan (Unconstrained)**

	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	FY 27-28	FY 28-29	FY 29-30	FY 30-31
<b>Operating Revenues</b>						
Passenger Fares & LCTOP Reimbursements <sup>1</sup>	\$180,000	\$187,200	\$190,944	\$194,763	\$198,658	\$202,631
TDA Article 4 Local Transportation Fund	\$795,243	\$803,195	\$811,227	\$819,340	\$827,533	\$835,808
State Transit Assistance	\$388,829	\$282,065	\$282,065	\$282,065	\$282,065	\$282,065
Proposition 1B PTMISEA (carryover balance)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Section 5311- Operating	\$254,998	\$257,548	\$260,123	\$262,725	\$265,352	\$268,005
Section 5311 - CARES Act/CRRSSA COVID Operating	\$882,282	\$428,370	\$428,370	\$0	\$0	\$0
Section 5311 - F Operating	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
SB 125 for Operating	\$1,678,974					
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$4,497,757</b>	<b>\$2,276,332</b>	<b>\$2,291,222</b>	<b>\$1,877,940</b>	<b>\$1,893,227</b>	<b>\$1,908,717</b>
Available Operating Balance	\$551,611	\$2,822,238	\$2,628,610	\$2,275,343	\$1,354,712	\$365,219
<b>Status Quo Operating Expenditures<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>\$2,208,500</b>	<b>\$2,308,400</b>	<b>\$2,477,700</b>	<b>\$2,552,000</b>	<b>\$2,628,600</b>	<b>\$2,707,500</b>
SRTP Plan Elements	\$13,900	\$161,900	\$166,600	\$263,100	\$270,900	\$279,000
SRTP Fare Revenue	-\$4,730	\$340	-\$190	\$16,530	\$16,780	\$17,020
<b>Balance</b>	<b>\$2,822,238</b>	<b>\$2,628,610</b>	<b>\$2,275,343</b>	<b>\$1,354,712</b>	<b>\$365,219</b>	<b>-\$695,543</b>
<b>CTSA Operating Revenues<sup>4</sup></b>						
CTSA Passenger Fares	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$6,500
Partnership Reimbursements (S. Oregon Shuttle, Medical DAR Trips)	\$21,078	\$22,828	\$23,513	\$4,133	\$4,257	\$4,385
TDA Article 4.5 LTF CTSA (see Fund 691)	\$41,855	\$42,274	\$42,696	\$43,123	\$43,554	\$43,990
<b>Total CTSA Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$69,433</b>	<b>\$71,601</b>	<b>\$72,709</b>	<b>\$53,756</b>	<b>\$54,312</b>	<b>\$54,875</b>
<b>Status Quo CTSA Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>\$61,200</b>	<b>\$64,260</b>	<b>\$66,188</b>	<b>\$25,557</b>	<b>\$26,324</b>	<b>\$27,114</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>\$8,233</b>	<b>\$7,341</b>	<b>\$6,521</b>	<b>\$28,199</b>	<b>\$27,988</b>	<b>\$27,761</b>
<b>Capital Revenues</b>						
SB-1 State of Good Repair (bus stops fund balance)	\$40,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000
SB-1 State of Good Repair (bus replacement fund balance)	\$183,919	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
LCTOP (Capital - Electric Bus)	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
VW Settlement Fund Capital (electric bus purchase)	\$160,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SB 125 (Fund 1653) for Capital Purposes	\$1,675,501	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
ZETCP	\$401,773	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Section 5339 Capital (competitive)	\$1,274,478	\$0	\$873,448	\$0	\$0	\$973,790
Starting Capital Fund Balance	\$8,041,000	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Total Capital Recurring Revenue</b>	<b>\$323,919</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>
<b>One Time Grant Funding</b>	<b>\$11,552,752</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$873,448</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$973,790</b>
<b>Capital Plan Expenditures Status Quo</b>	<b>\$2,081,460</b>	<b>\$6,067,719</b>	<b>\$5,152,810</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$1,227,238</b>
<b>Capital Balance with Discretionary Funding</b>	<b>\$9,795,211</b>	<b>\$3,772,492</b>	<b>-\$461,870</b>	<b>-\$426,870</b>	<b>-\$391,870</b>	<b>-\$600,317</b>
<p>Source: FY 2025-26 RCTA Draft Budgets.</p> <p>Note 1: Passenger fares escalated at 6 percent for FY 2025-26, 4 percent for FY 2026-27, and 2 percent for FY 2028-29 though FY 2031-32. RCTA ridership continues to recover from its pandemic lows, however ridership growth is expected to slow.</p> <p>Note 2: \$100,000 increase in additional operating expenses each year beginning in FY 2027-28 for janitorial and antiacne needs at the new transit center.</p> <p>Note 3: Status Quo operating expenditures assume 5% annual inflation to operations contract expenses in FY 2025-26, and FY 2026-27, and 3% annual inflation to all other expenses throughout the planning period.</p> <p>Note 4: Reduction in CTSA partnership match and CTSA operating expenditures in FY 28-29 and beyond are due to the Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle being replaced by a regular fixed route.</p>						



## **FISCALLY UNCONSTRAINED FINANCIAL PLAN**

Table 36 presents the unconstrained Operating and Capital Financial Plan for RCTA Transit. Assuming use of SB125 funds to support operations and incremental growth of reoccurring funding sources after FY 2025-26, the unconstrained service plan is funded only through FY 2029-30 with a deficit of around \$695,000 in FY 2030-31. Table 36 also does not include a set aside for operating or capital reserve funding, which is critical to RCTA's survival, providing operations funding stability and the biggest and most important source of local match funds for capital projects.

The capital plan is the same for both the constrained and unconstrained service plans. No additional vehicle purchases will be required as a result of service expansion. As shown in Table 36, it is anticipated there will be a deficit of around \$250,000 in the capital fund by FY 2027-28, primarily as a result of large, planned capital improvements. As RCTA Transit transitions to a zero-emission fleet, there are other potential funding sources available for electric vehicles. The Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project (HVIP), administered by CARB, provides around \$120,000 vouchers for large transit vehicle purchases. This program can help mitigate the cost difference between diesel and electric vehicles.

December 12, 2025

**MEMO TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Joe Rye, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** Approve Agreement with The Mobility House LLC to Provide Charge Management System (CMS) for the Williams Drive Charging Stations Project in a Not-To-Exceed Amount of \$29,083 and Direct Executive Director to Execute Agreement Documents



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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve agreement with The Mobility House LLC to provide charge management system (CMS) for the Williams Drive Charging Stations Project in a not-to-exceed amount of \$29,083 and direct Executive Director to execute agreement documents.

**BACKGROUND:**

In October and November 2025, RCTA conducted a comprehensive Request for Proposals (RFP) for a CMS vendor. Five proposals were received by the November 24<sup>th</sup> deadline.

**Discussion**

RCTA issued an RFP for CMS equipment on October, 22, 2025 with the goal of managing charging costs as part of the Williams Drive Bus Charging Infrastructure Project. The RFP followed an extensive Request for Information (RFI) process that took place over summer 2025. Five (5) vendors submitted responses to the RFP and were scored and evaluated:

- CarMediaLab/Init
- Chargepoint
- EVGateway
- MOEV
- The Mobility House LLC

The Selection Committee scored all proposals in its technical evaluation and invited the top two scoring vendors to participate in an interview. Following the interview, RCTA unanimously selected The Mobility House (TMH) as the top scorer. TMH specializes in hardware-agnostic solutions for small and rural transit agencies, with multiple deployments in California. TMH's proposal aligned with RCTA's project goals and its three-year price of \$29,083 fits the budget. *Note: RCTA received pro-bono assistance from Cal-ITP through its consultant, RebelGroup.*

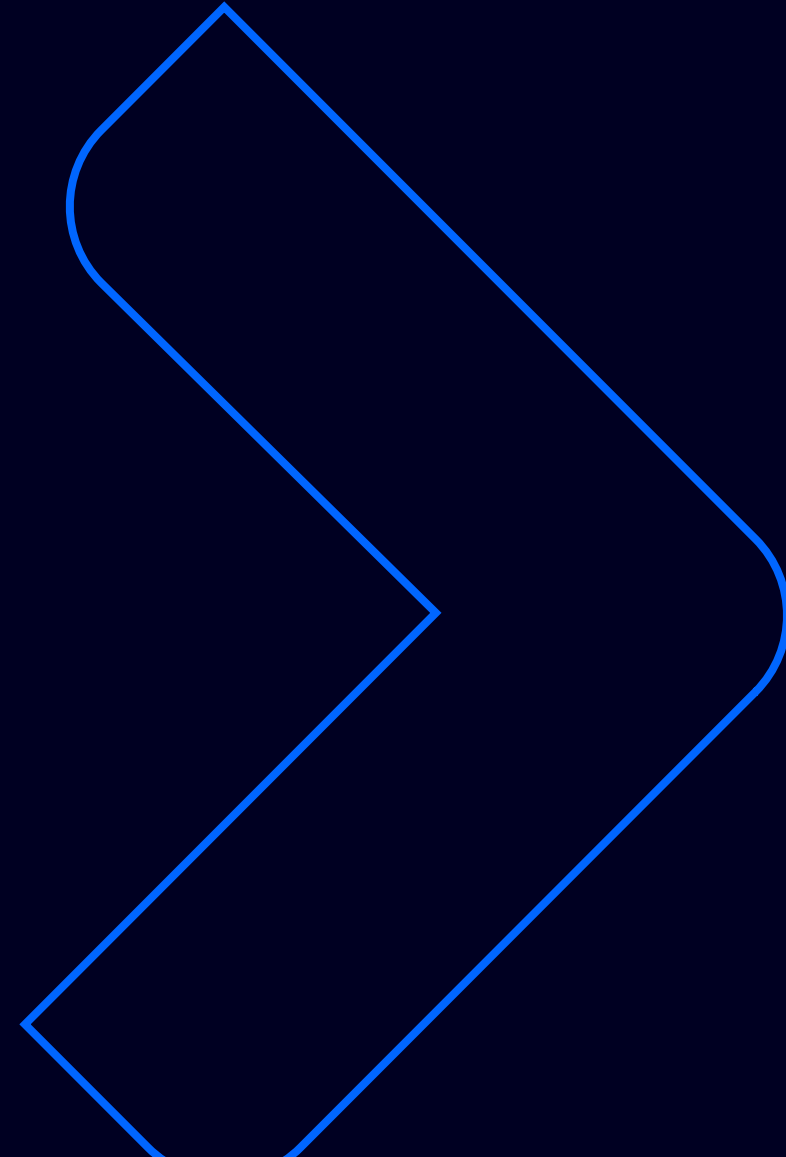
**Recommendation**

That the RCTA Board approve an agreement with The Mobility House LLC to provide CMS for the Williams Drive Charging Stations Project at a not-to-exceed three-year cost of \$29,083 and direct the Executive Director to execute the agreement.

