



# MARKET ASSESSMENT AND MARKETING PLAN for EL DORADO TRANSIT

June 2015

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# Introduction

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El Dorado Transit last developed a formal marketing plan in 2006. Many recommendations made at that time have been implemented. However, since 2006, a variety of changes have taken place both in El Dorado Transit's operating environment and services. The service area population has grown (especially in the westernmost part of the County) and the senior component has grown most rapidly. Services have been expanded and then contracted, due to the recession. Communications channels for reaching current and potential passengers have evolved as on-line access, cell phone and smart phone usage have expanded.



This Marketing Plan will take a fresh look at El Dorado Transit's current situation, service offerings, passenger experience and communications tools. It has been developed within the context of recently completed service plans including the Short Range Transit Plan and El Dorado Hills Needs Assessment and US 50 Corridor Operations Plan and includes strategies to complement those plans' recommendations.

In addition to reviewing existing plans and studies, a variety of primary data collection and outreach efforts were conducted to provide input to the marketing plan. These included:

- A passenger experience review on both local and commuter services.
- On-board survey of passengers on local fixed routes, Sacramento commuter routes and the Iron Point Connector.
- Informal interviews with local and commuter passengers as well as El Dorado Transit front line employees.
- In-depth interviews with El Dorado Transit staff responsible for marketing, outreach and passenger information.
- Stakeholder interviews with individuals and organizations who work with key market segments for transit use. Organizations represented included:
  - El Dorado County Health and Human Services
  - Marshall Medical
  - Public Health
  - Mental Health
  - Public Housing Authority
  - Cameron Park Village Apartments
  - Folsom College
  - 50 Corridor TMA
  - Sacramento TMA
  - El Dorado Hills Community Services District
  - Cameron Park Community Services District

## ***El Dorado Transit Market Assessment and Marketing Plan***

- Participation in a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting where members were asked to provide input to the objectives and focus of the plan.
- Detailed review of existing passenger information tools – both printed and on-line.

This document includes two primary components. The first is the Market Assessment which will summarize the findings of the various data collections and outreach efforts. The second is the Marketing Plan which will identify objectives, profile potential target markets and detail recommended strategies for increasing El Dorado Transit's visibility, building ridership and supporting implementation of the service plans.

# Market Assessment

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## Situation Summary

### Service Area and Population

El Dorado Transit's service area has a population of 148,614, according to the 2010 US Census. According to data included in the Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP), about 80,000 persons live in the communities currently served by El Dorado Transit's local routes (Placerville, Diamond Springs, Pollock Pines and Cameron Park), while nearly 40,000 live in El Dorado Hills, which is served only by Commuter services. The remainder live in rural communities with limited or no transit service.

Most of the growth in the service area population is occurring in the El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park areas which are closer to Sacramento. This is consistent with the fact that 32.2% of Western El Dorado County commuters work in Sacramento County.

### Current and Planned Services

El Dorado Transit currently operates several types of service that serve distinct market segments. In FY 2012-13, El Dorado Transit provided just over 376,000 passenger trips.

- Four local fixed routes serve the communities of Placerville, Diamond Springs, Pollock Pines and Cameron Park. They connect at the Missouri Flat Transfer Center in Placerville. Collectively, they provided about 172,000 trips per year –46% of the system's total ridership.
- Commuter routes to downtown Sacramento take El Dorado County residents from seven park and ride lots to a variety of employment destinations in downtown Sacramento. They provide about 134,000 trips per year or 36% of the system total.
- The Iron Point Connector provides service to Folsom College and Folsom Light Rail Station. It carries almost 10,000 riders per year, about 3% of the systems ridership base.
- Dial-a-Ride provides about 26,000 trips per year, 8% of the system total.
- The remainder of ridership was on specialized demand response services including SacMed, Mother Lode Rehabilitation Enterprises (MORE), Senior Day Care (SDC) and Grizzly Flats.

The SRTP completed in 2014 calls for a variety of service enhancements which will increase the marketability of the various services. Key improvements include:

1. Extended service hours and more Saturday service will be provided on the local fixed routes to better accommodate the needs of local workers to get to and from jobs in El Dorado County.
2. Resources committed to Dial-a-Ride will be increased somewhat to address lack of capacity.

## ***El Dorado Transit Market Assessment and Marketing Plan***

3. The Iron Point Connector will evolve into the 50 Express which will provide all day service, every two hours, between Placerville, Cameron Park and Folsom. Simultaneously, the Cameron Park route will become a local circulator to better serve destinations within the growing Cameron Park area.

4. New services will be initiated in El Dorado Hills. A new Taxi Voucher Program will serve trips within the El Dorado Hills Community Services District. Initially the program will be limited to seniors and persons with disabilities, however it may be expanded to the general public. In addition, a weekly El Dorado Hills activity bus may be initiated as a demonstration project.

## **Community Awareness and Image**

Based on interviews conducted with stakeholders, El Dorado Transit appears to have a generally positive image. No concerns were voiced relating to service quality or reliability – only concerns about the need for expanded hours and days of service to meet the needs of workers or transit to rural areas not currently served.

Similarly, transit riders gave the system high marks on all aspects of service. For overall service rating, more than half of riders rated El Dorado Transit excellent (56% gave 5 on a scale of 1-5), while another 38% rated it good (4 on a scale of 1-5).

Awareness of the services operated by El Dorado Transit is moderate. While most stakeholders were aware that there are both local and commuter services, the level of familiarity could be improved.

There were a number of questions about how Dial-a-Ride, paratransit and SacMed services work. One social service provider wasn't aware that all El Dorado Transit vehicles are wheelchair accessible.

One stakeholder in Cameron Park said she wasn't at all familiar with El Dorado Transit's services – but sees “the big blue commuter buses” all the time.

Several noted that the image of the system (particularly the local routes) is still that of a service for those with no option – elderly, persons with disabilities and the poor.

Among those interviewed, there was a high level of interest in having more information about and more engagement with El Dorado Transit.



## Current Ridership Profile

Each of El Dorado Transit's services meets the needs of a distinct market segment. An on-board survey conducted on all fixed routes provides us with a profile of the various ridership groups. The survey was conducted September 22-24 and was completed by 295 riders. A brief summary of findings is included here. Additional charts and details are included in the appendix.

ROUTES	SAMPLE
CAMERON PARK	20
DIAMOND SPRINGS	40
PLACERVILLE	44
POLLOCK PINES	58
COMMUTER	121
IRON POINT	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>295</b>

## Demographics

### Employment & Student Status

With regards to transit ridership, employment and student status are key demographic characteristics. The charts at the right shows the results for employment and student status on the local routes, Sacramento Commuter and Iron Point Connector.