# Charge Management Software System for BEB Fleet RFP

Redwood Coast Transit Authority

December 2025





# Agenda

- 01 The Mobility House
- 02 ChargePilot Demonstration
- 03 Question and Answer Period



# An industry-leading partner for fleet electrification & integrated energy solutions



**Founded 16 Years ago**, backed by leading OEMs and utilities



**300+ people**, 5 offices (Belmont, Munich, Paris, Zurich, Singapore)



**15 OEM partnerships** for B2B & B2C charging / energy services



ChargePilot trusted by **2,700+ EV Fleets**



**100+ MW** stationary storage solutions using EV batteries



**10 V2G pilots** enabling 14 value-generating energy & grid services



**We are the most experienced CMS provider with a robust network of partnerships with leading OEMs, fleet operators and technology providers**



# 150+ North American Fleets

## Highlights

- 1 **Port of Oakland** (Oakland, CA)
- 2 **Stockton Unified School District** (Stockton, CA)
- 3 **Gold Oak Unified School District** (Placerville, CA)
- 4 **El Dorado Union High School** (Placerville, CA)
- 5 **Modesto City Schools** (Modesto, CA)
- 6 **Turlock Unified School District** (Turlock, CA)
- 7 **Los Banos USD** (Los Banos, CA)
- 8 **Translink** (Vancouver, BC)
- 9 **Lassen Union High School District** (Susanville, CA)
- 10 **Hood River School District** (Hood River, Oregon)
- 11 **Weed Elementary** (Weed, CA)
- 12 **Trinity High School** (Weaverville, CA)
- 13 **Zion National Park** (Springdale, UT)
- 14 **Tempe School District** (Tempe, AZ)
- 15 **Ocean View School District** (Oxnard, CA)
- 16 **Antelope Valley Transit Authority** (Lancaster, CA)
- 17 **Long Beach Transit** (Long Beach, CA)
- 18 **Ace Parking at San Diego Airport** (San Diego, CA)
- 19 **SP+ Parking at San Diego Airport** (San Diego, CA)
- 20 **Trinity Metro - Lancaster Depot** (Fort Worth, TX)
- 21 **Houston Metro (Polk)** (Houston, TX)
- 22 **Houston Metro (West)** (Houston, TX)
- 23 **Metro St. Louis** (St. Louis, MI)
- 24 **Washington University** (St. Louis, Missouri)
- 25 **Rochester Public Transit** (Rochester, MN)
- 26 **Madison Metro Transit** (Madison, WI)
- 27 **IndyGo** (Indianapolis, IN)
- 28 **Knoxville Area Transit** (Knoxville, TN)
- 29 **Georgia Regional Transportation Authority** (Atlanta, GA)
- 30 **Colton Joint Unified School District** (Colton, CA)
- 31 **Pine Valley Central School District** (South Dayton, NY)
- 32 **Lake Shore School District Bus Yard** (Angola, NY)
- 33 **Newfield Schools** (Newfield, NY)
- 34 **Montgomery County Bus Depot by AlphaStruxure** (Silver Spring, MD)
- 35 **Ottawa Transit** (Ottawa, OT, CA)
- 36 **Canyon State Bus Sales Inc** (Glendale, AZ)
- 37 **Green Mountain Transit Bus Depot** (Burlington, VT)
- 38 **Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority (RIPTA)** (Providence, RI)
- 39 **Bethlehem CSD** (Delmar, NY)
- 40 **Connecticut Transit (Hartford)** (Hartford, CT)
- 41 **Connecticut Transit (Hamden)** (Hamden, CT)
- 42 **Croton-Harmon UFSD** (Croton-on-Hudson, NY)
- 43 **NYCSBUS (Zerega)** (The Bronx, NY)
- 44 **Consolidated Bus Transit (Zerega)** (The Bronx, NY)
- 45 **New York MTA (Charleston)** (Staten Island, NY)
- 46 **NYCSBUS (Port Richmond, Staten Island)** (Staten Island, NY)
- 47 **New York MTA** (Brooklyn, NY)
- 48 **NYCSBUS (Greenpoint)** (Brooklyn, NY)
- 49 **New York MTA (Grand Avenue)** (Queens, NY)
- 50 **Connecticut DOT (Stamford)** (Stamford, CT)





## Our Project Understanding

Based on our review of your electrification studies, transit plans and the RFP scope, here is our understanding of your desired outcomes for this project

- RCTA is seeking a sophisticated CMS to support its BEB rollout in 2026 for its Williams Drive Maintenance Facility
- Longterm interoperability and scaling of charger brands is important as there will be a mix of L2 and L3 chargers
- Due to long routes, RCTA will depend on opportunity charging and overnight charging – this requires careful management of charging to maintain pullout while avoiding excessive peak energy demand
- ITS software integration with Remix, Hexagon and the future telematics system will create a single source of truth for operations and maintenance
- Reliability is key – system must run with little intervention and must have ability to run without internet
- What else?

## Where does ChargePilot provide the most value to transit agencies?



Time-of-use rate optimization and load balancing



Site integrated load management & Integration with backup generators



Charging optimization based on SOC, vehicle schedules, priority, vehicle ID



Data tracking, analysis, and reports for trend analysis, reporting



Management of chargers from different manufacturers



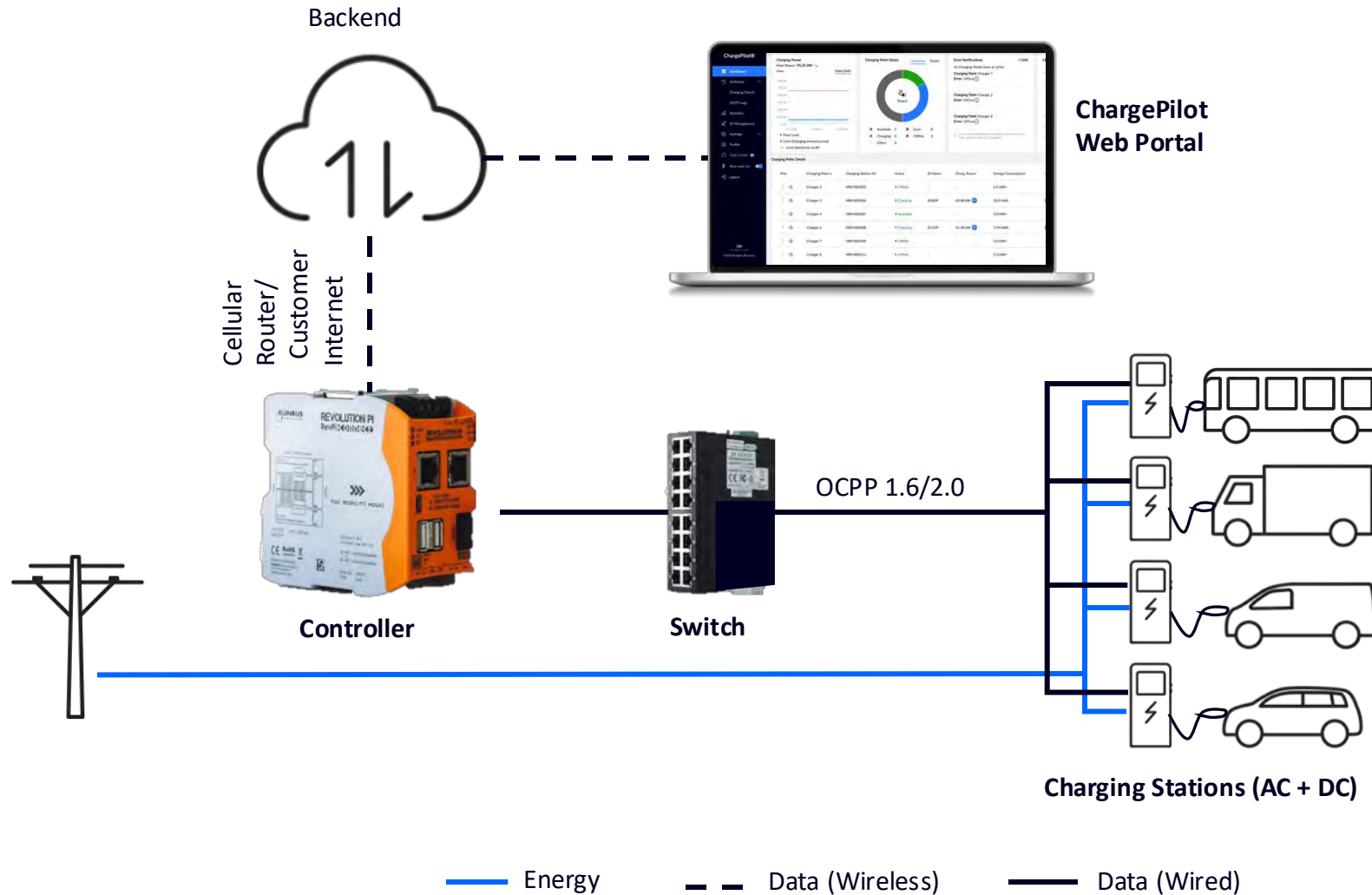
High reliability and uptime requirements, with need for offline redundancy