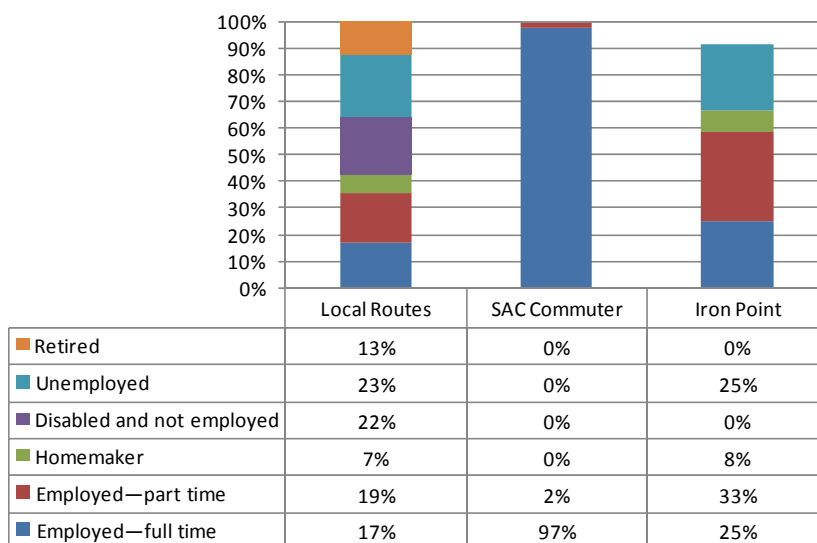
**Commuter:** Riders surveyed on the commuter routes were universally employed – 97% full time – and not generally students..

**Iron Point Connector:** Ridership on the Iron Point Commuter (where only 12 people were surveyed) was made up mostly of college students (83%). Many of the riders were also employed (58%).

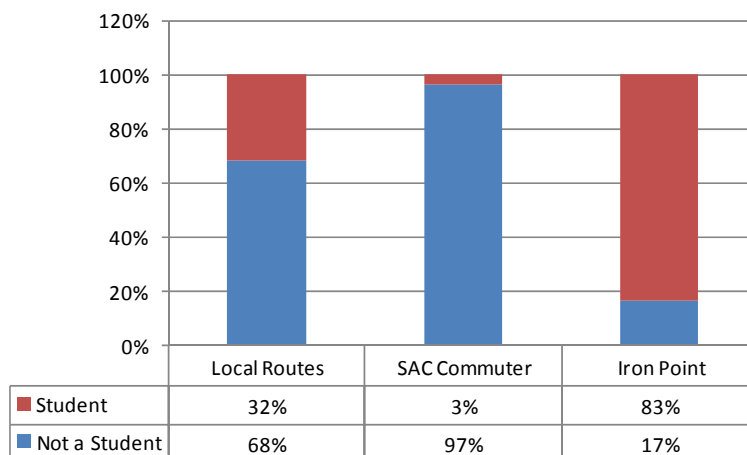
**Local Routes:** Local routes carry a broad mix of riders. More than a third (36%) are employed and 32% are students. Only on the local routes are there riders who categorized themselves as retired (13%) or disabled and not employed (22%).

Among all riders (weighted sample), 20% said they were students. Asked what

### Employment Status



### Students Status





school they attended 6% said the Los Rios College system, 3% said another college or university, 6% said middle or high school and 4% said other.

## Age

Age is another demographic factor which influences if and how people use transit. Among all El Dorado riders surveyed (weighted sample), 7% were under 18 and 13% were 18-24. Three quarters (74%) were adults 24-64 and only 6% were 65 or older. The age distribution does vary by route type.

**Commuter:** These riders are older than those on the other routes. Only 12% are under 35 years old and 36% are over 55.

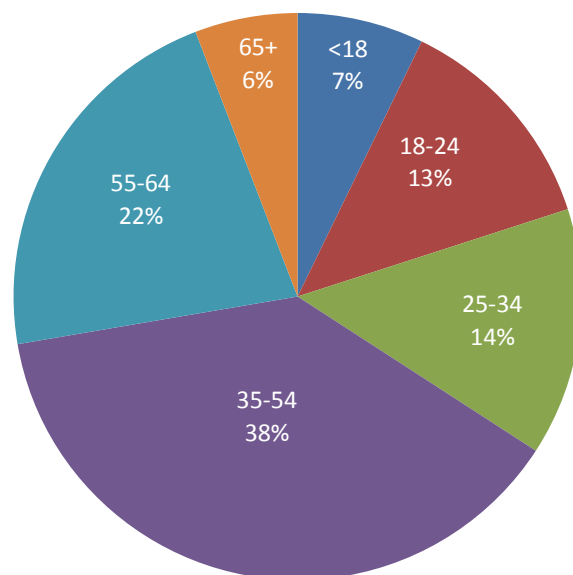
**Iron Point Connector:** IPC has the youngest ridership. 75% of those surveyed were under 35 – most were young college students.

**Local Routes:** On the local routes, about half of riders are under 35. The other half is evenly split between the 34-54 and 55 and older groups.

El Dorado Transit riders on all routes are predominantly Caucasian (77%). Seventeen percent (17%) say they are of Hispanic or Latino origin.

## Age of Riders

### All Routes



## Income

In terms of annual household income, there is a distinct difference between commuter route riders and those on other routes.

**Commuter:** Most riders on the

commuter routes report incomes of \$70,000+ and virtually all have incomes above \$50,000.

**Iron Point Connector:** The small sample of IPC riders report the most varied incomes. Half are below \$15,000, while 22% are above \$50,000.

	Cameron Park	Diamond Springs	Placerville	Pollock Pines	Sac Commuter	Iron Point
Less than \$10,000	41%	60%	31%	41%	0%	33%
\$10,000-\$14,999	12%	10%	16%	17%	0%	22%
\$15,000- \$19,999	35%	10%	28%	17%	0%	0%
\$20,000-\$24,999	6%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%
\$25,000-\$34,999	0%	5%	3%	7%	0%	0%
\$35,000-\$49,999	0%	0%	0%	2%	7%	22%
\$50,000-\$74,999	0%	10%	0%	5%	20%	11%
\$75,000-\$100,000	6%	0%	13%	2%	34%	0%
>\$100,000	0%	5%	0%	7%	39%	11%

**Local Routes:** Riders on the local routes are largely low income. While income ranges vary somewhat across the four routes, a large majority of riders on each route report incomes of under \$20,000.

## **Usage Characteristics**

### **Frequency of Use**

Most El Dorado Transit riders are regular customers. Three quarters of all riders use El Dorado Transit four or more days per week.

**Commuter:** Among Sacramento Commuter riders, 90% ride 4 or 5 days per week. More than two thirds (69%) say they ride every weekday.

**Iron Point Connector:** IPC serves a mix of regular and occasional users. A little over half (58%) say they ride four or more days a week.

**Local Routes:** Diamond Springs has the most frequent riders, 78% ride 4-6 days per week. Placerville has the most occasional riders, with more than half riding 3 days per week or less.

### **Duration of Use**

More than one third of El Dorado Transit riders (38%) are new to the system within the past two years. About 35% have been riding since before 2010.

**Commuter:** The commuter routes serve a mix of “old” and “new” riders - 45% have been riding since before 2010, however 30% are new to the system in the past two years.

**Iron Point Connector:** The Iron Point Connector (which was initiated in 2006) serves a much shorter term ridership. Two thirds of the small sample of riders surveyed were new to the system in the past two years. Only 8% said they had been riding since before 2010. This is reflective of the heavy student usage of the route.

**Local Routes:** The local routes vary greatly in terms of the duration of ridership. Cameron Park has the most long term riders (40% began riding before 2010), while Diamond Springs, which serves Folsom Lake College, has the most new riders (62% began riding in the past two years). Placerville and Pollock Pines have a mix of old and new riders.

### **Trip Purpose**

While the Sacramento Commuter routes are used almost exclusively for work trips, El Dorado Transit’s local routes are used for a broad mix of trip purposes.

**Commuter:** All riders surveyed on the Commuter routes said that they were traveling to or from work.

**Iron Point Connector:** IPC is also used primarily for commuting – however mostly by college students going to college (58%).

**Local Routes:** The chart at the right shows the distribution of trip purposes for local route riders. The mix varies from route to route. Cameron Park and Pollock Pines serve more work trips, while Diamond Springs serves more school trips. Placerville has the broadest mix of trip purposes including the most shopping trips.

### Reason for Riding & Transit Dependence

With the exception of the commuter routes, the majority of riders on all routes said that the main reason they ride the bus is that it is their only transportation.

**Commuter:** The Sacramento Commuter riders primarily ride the bus to save money (84%) and because it is more convenient than driving and parking (82%). Many also note that they like the time on the bus to rest or work (68%) and most also say it is better for the environment (58%). Only 2% say that the bus is their only transportation.

Virtually all commute riders have a driver's license and most have a vehicle available to them.

**Iron Point Connector:** The vast majority of IPC riders (83%) say that the bus is their only transportation. However, 33% say it also saves them money, 25% like the time to rest or work and 25% feel it is better for the environment.

Note that 42% of IPC riders have a driver's license, but only 25% had a vehicle available for the trip on which they were surveyed.

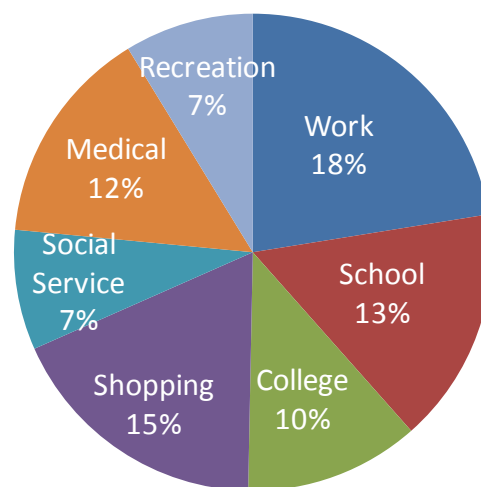
**Local Routes:** Riders on the Diamond Springs, Placerville and Cameron Park routes ride the bus almost entirely because it is their only transportation (80%). On the Pollock Pines route, only 66% say it is their only transportation, while 16% ride to save money and 12% because it offers more independence than riding with others.

Overall 31% of local route riders have a valid driver's license, but only 21% had a vehicle available for the trip on which they were surveyed. Riders on Pollock Pines route were the most likely of the local riders to have a driver's license (39%). Cameron Park riders were the least likely to have a driver's license or vehicle.

## Communications

Riders were asked a number of questions about their current and preferred sources of transit information, as well as about their use of various communications tools.

**Trip Purpose  
Local Routes**



## Sources of Information

Current information sources vary across service types. Note that riders could specify more than one source.

**Commuter:** The most used information source for commuter route riders is the website (79%) followed by the printed schedule (47%). Almost all (97%) commute riders had visited the website in the past three month – most only one to five times.

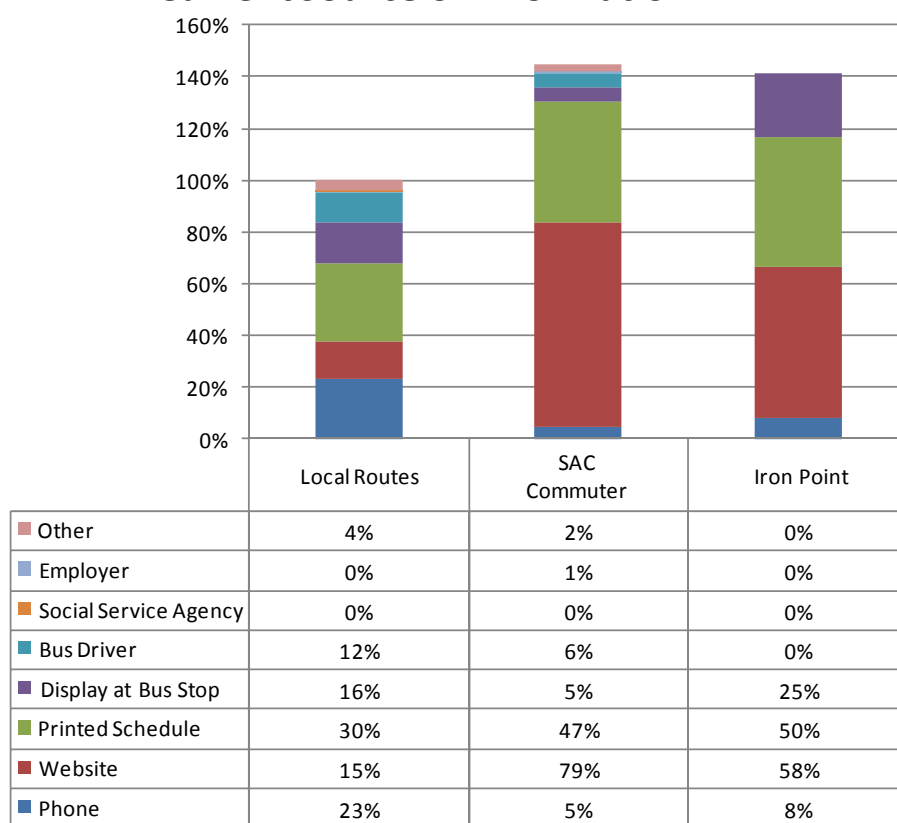
Most commute riders had not called El Dorado Transit in the past three months, however, 42% had. Of those who had called, 93% were able to get through in a reasonable amount of time.