# ChargePilot Demonstration

Energy management, software integrations & robust data collection



# ChargePilot System Architecture

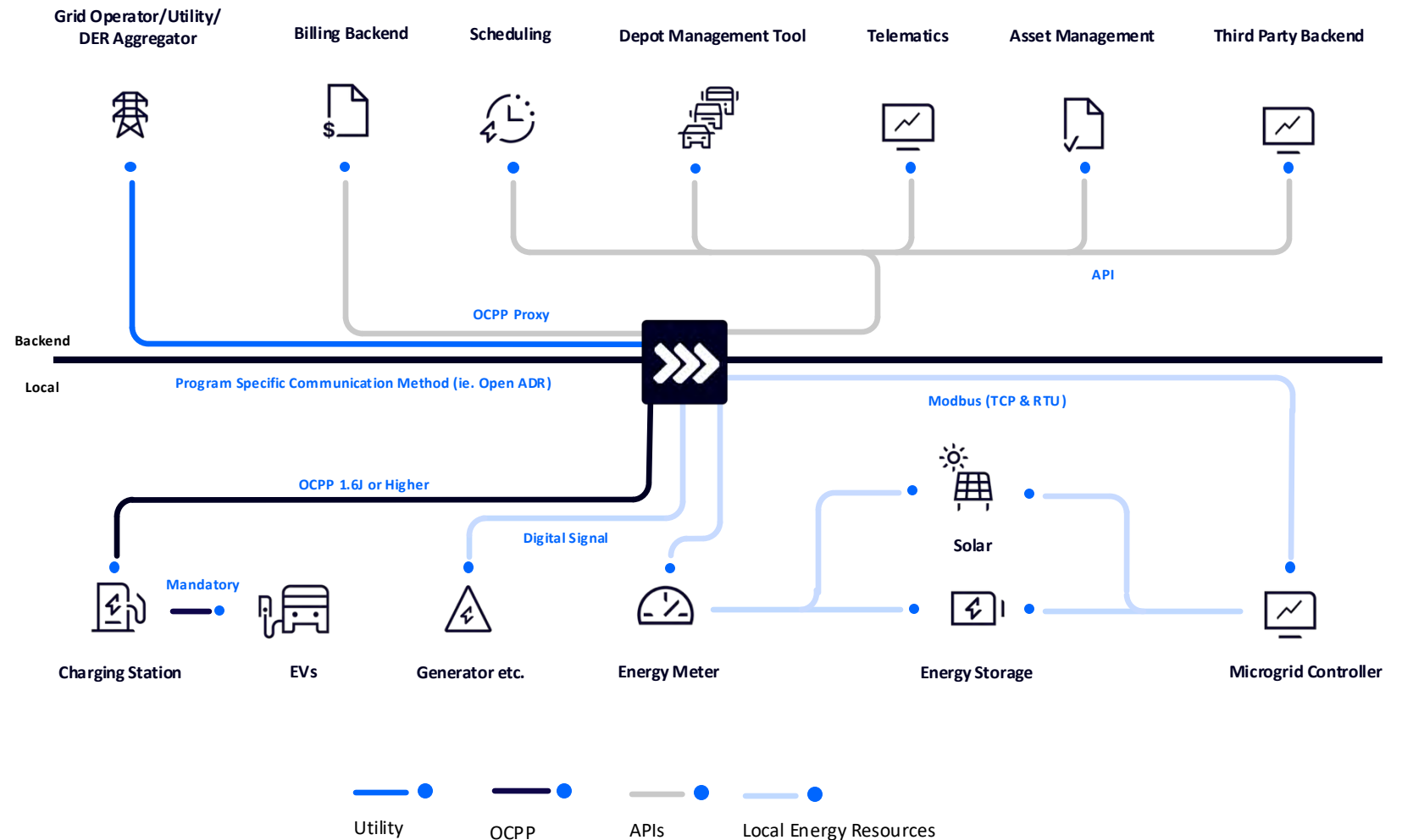


## Integrating with your charging infrastructure



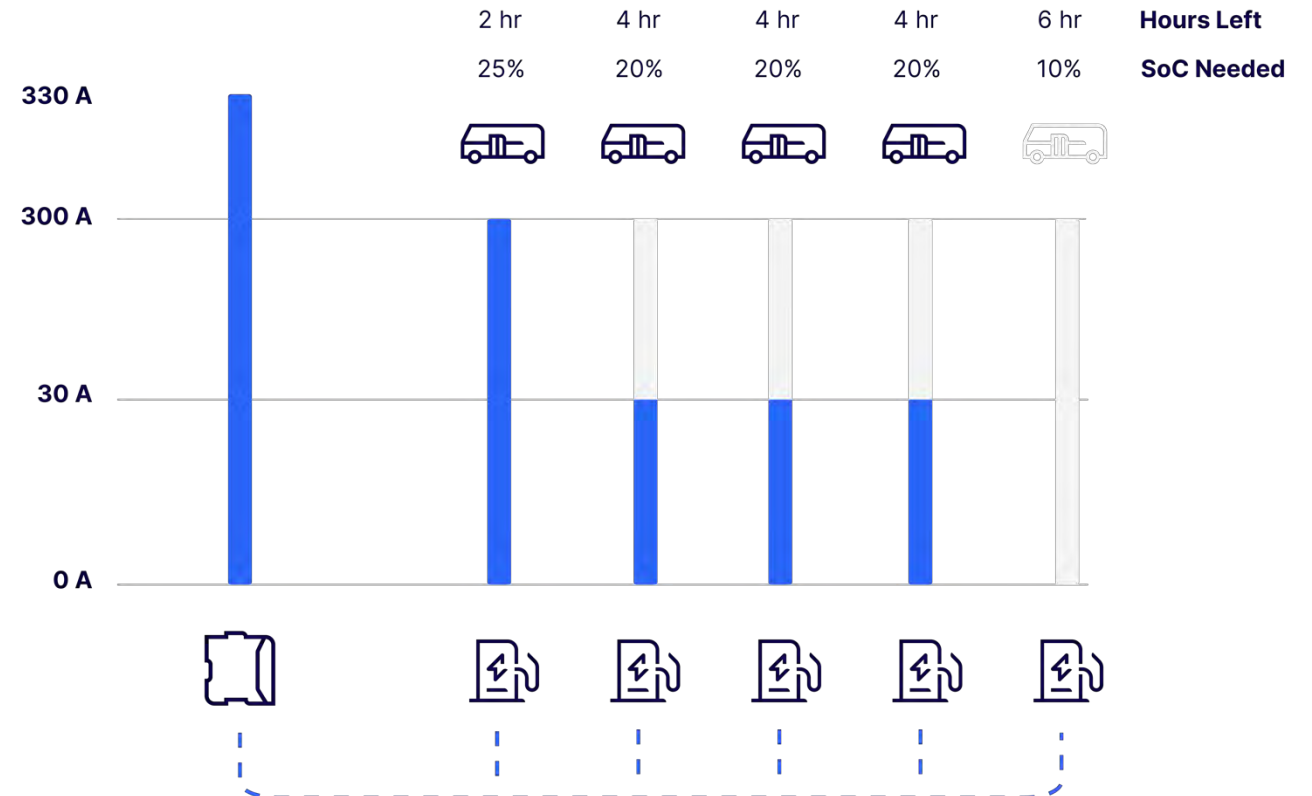
### Plan for scale

by choosing a system that can be combined with other systems from different manufacturers via standardized interfaces.



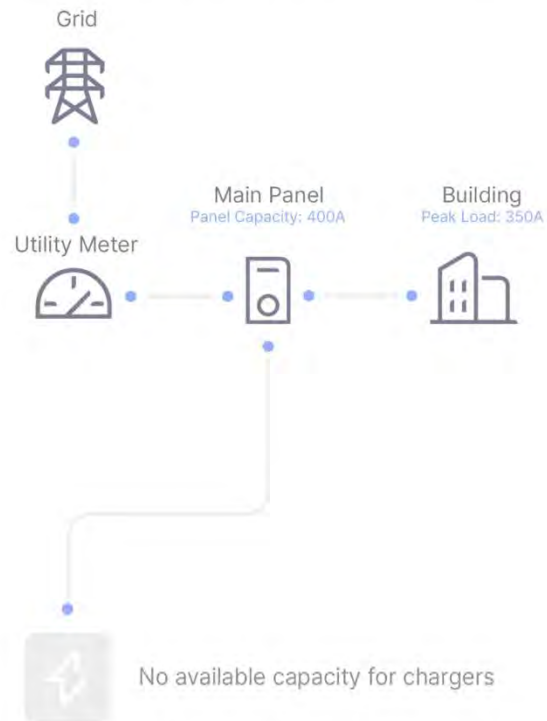
# Optimize charging around your fleet's schedule

- ChargePilot can take into **consideration** each bus needs depending on route critical information such as time of departure.
  - Priority is determined via two “urgency coefficients”: SoC needed & Time of Departure
- **Priority** can be set to a given bus or charger manually through the dashboard.
- These data points can be entered in 3 ways:
  - Manually
  - Via TMH provided APIs
  - Through connection to your company’s fleet management software (custom integration)

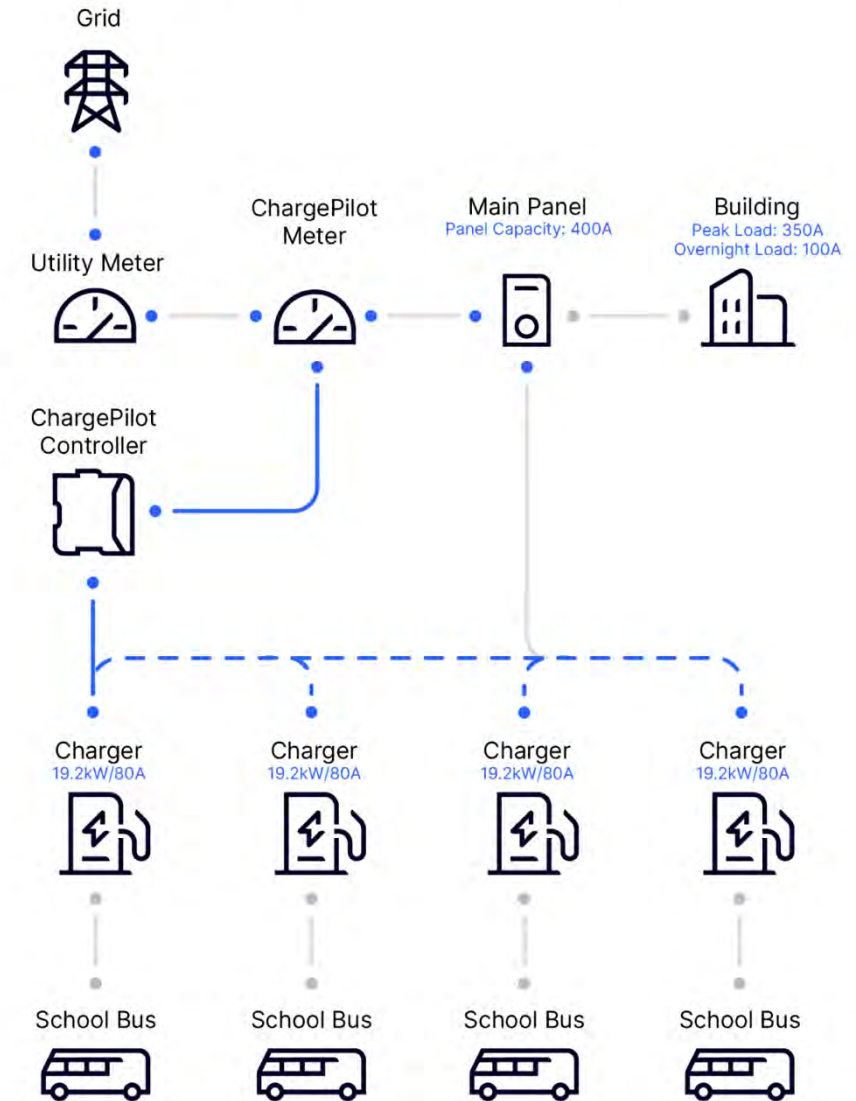


## Leverage Existing Electrical Service

Without ALM & Site Integrated Load Management



## With ALM & Site Integrated Load Management



The combined functionalities of ChargePilot allow the site to safely oversubscribe the main panel and adjust charging in response to the building load.