**Iron Point Connector:** IPC riders' responses split between the website (58%) and printed schedule (50%). However, 25% also noted that they use the display at the bus stop. Two thirds of IPC riders have visited the website in the past three months. A quarter say they have visited 6 or more times. Most of the IPC riders had not called for information, however 42% had and 80% of those said they got through in a reasonable time.

**Local Routes:** As the chart at the right shows, local route riders are more varied in their use of communications sources and less likely to cite the website. Printed schedules were used by the largest share of riders (30%) but followed closely by those who use the phone (23%). Bus stop displays (16%), the website (15%) and bus drivers (12%) were also noted by significant minorities of riders.

More than half of local riders (59%) have not visited the website at all in the past 3 months, while 13% had visited six or more times.

## Current Source of Information



On the other hand most local riders have called for information at least once (72%) and a quarter have called six or more times. Most of those who have called (84%) say they were able to get through in a reasonable time.

## Mobile Phone Usage

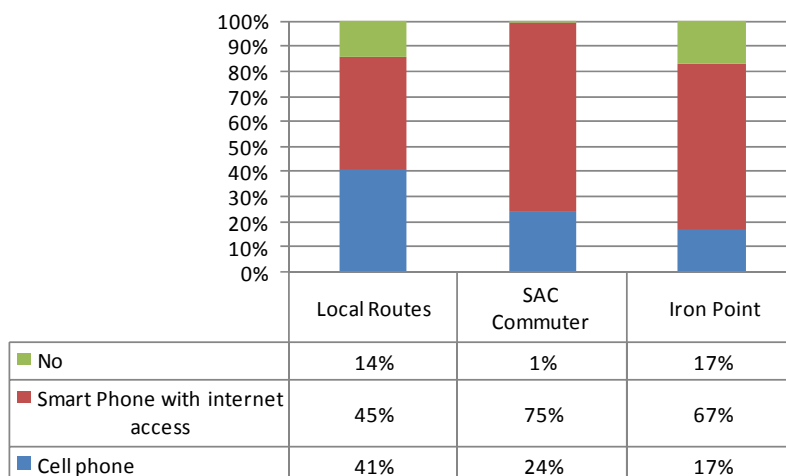
Most riders on all service types carry a mobile phone.

**Commuter:** Commuter riders almost universally have mobile phones (99%), primarily smartphones (75%).

**Iron Point Connector:** Most IPC riders (67%) have smartphones while 17% have regular cell phones and 17% no mobile phone.

**Local Routes:** Local Route riders are about evenly split between those who carry smartphones (45%) and those who have conventional cell phones (41%). Only 14% don't have a cell phone at all.

### Do you carry...?



## Social Media Usage

Riders were asked if they use Google Maps, Facebook, Twitter or other social media.

**Commuter:** Among Sacramento Commuter riders, Google Maps is the most used social media (73%) followed by Facebook (51%). Very few use Twitter (10%).

**Iron Point Connector:** Most IPC riders use both Facebook (75%) and Google Maps (67%). Few use Twitter.

**Local Routes:** About half of local route riders use Facebook (53%). A third (33%) use Google Maps.

## Alerts

Riders were asked if they would sign up to receive alerts about service irregularities, and if so how they would prefer to receive the alerts.

**Commuter:** The idea of alerts was most popular with commuter route riders, many of whom already receive El Dorado Transit alerts via email. Almost all (94%) said they would sign up. Two thirds (66%) said they would like to get them by text message, 42% said email.

**Iron Point Connector:** Just over half of IPC riders (55%) said they would like to get alerts. They split between email and text message as to how to receive them.

**Local Routes:** On local routes, 63% of riders said they would like to get alerts. Text messages were the most desirable delivery mechanism, although smaller groups said email and Facebook.

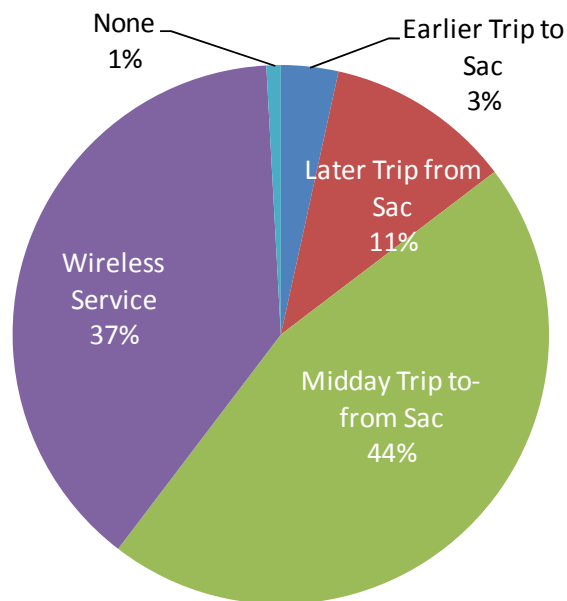
### Service Improvement Priorities

**Commuter:** Commuters were asked to rate the importance of various service improvements which had been requested by riders during oral interviews. Then they were asked to select the one improvement most important to them. The chart at the right shows the “most important” distribution of responses.

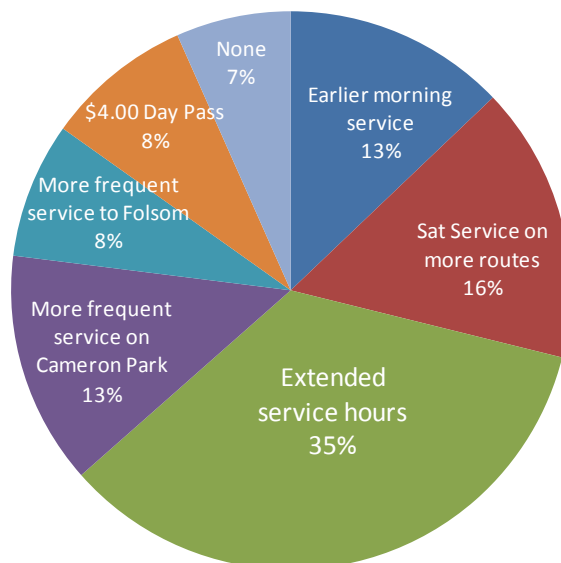
More people rated wireless services as very important than any other improvement. However, when asked to choose one improvement, a midday trip to/from Sacramento won out and was selected by 44% of respondents, while 37% selected wireless service.

**Local Routes and IPC:** Non-commute riders were asked to rate a different set of improvement possibilities. Their choices for one improvement are shown at the right. Here, extended service hours and more Saturday service were the most desired. However, 13% chose more frequent service to Cameron Park and 8% more frequent service to Folsom. The recommendations included in the SRTP are likely to be very well received by the ridership.

### Most Important Improvement Commuter Routes



### Most Important Improvement Local Routes



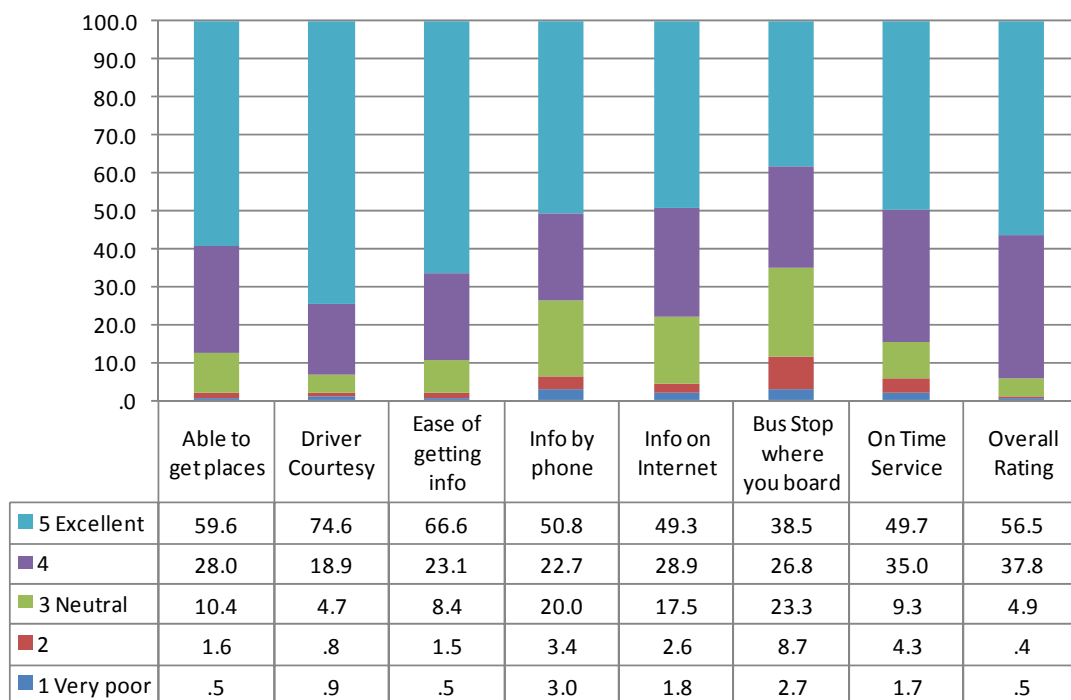
## Service Ratings

Riders were asked to rate El Dorado Transit on a variety of criteria. The chart at the right shows the ratings of the total weighted sample. A more detailed chart showing route by route ratings is included in the appendix.

Driver courtesy is the highest rated aspect of service followed by ease of getting information. This speaks well of El Dorado Transit's customer service efforts.

There are very few ratings below neutral. The largest number is for the "bus stop where you board."

**Service Ratings**  
**Full Sample**



## Marketing Review

### Customer Experience

This consultant rode several routes to talk with passengers about their experiences using El Dorado Transit. The customer experience for most El Dorado Transit riders is quite positive. Drivers are friendly, buses are well maintained and the service generally operates as scheduled.

Asked about how the service could be improved, most local route riders spoke about the need to expand the span and/or days of service to make it possible to get to and from work. Commuter route riders had specific desires for additional trips (midday or to fill some gaps in the afternoon), however they were generally very happy with the quality of service and spoke highly of the drivers and reliability

### Passenger Information

The first experience that new riders often have with a transit system is with their passenger information. While there are significant opportunities to enhance the attractiveness and user-friendliness of El Dorado Transit's passenger information tools, it is important to note that accurate usable passenger information is currently provided through four key channels - in print, on the website, at bus shelters throughout the system and by phone. As shown in the on-board survey, all of these tools are being used by various segments of the ridership and are therefore important to maintain and enhance. Following is a brief review of the usability of each passenger information channel.

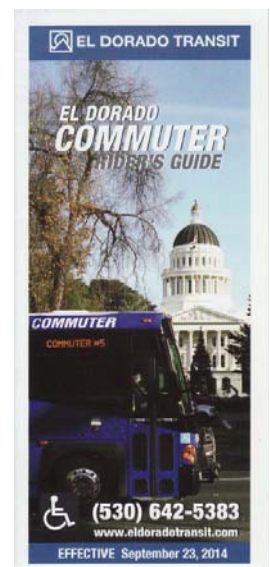
#### Printed Guides

El Dorado Transit publishes five passenger information guides:

- Commuter Guide
- Iron Point Connector Guide
- Local Service Guide
- Dial-a-Ride brochure
- Sac-Med brochure
- Grizzly Flat Flex Route brochure

**Commuter Guide:** The Commuter Guide is a full color, fold-out guide. It provides comprehensive information about the Commuter routes including:

- Information about "Using this Guide" which explains, for the novice rider, how the service works.
- A large map showing the location of all Park and Ride lots in El Dorado County.





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- Detailed maps showing the AM and PM bus stops in Downtown Sacramento.
- Schedules showing times for all bus stops served on each trip.
- Schedules for reverse commute trips.
- Information about fares, passes holidays and accessibility.

The content of the Commuter Guide continues to be sound and complete. The only element of the content that is not completely clear is the segment relating to Intra-County fares which appears to be intentionally vague. The look of the guide could be freshened and information about getting realtime information on a smartphone should be added.

**Iron Point Connector Guide:** The IPC Guide is similar in format to the Commuter Guide in that it includes comprehensive information about the specific route.