# Example: A US Transit with 23 charging points reduces peak demand by 57+% with ChargePilot

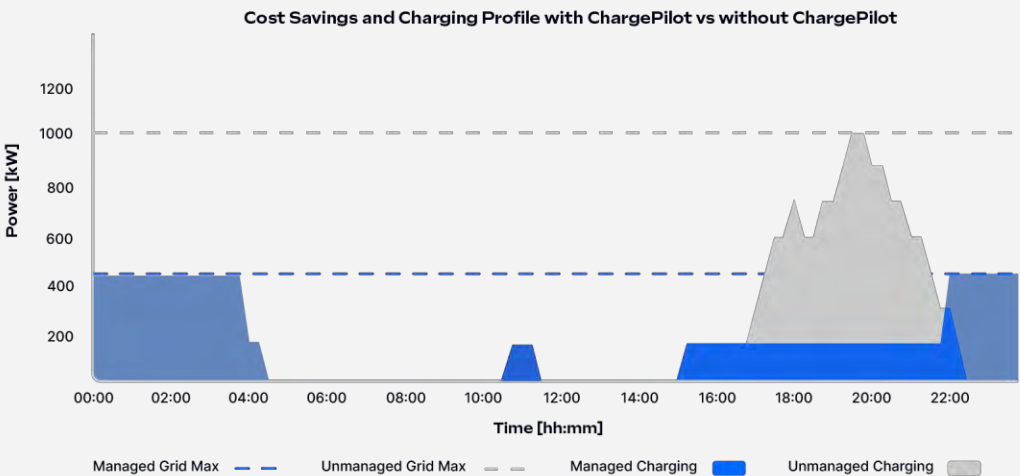
## Simulation

1,050 kW

Load Peak Without Management

446 kW

Load Peak With Management



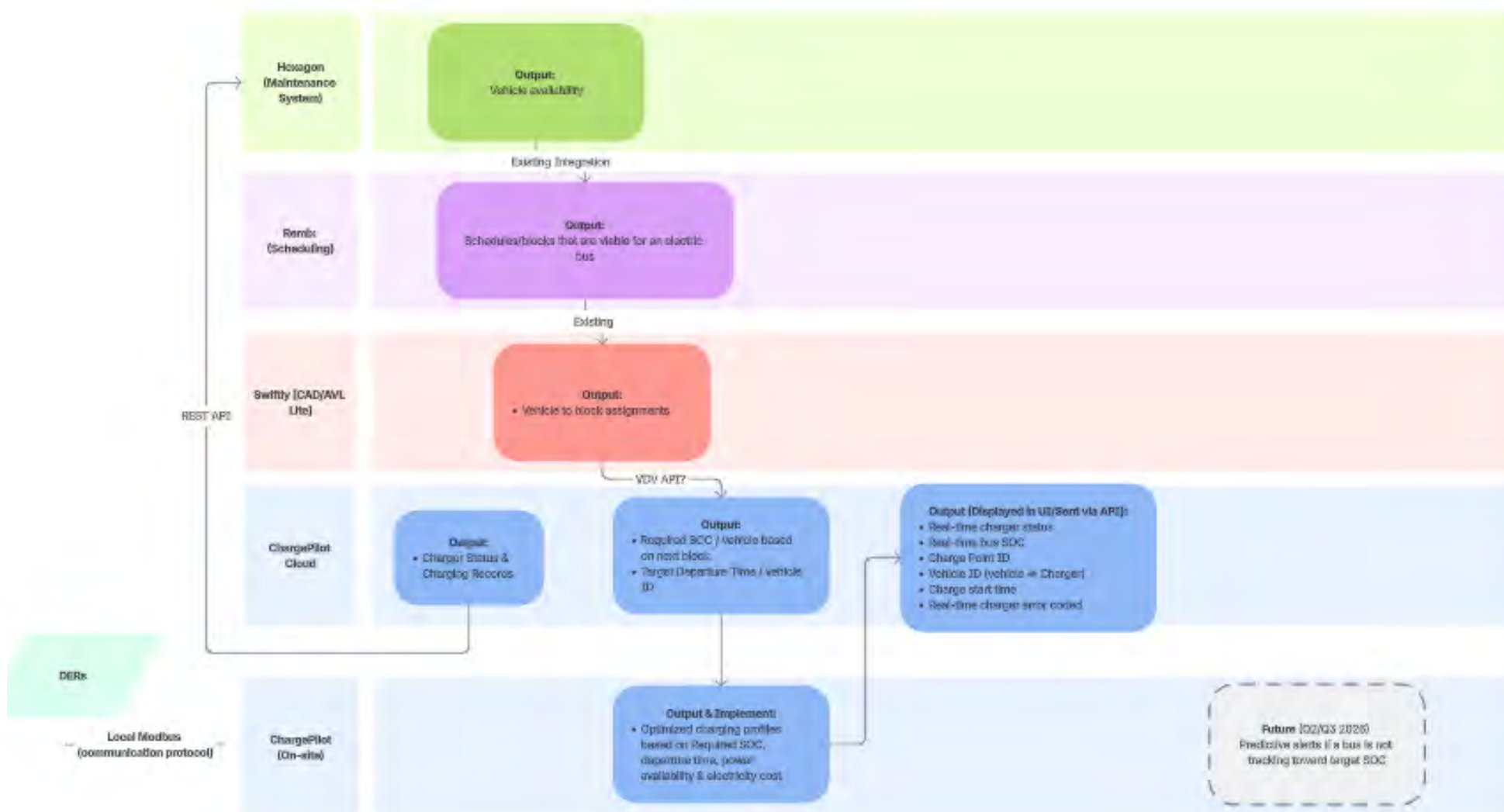
## Parameters

- Vehicles:** 5 x Gillig 40 ft buses, 8 x New Flyer 60 ft buses
- Chargers:** 9 x 150 kW (DC), 13 ports now 20 x 150kW (DC), 3x 450 kW pantograph
- Utility Rate Plan:** Amren Large General Service (Energy>350 kWh)
- TOU Peak Hours:** 10 AM – 10 PM Monday - Friday

## Results

Estimated Monthly Savings	\$6,061.08
Estimated Annual Savings	\$66,203
Load Peak Reduction	-57.7%

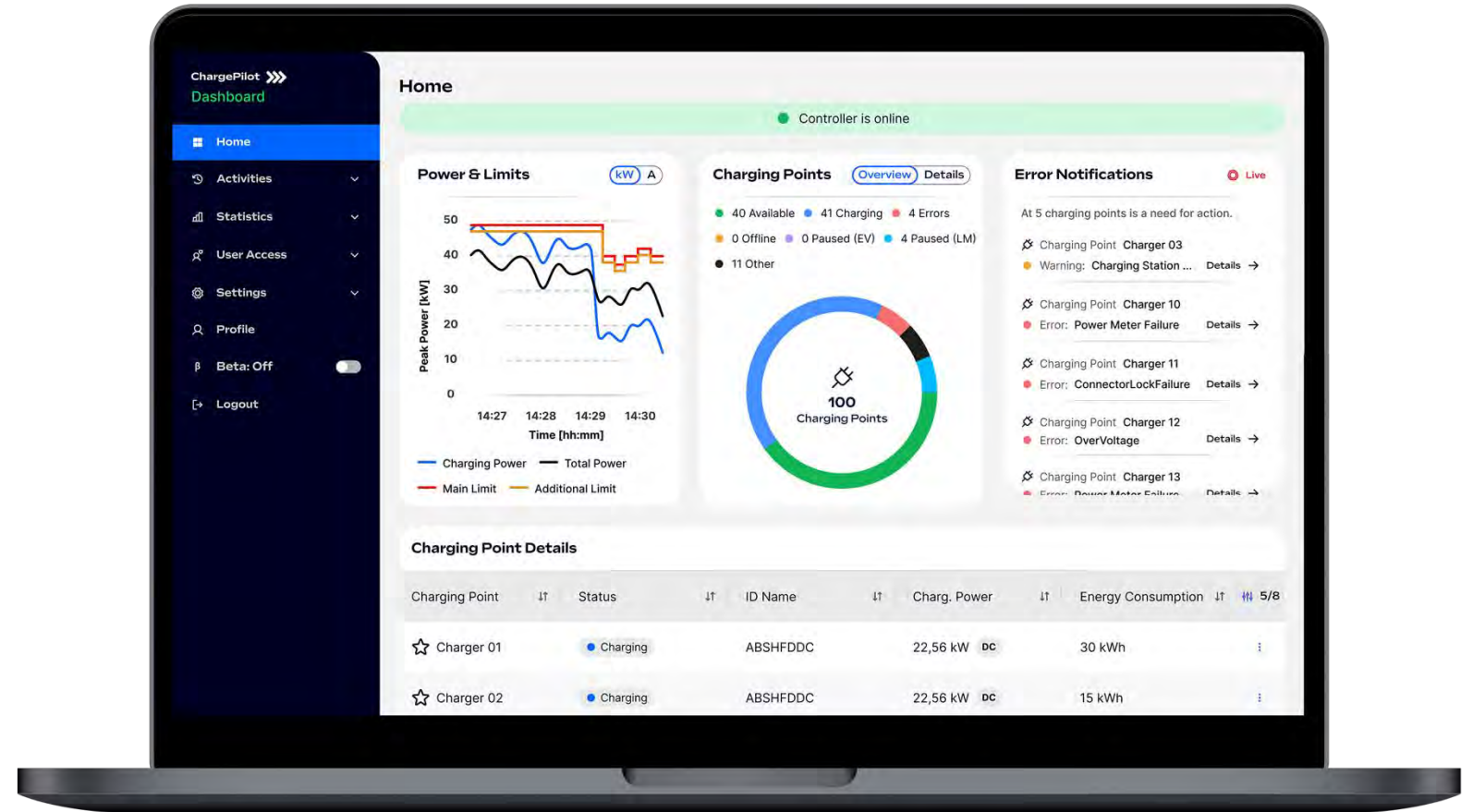
## Integrating with your transit ITS ecosystem using open data standards



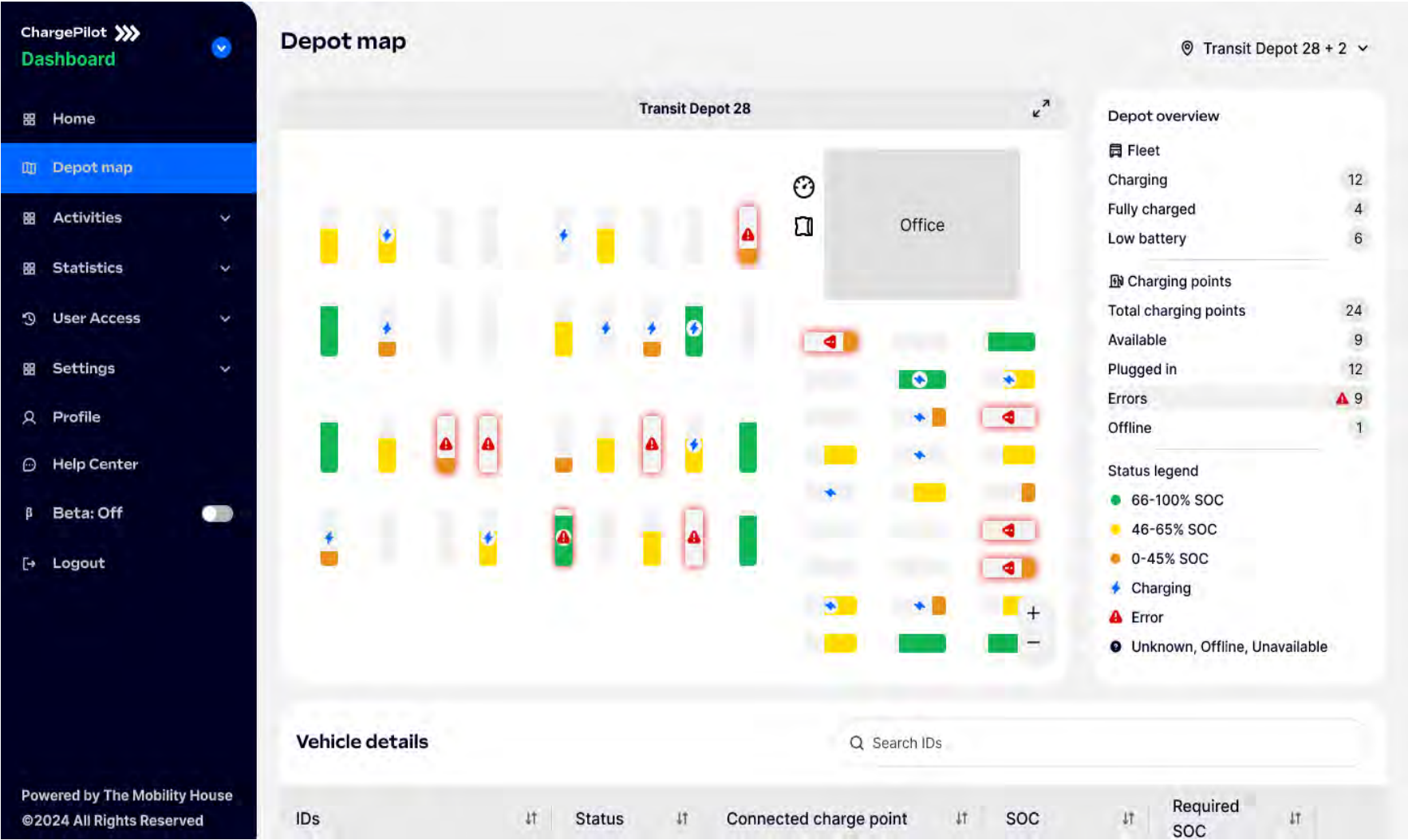
## Live insights illustrate the load management, reporting and error code functions at a glance

### ChargePilot Live Demonstration

Go Live!



# Depot Map provides dynamic live visualizations of your depot



# Question and Answer Period





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# Price Proposal

**EXHIBIT 2: PRICE PROPOSAL FORM****Exhibit 2****Price Proposal Form****Proposed Cost, Hardware & Implementation**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Unit/Quantity</b>	<b>Unit Cost</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Hardware Components			
<i>ChargePilot Kit</i>	1	\$4,500	\$4,500
<i>[Hardware Component #2]</i>	#_____	\$_____	\$_____
<i>[Hardware Component #3]</i>	#_____	\$_____	\$_____
Subtotal, Hardware Components			<b>\$4,500</b>
One-time Implementation Fees			
<i>AC Remote Charger Commissioning</i>	9	\$75	\$675
<i>DC Remote Charger Commissioning</i>	2	\$175	\$350
<i>[Implementation Component #2]</i>	#_____	\$_____	\$_____
Subtotal, One-time Implementation Fees			<b>\$1,025</b>
Other One-time Support			
Labor Costs (blended rate)	#_____	\$_____	\$_____
<i>Other (specify)</i>	#_____	\$_____	\$_____
Subtotal, One-time Support			\$_____
<b>Total, Hardware &amp; Implementation</b>			<b>\$5,525</b>

<b>Description</b>	<b>Unit/Quantity</b>	<b>Unit Cost</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Year 1: CMS System Subscription			



**Proposed Cost, CMS System Subscription**

CMS System Subscription (AC Chargers)	9	\$234	\$2,574
CMS System Subscription (DC Chargers)	2	\$1,058	\$2,116
<i>Schedule-based optimization (annual)</i>	11	\$36	\$396
<i>Automated Load Management (annual)</i>	11	\$100	\$1,100
Subtotal, Year 1 CMS System Subscription			\$6,186
Year 2: CMS System Subscription			
CMS System Subscription (AC Chargers)	9	\$234	\$2,574
CMS System Subscription (DC Chargers)	2	\$695	\$2,116
<i>Schedule-based optimization (annual)</i>	11	\$36	\$396
<i>Automated Load Management (annual)</i>	11	\$100	\$1,100
Subtotal, Year 2 CMS System Subscription			\$6,186
Year 3: CMS System Subscription			
CMS System Subscription (AC Chargers)	9	\$234	\$2,574
CMS System Subscription (DC Chargers)	2	\$695	\$2,116
<i>Schedule-based optimization (annual)</i>	11	\$36	\$396
<i>Automated Load Management (annual)</i>	11	\$100	\$1,100
Subtotal, Year 3 CMS System Subscription			\$6,186
<b>Total, CMS System Subscription (Y1-3)</b>			<b>\$18,558</b>

**Proposed Cost, Optional Components**

Description	Unit/Quantity	Unit Cost	Cost
<b>OPTIONAL</b> Hardware & Implementation			

<i>Onsite TMH representation for commissioning of system (per visit)</i>	1	\$5,000	\$5,000
<i>[ OPTIONAL one-time hardware or implementation component ]</i>	#_____	\$_____	\$_____
Subtotal, OPTIONAL Hardware & Implementation			\$5,000
<b>OPTIONAL CMS System On-going</b>			
<i>[ OPTIONAL on-going CMS system component ]</i>	#_____	\$_____	\$_____
<i>[ OPTIONAL on-going CMS system component ]</i>	#_____	\$_____	\$_____
Subtotal, OPTIONAL CMS System Ongoing			\$_____

**Price Proposal Narrative (OPTIONAL):**

- The ChargePilot Kit is inclusive of the Controller (hardware), remote configuration, the power supply and ethernet switch and pre-configured RFID cards (for authentication if requested).
- We have priced for phase one of the project, assuming the installation of 9 AC chargers and 2 DC chargers.
- In our proposal, we have priced for remote commissioning of the chargers. Should RCTA opt for onsite commissioning, we have included an optional line item for this.

We, the undersigned, propose to provide Redwood Coast Transit Authority with Charge Management Software Services in accordance with the Request for Proposals and Scope of Work.

Authorized Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_Gregor Hintler\_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_CEO North America\_\_\_\_\_

December 12, 2025

**MEMO TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Joe Rye, Executive Director



**SUBJECT:** Approve Amendment 1 with Dokken Engineering for Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) for the Williams Drive Bus Charging Infrastructure Project in a Not-To-Exceed Amount of \$33,500 to Complete 100% Design and Bid Documents for a Not-To-Exceed amount of \$449,747 and Direct Executive Director to Execute Agreement Documents

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve Amendment #1 with Dokken Engineering for Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) for the Williams Drive Bus Charging Infrastructure Project in a not-to-exceed amount of \$33,500 to complete 100% design and bid documents for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$449,747 and direct the Executive Director to execute agreement documents.

**BACKGROUND:**

In June 2025, RCTA awarded a contract to Dokken Engineering to perform Plans Specifications and Estimates (Final Design) services for the Williams Drive Electric Bus Charging Infrastructure Project. Work began and once the scope was clear to both parties, it was discovered that RCTA had failed to mention the need to design for two backup generators and a site survey.

**Discussion**

RCTA needs the site survey to ensure that all project elements are designed to locate inside a new, revised extent ground lease. The intent is to remove a strip of land nearest Williams Drive from the next new Ground Lease, and add new lands west of the access roadway. This area west of the roadway will host the required electrical equipment. Revising the lease extents will improve the efficiency of the next (replacement) ground lease by deleting areas that were unused by RCTA and adding areas that will host vital electrical gear. Having a surveyed site map and markers installed on the ground will improve the accuracy of the new lease and its exhibits.