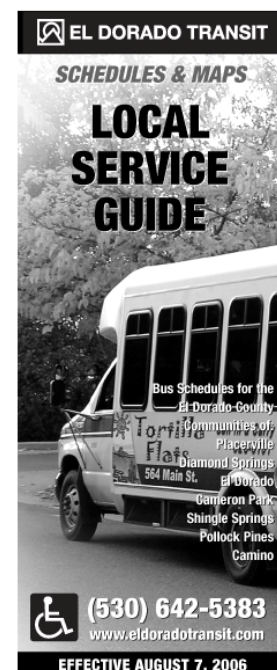
- A color route map which clearly shows Park & Ride locations and key bus stops.
- Detailed schedule showing times for all stops.
- Fare and pass information.
- Complete information about using the service, holidays, etc.
- Special information for Folsom Lake College students.

The design of the guide is such that the map side can be used as an information display. When IPC was viewed as a “stand-alone” service, this guide was very appropriate.

However, the guide will need to be redesigned to reflect the new Highway 50 Express. At that time, it is recommended that it be merged with the Local Route Guide as the new route will combine the functions of the Cameron Park Route and the IPC. It will be important to communicate its role as part of the overall El Dorado County Network.

**Local Route Guide:** The Local Route Guide is a black/white schedule booklet which includes individual route maps showing bus stop locations. It also includes bilingual information about how to read the schedules, fares, holidays, rules and other El Dorado Transit service. The guide was originally designed to have a companion system map which provided a full color overview of the system; however that piece is no longer published.

While the local guide is very comprehensive in the information it provides, it suffers from two shortcomings:



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- There is no overview map to show you where you can go on El Dorado Transit. You are left to your own devices to figure out how the routes connect.
- The black and white format of the booklet, while economical to produce (particularly at the time it was designed in 2006), is not very engaging.

One stakeholder noted that “it’s too tedious to read through the book to find what you need – a big map would be easier.”

**Demand Response Brochures:** Three individual brochures provide information about the Dial-a-Ride service, SacMed and Grizzly Flat Flex Route. It is relevant to have individual brochures for these services (in addition to including them in the overall local route guide) because they target specific market segments.

The information provided in each brochure is appropriate and complete. However they would definitely benefit from a redesign that would utilize consistent branding and format, along with concise text and enhanced graphics.

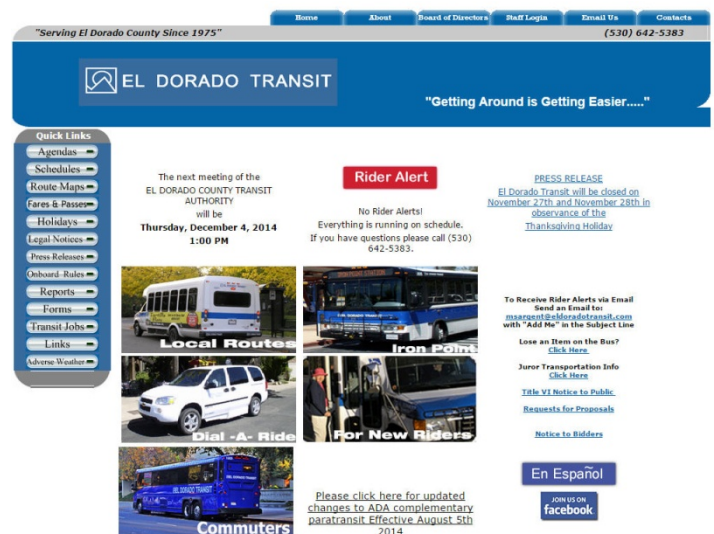
**Distribution of Passenger Guides:** Passenger guides are only useful if they are readily available to potential riders. Broadly distributed, passenger guides have the potential to build awareness of services as well as to inform new riders. At this time, it does not appear that El Dorado Transit has a systematic approach to distributing passenger guides. When a pass outlet or stakeholder calls and requests guides they are delivered. However, there is not a regular replenishment schedule nor a strategic approach to establishing information outlets at locations frequented by target ridership segments.

## Website

The website has been reviewed in detail by Trillium Transit and detailed recommendations for enhancement submitted as a separate document (included in Appendix).

Nearly half of El Dorado Transit’s riders rely on the website as a primary information sources. This is particularly true among the commute riders.

The existing website was clearly developed in-house without the aid of a web designer. As a result, it is not very graphically appealing and looks extremely dated. However, it does make a good attempt at providing complete information about El Dorado Transit services in a relatively easy-to-follow manner. Most key pieces of information (schedules, fares, route maps) can be accessed from the quick links on the



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left. The icons on the homepage highlight the key service types and link to descriptions of the services available (which are very text heavy and poorly formatted by today's web standards).

Most information is presented as PDFs pulled from the printed materials. As the Trillium discussion explores in detail, this is not the best primary way to present information due to lack of accessibility for the blind, load speeds, search engine optimization and ease of editing.

From a customer point of view, the primary thing missing from the site is a visual representation of the service area and services. There is no overview map that shows where you can go on El Dorado Transit. Even individual route maps are presented separate from the schedules so that they cannot be used in tandem (as they are in the Riders Guide). To use the site effectively, you have to know what service you want and navigate to it or plan to do a lot of reading (something people prefer not to do on websites).

The second thing missing is an easy way to plan trips that involve transfers between local routes, between local routes and commuter routes or to other systems (such as RT Light Rail). This functionality can best be provided by a trip planner, such as Google Transit, and is discussed in the Trillium report.

### ***At-the-Stop***

A third important strategy for distribution of passenger information is at the bus stop. With a few notable exceptions (Placerville Station and Folsom Lake College), El Dorado Transit has placed schedule information at key bus stops with shelters. This is a strategy that should be continued and enhanced as the printed and on-line materials are enhanced. It is of particular value to new riders, occasional users, and transient populations such as visitors.



### ***Phone***

The phone is still a significant communications tool for some El Dorado Transit riders – particularly local route riders. Overall, 19% of riders consider it a primary information source and more than half of riders say they have called El Dorado Transit at least once in the last 3 months. Among those that have called, 88% were able to get through in a reasonable time. The introduction of realtime information via RouteShout or another application will likely reduce the call volume. However it will not completely eliminate the need for telephone information as 16% of riders say it is how they prefer to get information.

# Marketing Plan

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## Marketing Objectives

The primary goal of the marketing program is to build ridership for El Dorado Transit's services, particularly the local and commuter routes. To achieve this goal, the plan will address several objectives.

### ***Increase visibility and improve image of El Dorado Transit through an enhanced visual brand.***

Buses and bus stops are seen by thousands of potential users every day. Bolder branding with a clear public transit image can increase the visibility and enhance the image of El Dorado Transit services.

### ***Increase awareness of El Dorado Transit's menu of services through active outreach and passenger information programs.***

Many people know some but not all of what El Dorado Transit offers. An active program of community outreach and passenger information will increase awareness of El Dorado Transit's full menu of transit options.