- Site Survey for New Ground Lease (\$7400)
- Design fees for additional two generators (\$26,100)

**Recommendation**

That the RCTA Board approve Amendment 1 adding \$33,500 to the existing \$416,247 agreement increasing the not-to-exceed amount to \$449,747.

Attachment 1 – Dokken Engineering Amendment 1 Proposal – November 21, 2025

AMENDMENT NO. 1  
AGREEMENT FOR PLANS SPECIFICATIONS AND ESTIMATES – FINAL DESIGN  
WORK FOR WILLIAMS DRIVE CHARGING STATIONS PROJECT  
REDWOOD COAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY

This Amendment No. 1 is entered into this 12th day of December 2025 by and between the Redwood Coast Transit Authority (RCTA), and Dokken Engineering, an independent contractor (“Dokken”). Dokken Engineering is collectively referred to as Consultant for purposes of this Addendum.

WHEREAS, RCTA and Consultant entered into an Agreement for Plans, Specifications, and Estimates – Final Design services on June 23, 2025; and

WHEREAS, RCTA inadvertently omitted inclusion of two backup generators (large for chargers, smaller for building) in the original RFP scope of work, as well as failed to include any site survey work in the original scope, and those services are needed to deliver a successful project and to firmly define the extents of RCTA’s new ground lease with the Fair District; and

WHEREAS, the Agreement states that it may be amended from time to time by the written approval of the parties; and

WHEREAS, without otherwise altering the terms and conditions of the Agreement, the parties hereby intend to modify the Scope of Services and Cost Proposal as set forth below.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE PARTIES HERETO DO MUTUALLY AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

A. Scope of Services

Consultant’s Scope of Services is amended to include two backup generators (large for chargers, smaller for building) and a site survey as directed by the RCTA Board of Directors, in accordance Consultant’s proposal dated November 21, 2025, attached as “Exhibit A”. Consultant will complete all work by April 30, 2026.

B. Cost Proposal

Consultant’s Cost Proposal is amended to include a new not-to-exceed amount for the project of \$449,747 from the original agreement not-to-exceed amount of \$416,247, the Amendment #1 value is not-to-exceed \$33,500.

C. Terms and Conditions

Except as otherwise modified in this Amendment No. 1, the terms and conditions of the Agreement and the rights, duties, and obligations of the parties thereunder are unchanged and remain in full force and effect.

The above statements are understood and accepted and the parties hereby cause this Amendment No. 1 to the Agreement for Williams Drive Charging Stations Plans Specifications and Estimates Final Design Services to be executed by the signatures below.

REDWOOD COAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
By: Isaiah Wright, Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CONSULTANT:

\_\_\_\_\_  
General Counsel  
Redwood Coast Transit Authority

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dokken Engineering

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



November 21, 2025

Attention: Joe Rye  
Redwood Coast Transit Authority (RCTA)  
900 Northcrest Drive, Suite 134  
Crescent City, CA 95531

RE: Design Services for Maintenance & Operations Facility Charging Stations (PS&E)  
Request for Additional Budget for Survey R/W and Generator Design Services

Dear Mr. Rye:

This memo is being provided to request additional budget for R/W mapping services, design of the EV bus fleet backup generator, and installation of the owner furnished propane backup generator for the building.

#### Task 1.1 – Meetings and Coordination

Justification/reasoning – Additional cost of \$3,300 (~15 HRs) for coordination of the R/W mapping and generator design services.

Dokken will coordinate the Right of Way Mapping and ensure that the deliverables are accurate and included in the design package. Dokken will coordinate the generator revisions with EEI and ensure that the additional work is incorporated in the civil and structural plans. Concrete pads for the propane backup generator and corresponding ATS will be included in the civil and/or structural plans.

#### Task 3.2 – Boundary and Right of Way Mapping

Justification/reasoning – Additional cost of \$5,800 (~24 HRs and Travel Expenses) for Right of Way mapping services.

UNICO will research record maps and deeds to map the subject parcel. UNICO field crews will search and locate sufficient monuments to map the parcel and adjacent right of way and easements. To best determine boundaries, easements, right of way and other property constraints, UNICO will request design team or agency provide a title report of the subject parcel. UNICO will map the parcel to include all plottable title exceptions.

#### Task 4.5 – Additional Engineering Services – Two Backup Generators

Justification/reasoning – Additional cost of \$11,900 (~70 HRs) to design the backup generator for the EV bus fleet and additional cost of \$12,500 (~74 HRs) to install owner furnished propane generator.

The EEI team will design the backup generator for the EV bus fleet to integrate with the electrical design. The additional work will include the electrical site plans showing the generator location, associated conduit and cables, and grounding and bonding. The single line diagram will be updated to include the generator. Voltage drop, short circuit, and load calculations will be completed for proper alternator sizing for the generator.



# DOKKEN ENGINEERING

The EEI team will design the connection of an owner furnished 60KW, 240/120V, 1 phase generator to the existing 600A, 240/120V, and 1 phase building electrical service. The additional electrical design will include the installation of an owner furnished generator, all wiring and conduits, and an automatic transfer switch (ATS) to the existing building electrical service.

Total increase in Contract Amount \$33,500

Please feel free email me at [jthorner@dokkenengineering.com](mailto:jthorner@dokkenengineering.com) or call me at the office at (858) 514-8377 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Justin Thornber, PE



December 12, 2025

**MEMO TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Joe Rye, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** Update on LCTOP Funding and LCTOP-funded RCTA Projects

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Discussion only. The Board shall discuss and provide staff direction for future use of LCTOP.

**BACKGROUND**

LCTOP is a cap-and-trade program initiated by the CA State Legislature in 2014. LCTOP is allocated to transit agencies based on population and the percentage of local transit fare revenues. While LCTOP is distributed based on formula funding, CalTrans and the Air Resources Board have jurisdiction over the scoring and funding of all projects, making it a somewhat competitive process. Requests for Allocation are required similar to an application and can be rejected should those two regulatory agencies not support a project. So, while LCTOP fund targets are formula based, all projects must be supported by Caltrans and CARB and are scored based on air quality benefits.

For 2025-26 service year, the LCTOP allocation for Del Norte County totaled \$71,725, roughly the same as in previous years. Of this amount, RCTA is directly eligible for \$3,631 that is allocated based on fare revenue and the remaining population-based funds are programmed through the Del Norte Local Transportation Commission (DNLTC). The DNLTC will program the remaining \$68,094 to RCTA as the only public transit agency in the county. RCTA will be responsible for program requirements and reporting. **LCTOP fund estimates for FY 2026-27 are drastically lower, dropping RCTA's (estimated) apportionment to \$46,199.** This is a very concerning drop in projected funding, seemingly attributed to lower proceeds from the statewide Cap-and-Trade program that produces the revenue.

**History**

RCTA first utilized LCTOP for a purchase of bus shelters in FY 15-16, then switched the funding to support the new student Free Bus farebox subsidy program (in FY 16-17, 17-18 and 18-19). Over those years \$150k+ in funding was received, which was far greater than the growth rate of the Free Bus Program, allowing a project balance to develop. RCTA has continued the Free Bus Program through FY 2022-23 drawing down this balance.

As noted above, prior to RCTA submitting its FY 2019-20 LCTOP application, Caltrans provided feedback to RCTA that it did not wish to fund a fourth year of the Free Bus Program. In general, Caltrans explained that it viewed LCTOP funds as startup funding for projects such as the Free Bus Program. Caltrans did not feel LCTOP should be used to permanently sustain a fare-subsidy project. Caltrans requested that RCTA submit a different project for FY 2019-20 LCTOP funding, and for the next four years (FY 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, and FY22-23), RCTA submitted LCTOP applications for its Fleet Electrification Project.

### **Free Bus Program Overview – Funded FY 16-17 through 18-19, 20-21, and 23-24 through 25-26**

Initially, two population groups were targeted for the Free Bus program, College of the Redwoods students and Cal Poly Humboldt students. Two other groups were added to those eligible 2 years later, High School/Middle School students and Veterans. The latter group, Veterans, were added through community comment on the need at a RCTA board meeting. The need expressed was very real, and veteran's ridership became a truly robust segment of the services. Starting in FY 2024-25, the Free Bus program was expanded to seniors & disabled residents, and the program was a big success in ridership and community appreciation.

As the rider enters the bus, he/she proves eligibility by showing a college or school identity card or proof of veteran status, elderly or disability. No fare is needed but the driver records all Free Riders and the route involved. T r a n s d e v submits detailed information monthly, which has been entered into a matrix for program analysis. This program is revenue neutral, with bus drivers checking eligibility, and staff later compiling the rides, noting the fares not paid by riders to be reimbursed by the LCTOP program. This is RCTA's preferred project for LCTOP funds, a key catalyst in assisting RCTA to recover lost pandemic ridership.

### **Fleet Electrification Project – Funded FY 19-20, and FY 21-22 through 22-23**

The Fleet Electrification LCTOP funds accumulated as they are restricted to construction or equipment/bus purchases, and were not available for planning and design phases of the Williams Drive Charging Stations Project. RCTA submitted a successful request to transfer \$29,552 (one small year's allocation) from the Electrification Project to the Free Rides Project in 2024. Even after that transfer out, RCTA has amassed a balance of nearly \$140,000 for LCTOP Electrification Projects:

In 2023, RCTA obtained its \$7.6M TIRCP grant to fund the Williams Drive Project, plus a large batch of electric buses (and the Downtown Transit Center) with zero local match. This allows RCTA the

#### **TOTAL AVAILABLE LCTOP FUNDS FOR EV INFRASTRUCTURE**

FY 2021-22 -- 69,084

FY 2022-23 -- 70,264

\$ 139,348

Note: one years' EV funding already has been transferred to Free Bus

FY 2020-21 -- 29,552

flexibility to work with Caltrans to move MORE of the LCTOP Electrification fund to the Free Ride Program should the Board desire. However, RCTA has a large local match required for its first "pilot" Endera Electric Bus that will arrive early in 2026. That bus is NOT TIRCP eligible. Staff has set aside \$100,000 of the LCTOP Electrification balance for the local match on the bus purchase, which still leaves a local match shortfall on the bus of \$100,000. Should the Board NOT want to move any of the remaining LCTOP Electrification money to the Free Rides Program, RCTA could dedicate all \$140k of the remaining balance to the bus purchase and protect its precious State of Good Repair Fund. The SGR fund (RCTA local match bus source) would only have to cover the remaining \$60k, rather than \$100k.