### ***Increase ease of use of the El Dorado transit system through an enhanced on-line presence and user-friendly passenger information.***

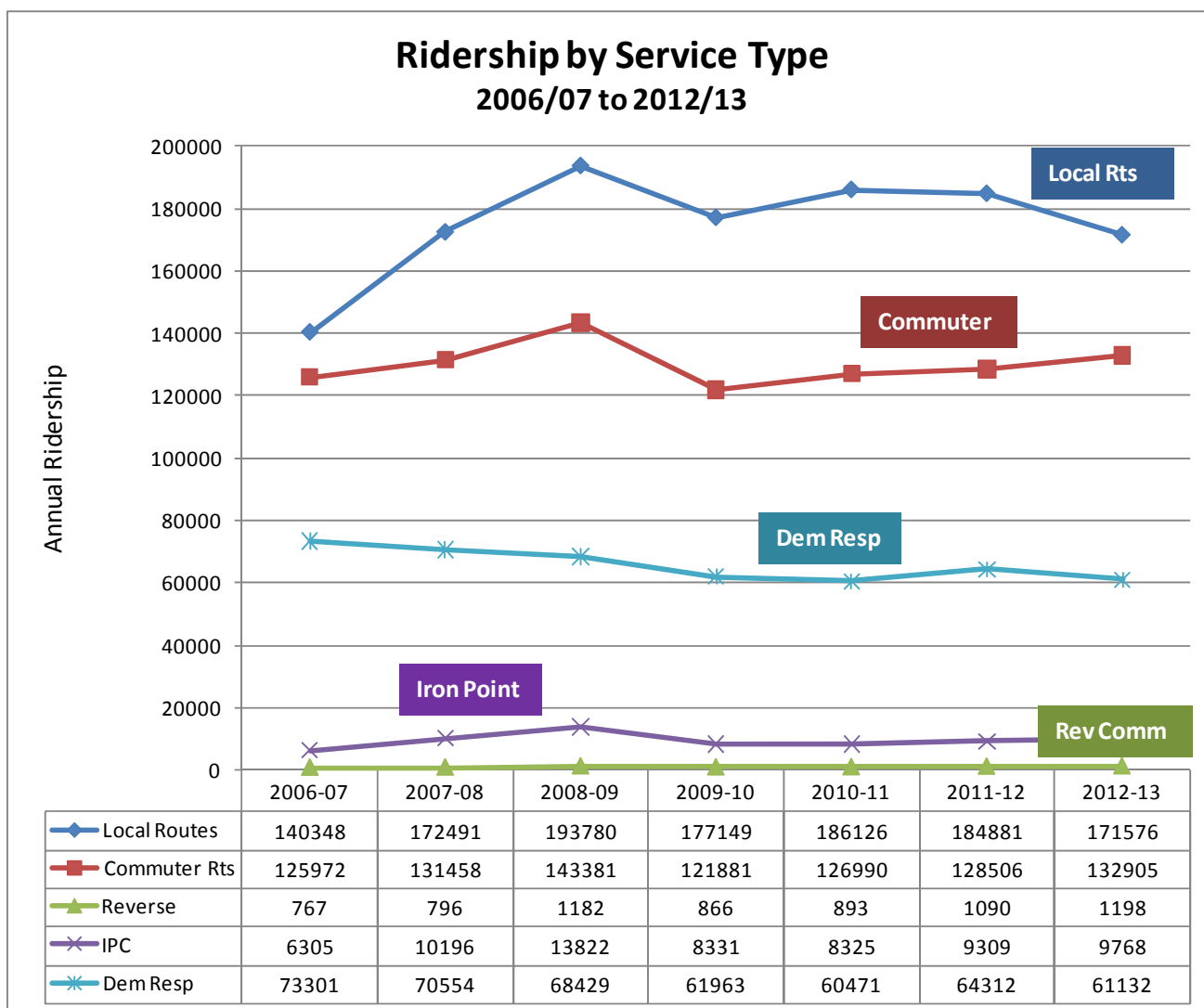
Making the system easier for first-time-riders to understand and existing riders to rely on is an important step in building ridership. This can best be accomplished by introducing new and enhanced passenger information tools such as Google Transit trip planning, a user-focused website, realtime information application and engaging/easy to understand passenger guides.

### ***Support introduction and promote ridership of new services in El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park and along the Highway 50 Corridor.***

The SRTP calls for expanding El Dorado Transit's menu of services to include new and improved services in El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park and to Folsom. These new services will require particular marketing support to build awareness and ridership.

### ***Promote trial and on-going ridership of all El Dorado Transit services among relevant target audiences.***

Generating ridership will require a combination of broad promotional efforts and targeted communications to high potential rider segments.



## Target Markets

El Dorado Transit operates a diverse menu of services – each with a distinct target audience. Ridership is roughly evenly divided between the local routes and those which provide inter-county service. The chart above shows the ridership for each service over the past seven years. Following are brief profiles of the populations segments that offer potential ridership for each service.

## **Local Routes & Dial-a-Ride**

Significant service cuts in local services, as a result of the recession, led to a drop in ridership in 2009. Those services have yet to be fully restored and ridership levels have not recovered to their 2008 levels. While commuter route ridership continues to rebound, local ridership has actually begun to decline again over the past two years. Rebuilding local ridership should be a particular focus of the marketing program in the near term.

### ***Local Workers***

About 36% of current riders on the local routes are employed. Eighteen percent of local route riders were traveling to work when surveyed. The limited span of service on El Dorado Transit's local routes currently limits the ability for local retail and other workers to use it as a primary commute mode. However, a slight expansion of the service hours as called for in the SRTP will improve the system's ability to attract this target group.

### ***Low Income Families***

While only 6% of the service area population is considered low income, this is a group which uses public transit heavily and makes up the core ridership on the local El Dorado Transit routes. The SRTP notes that more than 9,000 low income individuals reside in the study area and that 732 households do not have a vehicle.

### ***College Students***

College students (primarily Los Rios system) make up about 12% of riders on the local routes and 40% of riders surveyed on the Iron Point Connector. With 2500 students at the El Dorado Center of Folsom Lake College and others commuting to the main campus in Folsom, there is significant potential for growth among this segment which enjoys fare-free ridership on the local routes and a \$1.00 discount on out of county routes.

### ***Secondary Students***

Middle and high school students make up 13% of the ridership on the local routes. Many local schools now charge for school bus service and one driver noted that riding El Dorado Transit at the student rate of 75 cents/ride or \$30.00/month is less expensive for parents. Students can also use El Dorado Transit to independently access after school, weekend and summer activities.