## DISCUSSION

Caltrans staff interpretation of LCTOP legislative intent, disallowing projects after 3-4 years of LCTOP funding was very unpopular in the transit industry. Pressure from legislative leadership at the state level, as well as CalACT and the California Transit Association, led to legislative relief that can allow RCTA to re-apply for Free Bus Program funds from LCTOP in the future. The three-year funding limit set by Caltrans LCTOP staff has now been lifted, and agencies like RCTA have returned to funding fare subsidy programs each year. RCTA has already submitted its last three LCTOP applications for the Free Ride Program.

The LCTOP Cap and Trade Program has slumped recently, and RCTA received less than anticipated in FY 24-25 and its fund projection for FY 25-26 is decreased from the historic range around \$70k to \$46,199. This puts in doubt RCTA's ability to full fund its current Free Ride demographics let alone expand eligibility to backfill any further lost fares on Route 20. The LCTOP fund (when not diverted to Electrification) had been more than enough to handle RCTA's growing Free Rides Program. FY 24-25 saw Free Rides consume \$61,751 of an allocation of \$71,725 (actuals came in less). However, if dark new LCTOP fund forecasts are accurate, RCTA is already \$15k per year underwater on the LCTOP funding, without expansion.

## PROGRAM REPORT

While the Fleet Electrification Project and its LCTOP money has been held waiting for the project to reach construction OR RCTA to purchase an eligible electric bus (delivery of pilot bus expected finally in FY 25-26), the Free Ride Program has become a critical marketing campaign for RCTA. This program has been warmly received by the community and its popularity has helped RCTA gain ridership. Riders experience the ride as "Free", but drivers tally each time an eligible rider boards the bus, and LCTOP is billed annually for the published fare. A series of charts and tables are included showing interesting patterns of Free Bus usage. Initially targeted to College of the Redwoods Students, the Free Bus Program was expanded to include all youth and Veterans in the 2018-2019 timeframe. In 2024, the Board approved expanding the free bus ridership to include seniors and certified disabled riders. At this point, the fare replacement cost in one year is similar to the level of annual LCTOP grant amounts, \$60,000 to \$75,000.

Altogether, since 2017 the Free Bus Program has served 78,535 riders and accumulated \$94,664.50 of deferred fares. The program is revenue-neutral to operations, as all of the \$94,664.50 are charged against the grant rather than the riders.

### **Potential New Free Rides "Express Rides" Project – North State Express Route 101**

An additional project was included in the Board-approved annual FY 25-26 LCTOP Allocation Request. The Express Ride Program would expand (again) the Free Ride Program to include adults on RCTA's regional route (Route 20). This was included as a response to requests from partner transit agencies along the new North State Express Route 101 who desire to market the NSE 101 as a convenient and very affordable travel option. To make it as seamless as possible, all three operators on the corridor would adopt a flat \$2 fare per segment for adults.

It will be helpful at this point to explain how the NSE 101 compares to RCTA Route 20. Route 20 features 4 daily round trips on its North Segment (CC to Smith River) and 2 daily round trips (3 in the summer, funding permitting) on its South Segment (CC to Eureka). NSE 101, at this point,

is one round trip per day. For RCTA, the Route 20 trips that are part of NSE 101 are the early morning southbound, and the early evening northbound trips. Most 20 trips are NOT NSE 101.

## Options to Discuss

### **Implement the \$2 fare on ALL adults that use Route 20, not just NSE 101 trips**

The easiest way to participate in the joint marketing of the NSE 101 fare structure with RCTA's partners from Humboldt Transit, Mendocino Transit, and Lake Transit would be to adopt the \$2 flat fare for ALL Route 20 trips, both NSE 101 trips of Route 20 and non-NSE 101 trips. However, this will also be the most expensive option in terms of lost fares. Route 20 features a distance-based fare structure that charges more the further a rider travels, with fares ranging from \$2.50 to \$14 per one-way trip, for adults. All seniors, veterans, youth, and college students ride free. In digging deep into FY 24-25 Route 20 ridership data, 80% of adults that ride either only cross one zone (a two zone trip, \$2.50 fare) or use a pass. Lost fares of full participation in the \$2 flat fare promo on ALL Route 20 trips would primarily focus on the 20% of adult riders that ride longer distances, and pay higher fares. RCTA had 1331 adult cash riders who travelled 3 or more zones in FY 24-25, a mix of 3, 4, and 5 zone rides. According to FY 24-25 adult cash rider statistics, enacting the \$2 flat fare would cause a loss of \$12,835 per year.

### **Implement the \$2 fare ONLY on NSE 101 trips of Route 20**

As mentioned earlier, not all Route 20 trips are part of NSE 101, in fact only 2 one-way segments out of 12 daily one-way segments are NSE 101 trips. RCTA could, in theory, apply the \$2 flat fare to only the NSE 101 trips and reduce the lost revenue. However, this will be very difficult to communicate to riders and drivers alike, and the risk of non-compliance or confusion will be high. RCTA will have to do a great job communicating this situation to riders and go above and beyond to train drivers and dispatchers on the fare scheme. Not all runs of Route 20 will have \$2 fares, only the ones connecting with NSE 101 in Eureka. The safest way to estimate this impact would be to take the same group of long-distance cash paying adults from above and cut those in half (the long distance riders are, by nature, using the South Segment, and half of those South Segment trips are NSE 101 trips in the winter, 33% in the summer). That rate, just offering the \$2 flat fare on NSE 101 trips will cost RCTA \$6417 per year.

### **Implement the \$2 fare ONLY for Credit Card/Tap Card users**

RCTA has offered promotional fares of \$1 (\$2 if you fail to tap off) on all its buses since the start of the Cal-ITP Far North Contactless Fares demonstration project in early 2023. This was part of the NSE 101 partnership, and all NSE 101 operators participated, and still do. RCTA could decline to extend the \$2 flat fare to cash riders and limit it to contactless card paying customers. This would drastically reduce the lost fares, but might be viewed negatively by RCTA's partners in the corridor. Right now, Humboldt Transit has fully implemented \$2 flat fares, while Mendocino Transit is in the same spot as RCTA, in discussions with their Board on whether or not and how to reduce fares to \$2 on their segment.

See below for growth of Free Rides, caused by expanding the eligibility of the program to the elderly and disabled populations. This, combined with the drop in LCTOP funding, may require program changes, such as reduction of eligible groups to align with dwindling LCTOP funds?

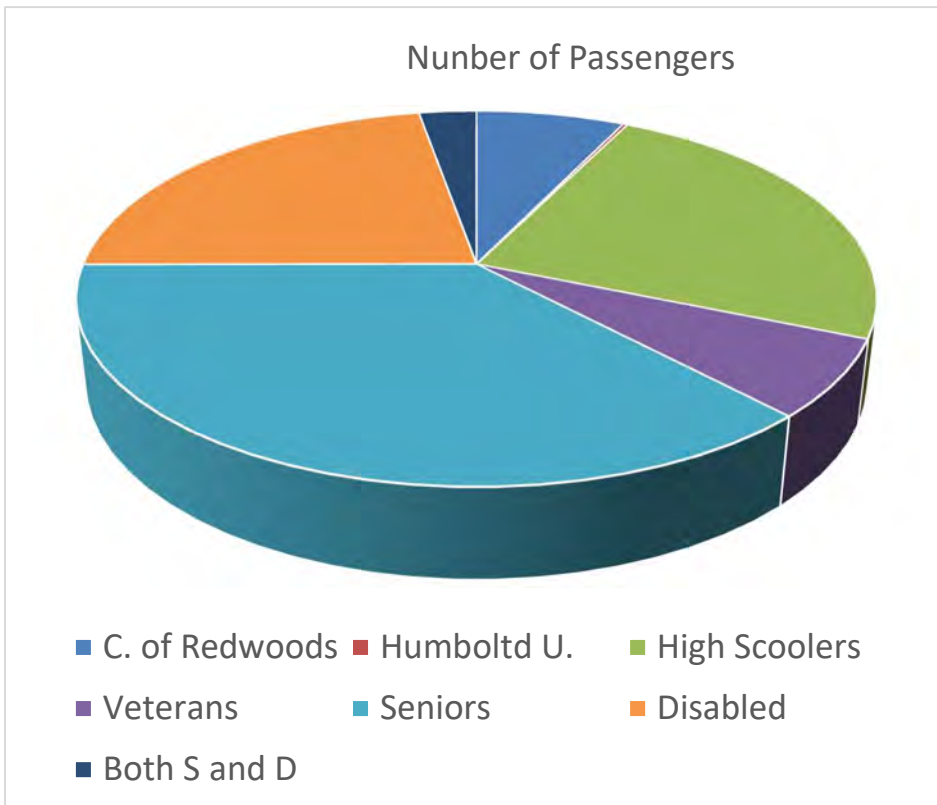
## **RECOMMENDATION**

Discussion only.

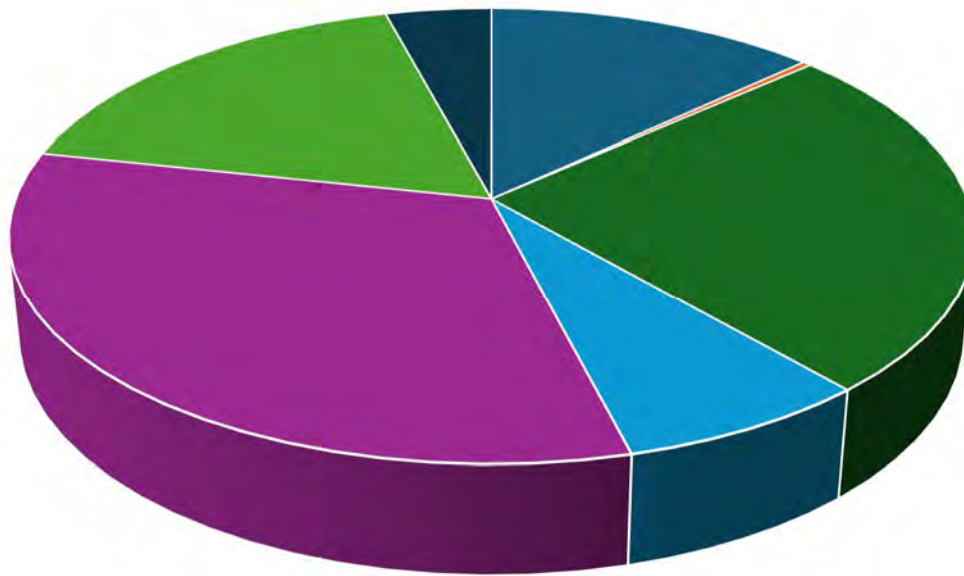
## RCTA Free Bus Program Charts

July 2024 to June 2025

Group	Total Rides	
Type	No. Passengers	Fares Accrued
C. of Redwoods	2,891	8,042.00
Humboldt U.	85	211.50
High Schoolers	9,662	15,628.47
Veterans	2,692	4,543.50
Seniors	14,942	19,973.64
Disabled	9,000	10,781.45
Both S and D	1,118	2,570.55
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>40,390</b>	<b>61,751.11</b>



Fares Recorded--\$\$\$



- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| ■ C. of Redwoods | ■ Humboldt U. |
| ■ High Schoolers | ■ Veterans    |
| ■ Seniors        | ■ Disabled    |
| ■ Both S and D   |               |

December 12, 2025

**MEMO TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Joe Rye, Executive Director



**SUBJECT:** Discussion of Possible \$2 Flat Fare Promotion on Route 20

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Discuss possible implementation of \$2 flat fare promotion on RCTA Route 20.

**BACKGROUND:**

RCTA has partnered with its regional transit agency partners of Humboldt Transit (HTA), Mendocino Transit and Lake Transit initially in information sharing during the pandemic, then with the Cal-ITP-supported Contactless Fare Payment Project (2022), then with the extension of Route 20 into Eureka and schedule timing with HTA's new regional route to Ukiah (2023), that came to be named the North State Express Route 101 (NSE 101) in 2024. In addition, all four transit properties joined together with transit agencies along I-5 to form the North State Super Region Transit Working Group. This proved critical when Greyhound pulled out of the US 101 Corridor in June 2024, leaving the new NSE 101 as a prime choice for travel out of the area.

**DISCUSSION:**

For the NSE 101 to do a good job replacing Greyhound in providing regional service between Santa Rosa and Del Norte County, marketing is a key aspect. Greyhound featured a known national brand, a comprehensive e-commerce ticketing website, and a long history of successful marketing campaigns to raise awareness of the intercity bus as an option for travel. The NSE 101 partnership is led by HTA and is attempting to replicate many of those user conveniences and awareness tools that Greyhound deployed. However, there are challenges. None of the NSE partners have premium over-the-road buses with on-board toilets, which are the most appropriate and comfortable bus type for long-distance travel. A unified ticketing system must be found to make purchasing NSE tickets as easy and seamless as that of Greyhound or Flixbus. While those problems will take longer to overcome, in the meantime getting the word out to the public about the NSE 101 through traditional methods (flyers, websites, branded vehicles, radio, print) plus operational collaboration to ensure a pleasant and affordable experience are HTA's top priorities. HTA developed the idea of "\$2 for 2 hours" as a tagline for the NSE (and their own Redwood Transit System routes) and implemented this change in 2025. HTA would like to see RCTA and Mendocino join the \$2 for 2 hours campaign (at least for our regional segments of NSE 101) so that marketing can be more effective with the \$2/2 hours theme. \$6 from Del Norte to Santa Rosa would offer the passenger an amazingly cheap service, and should induce ridership.

Route 20 features a distance-based fare structure that charges more the further a rider travels, with fares ranging from \$2.50 to \$14 per one-way trip, for adults. All seniors, veterans, youth, and college students ride free. Most riders do NOT ride the full span of the route, with the majority of riders using Route 20 to travel between Smith River and Klamath into Crescent City.



Prior to the unexpected tanking of LCTOP funding allocations announced in late 2025, RCTA included an additional project in its annual FY 25-26 LCTOP Allocation Request. The Express Ride Program would expand (again) the Free Ride Program to include adults on RCTA's regional route (Route 20). This was included to allow RCTA to recoup some of the expected lost fare revenue that joining in (in any manner) the NSE 101 \$2 for 2 Hours promotion will cause.

It is important to explain how the NSE 101 compares to RCTA Route 20. Route 20 features 4 daily round trips on its North Segment (CC to Smith River) and 2 daily round trips (3 in the summer, funding permitting) on its South Segment (CC to Eureka). NSE 101, at this point, is one round trip per day. For RCTA, the Route 20 trips that are part of NSE 101 are the early morning southbound, and the early evening northbound trips. Most Route 20 trips are NOT NSE 101.

Transit planning literature posits that fare level drops induce latent travel demand, and in theory this makes sense. The lower the transit fare, the less resistance customers will feel to taking the bus. So, RCTA needs to also consider how many NEW riders will use Route 20 and/or the NSE 101 RCTA segment if adult fares are dropped from current levels to a flat \$2. This is extremely difficult to predict, so staff will point the Board towards a recent major fare drop that RCTA implemented on Route 20 in 2017, and the ridership impacts. From 2004 to 2017 RCTA charged flat fares, \$2 for trips within Del Norte County (again, that's 80% of rides) and \$30 for any trip that crossed the border into Humboldt County. As part of a fare increase process in the summer of 2017, RCTA reconfigured the Route 20 into a distance-based scheme that kept the local 2 zone fares (SR to CC, Klamath to CC) at \$2, while lowering fares to Arcata from \$30 to \$10 each way. RCTA expected a surge in ridership from this equity and competitive-based fare restructuring. Sadly, the riding public did not respond by increasing trips, and overall Route 20 ridership actually dropped between FY 16-17 and FY 17-18 by 4.9%. So, at least 10 years ago, Route 20 riders were not enticed into additional trips, or new riders, by a significant fare slash. Part of this is attributable to the small share of Route 20 riders that travel to/from Humboldt.

### Options to Discuss

#### **Implement the \$2 fare on ALL adults that use Route 20, not just NSE 101 trips**

The easiest to implement option to participate in the joint marketing of the NSE 101 fare structure with RCTA's partners from Humboldt Transit, Mendocino Transit, and Lake Transit would be to adopt the \$2 flat fare for ALL Route 20 trips, both NSE 101 trips of Route 20 and non-NSE 101 trips. This would also please the NSE 101 partners. However, this will also be the most expensive option in terms of lost fares. Route 20 features a distance-based fare structure that charges more the further a rider travels, with fares ranging from \$2.50 to \$14 per one-way trip, for adults. All seniors, veterans, youth, and college students ride free. In digging deep into FY 24-25 Route 20 ridership data, 80% of cash-paying adults that ride pay the two-zone trip, \$2.50 fare). Lost fares of full participation in the \$2 flat fare promo on ALL Route 20 trips would primarily focus on the 20% of adult riders that ride longer distances, and pay higher fares. RCTA had 1331 adult cash riders who travelled 3 or more zones in FY 24-25, a mix of 3, 4, and 5 zone rides. According to FY 24-25 adult cash rider statistics, enacting the \$2 flat fare would cause a loss of \$12,835 per year, assuming no new riders start riding the service due to lower fares.

#### **Implement the \$2 fare ONLY on NSE 101 trips of Route 20**

As mentioned earlier, not all Route 20 trips are part of NSE 101, in fact only 2 one-way segments out of 12 daily one-way segments are NSE 101 trips. RCTA could, in theory, apply the

\$2 flat fare to only the NSE 101 trips and reduce the lost revenue. This would also please the NSE 101 partners. However, this will be very difficult to communicate to riders and drivers alike, and the risk of non-compliance or confusion will be high, at least at first. RCTA will have to do a great job communicating this situation to riders and go above and beyond to train drivers and dispatchers on the fare scheme. Not all runs of Route 20 will have \$2 fares, only the ones connecting with NSE 101 in Eureka. For 80% of Route 20 riders, it won't matter much which trip they use, the fare will either be \$2.50 or \$2. The safest way to estimate this impact would be to take the same group of long-distance cash paying adults from above and cut those in half (the long distance riders are, by nature, using the South Segment, and half of those South Segment trips are NSE 101 trips in the winter, 33% in the summer). Using that methodology, just offering the \$2 flat fare on NSE 101 trips only will cost RCTA up to \$6417 per year.

### **Implement the \$2 fare ONLY for Credit Card/Tap Card users**

RCTA has offered promotional fares of \$1 (\$2 if you fail to tap off) on all its buses since the start of the Cal-ITP Far North Contactless Fares demonstration project in early 2023. This was part of the NSE 101 partnership, and all NSE 101 operators participated, and still do. RCTA could decline to extend the \$2 flat fare to cash riders and limit it to contactless card paying customers. This would drastically reduce the lost fares, but might be viewed negatively by RCTA's partners in the corridor. Right now, Humboldt Transit has fully implemented \$2 flat fares, while Mendocino Transit is in the same spot as RCTA, in discussions with their Board on whether and how to reduce fares to \$2 on their segment. Like RCTA, MTA historically charges a higher, distance-based fare for their segment between Ukiah and Santa Rosa.

<b>Total Passengers and Fares for FY24-25 (7/1/24 to 6/30/25)</b>			
	LCTOP FREE BUS PROGRAM		
Type	No. Passengers	Fares Accrued	
C. of Redwoods	2,891	8,042.00	
Humboldt U.	85	211.50	
High Schoolers	9,662	15,628.47	
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Seniors	14,942	19,973.64	
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Both S and D	1,118	2,570.55	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>40,390</b>	<b>61,751.11</b>	

With LCTOP funding dropping dramatically in FY 25-26, adding NSE 101 riders (or all Route 20 adults) to the drawdown of LCTOP will increase the spillover of a program that suddenly finds itself over capacity. With future LCTOP allocations predicted in the \$46k/year range, until the LCTOP funds recover, if they recover, RCTA will have to cover at least \$15k/year

out of TDA operating budget WITHOUT adding any additional Route 20 riders to the program.

### **LCTOP Free Ride Program Options**

RCTA has a few options with regards to the future of the LCTOP Free Rides Program:

- Do nothing. Wait and see if the LCTOP fund trends back towards historical levels. Funds that exceed the available LCTOP allocation each year will be drawn from the regular RCTA operating budget. This would be invisible to riders but will draw down reserves.
- Eliminate one or two demographics from the Free Rides eligibility list.
- Seek funding subsidies from one or both colleges to replace LCTOP funds while keeping it "free" to students.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Provide direction on Board preferences for if and how to implement the \$2 flat fare.