### ***Seniors and Persons with Disabilities***

Seniors and persons with disabilities are key target markets for El Dorado Transit's demand response services, however they are also a significant target for fixed route ridership. Older adults (65+) are a rapidly growing segment. They currently make up 14% of the study area population, over 21,000 persons. There are more than 3,000 persons with mobility limitations.



## **50 Express**

This new route (which will replace the existing IPC) will function both as part of the local route network (replacing the existing Placerville to Cameron Park service) and as an enhanced connection between El Dorado County and the Folsom area. It should be marketed as part of the Local Routes discussed above, but will also offer particular appeal for a number of specific market segments.

### ***Folsom Lake College Students***

Folsom Lake College students traveling to the main campus in Folsom make up a large segment of the ridership on the IPC and will be a key target segment for the 50 Express which will provide a higher level of service to the main campus.

### ***Cameron Park Residents***

The new 50 Express will provide more frequent and regular service between Placerville and Cameron Park. It will work in tandem with the new Cameron Park circulator to give Cameron Park residents much better local service and better access to the overall local route network. Focused marketing of these two routes in the Cameron Park area should yield significant ridership increases in that community.

### ***Commuters to Folsom Area***

Individuals who live in El Dorado County but work in the Folsom area (for example at the Outlet Malls and other nearby employers) will be another potential target group. The size of this market is difficult to estimate, however, Census data included in the SRTP shows that 6.6% of El Dorado County residents work in the Folsom area.

### ***Downtown Commuters (midday access)***

The service improvement most desired by commuter route riders is a midday trip between El Dorado and Sacramento. Until this is implemented, the 50 Express will provide a way for commuters to return to El Dorado County in the midday by using RT Light Rail and transferring to the 50 Express at the Iron Point Light Rail Station.

### ***Shoppers***

Like the IPC, the 50 Express will provide direct access to the Folsom Premium Outlets. Promoting the 50 Express as a “shopper shuttle” will appeal to local route riders as well as other El Dorado County residents (for example seniors in the El Dorado Hills area who can use the taxi program to get to the bus, then the bus to get to Folsom).

## **Commuter Routes**

### **State Employees**

State employees make up a large share of the commuter route ridership. Their offices are grouped in the downtown area served by the commuter and they receive a fare subsidy from the state.

### **Other Downtown Commuters**

The commuter routes are also used by other downtown commuters traveling to a wide variety of workplaces. The service is somewhat less attractive to those without a fare subsidy; however it still offers a number of benefits including the avoidance of parking costs.

### **Non-Commuters**

The commuter routes have the potential to serve non-commute trips to Sacramento. Riders can connect to Amtrak, connect to YoloBus for trips to the airport or connect to Regional Transit for trips throughout the Sacramento area. Thirty percent of local route riders said they had used the commuter bus at some time, but only 10% within the past three months. Asked for what purpose they used it, their responses were evenly distributed across work, college, shopping, medical and connecting to intercity transportation. There would appear to be potential to promote the commuter buses as an option for occasional trips into Sacramento, particularly if, in the future, a midday trip is added.

## **El Dorado Hills Taxi Voucher**

### **Seniors and Persons with Disabilities**

Initially, the El Dorado Hills Taxi Voucher program will be restricted to seniors (60+) and persons with disabilities. It can be promoted to these groups for a wide variety of trip purposes – medical appointments, shopping, evenings out. A key target segment will be individuals currently using Dial-a-Ride as this will provide a less expensive, more flexible option. However, it will also be attractive to a broader spectrum of the community.

## **Sac Med**

### **Seniors and Persons with Disabilities**

Seniors and persons with disabilities are a key target market for the SacMed service which provides access to medical facilities in Sacramento. These individuals can use SacMed in combination with Dial-a-Ride to travel between their home and medical appointments without having to drive or rely on others for a ride.



***Low Income Families***

Low income families are another target for the SacMed service. Like seniors, they may be referred to specialists outside of the county, but not have private transportation for getting there.

***Medical Providers***

It is important that the medical providers that work with seniors, persons with disabilities and low income families locally be fully aware of the SacMed service and how it works. Front line staffs are often the ones making appointments for clients and need to know when to schedule appointments to insure that these individuals have the necessary transportation. Hence, while they are not potential riders, medical provider staffs are a critical target group.

## Marketing Strategies: Fundamentals

Some marketing strategies are fundamental to the effectiveness of all other communications efforts. These are noted with the symbol ★.

### Branding

Branding is marketing at its most basic. It is how we identify a service and everything associated with it using a name, logo, and packaging. The objective of branding is to create a unified and positive image in the mind of the potential customer and to create immediate recognition of all facets of the service.

For a transit system, the key elements of its visual brand are its name, logo, vehicle colors, vehicle graphics, bus stop signage and bus stop facilities (shelters, benches, etc.).

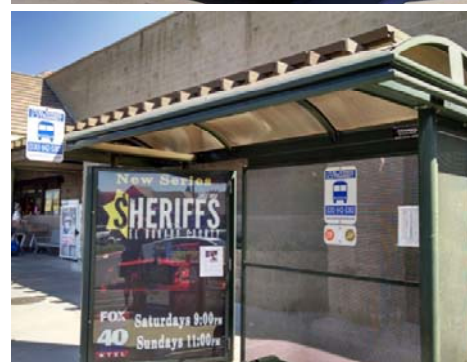
The vehicles and bus stops are in essence a transit system's "packaging" and its most visible marketing tools. They are seen by thousands of people every day. They can be a highly effective awareness-building tool or can be essentially invisible.

The photos at the right illustrate El Dorado's current visual brand. While the brand is consistently applied, it is dated, bland and still conveys a bit of the "service for the elderly" image which was El Dorado Transit's origin.

El Dorado Transit has grown well beyond its roots in service for the elderly, disabled and poor. It now provides a menu of transit options to appeal to a wide variety of target groups – commuters, college students, workers and youth, as well as the its traditional ridership core. With this in mind, it is time to take stock of the system's brand and how it might evolve.

The name, El Dorado Transit, is good. It clearly communicates the nature of the service and the area served. However, the logo is dated and generic – not very eye catching.

The most visible element of the system are the large commuter buses which have recently been painted royal blue. One stakeholder commented on the fact that she sees them all the time [while the rest of the system is invisible.] The local route and dial-a-ride vehicles are relatively "generic" – white with a



blue stripe and the system name in the stripe. The Dial-a-Ride vehicle has the phone number on the back window, while the fixed route buses have no other graphic elements. Local bus stop signs are consistent with the overall branding – again relatively generic and nondescript.

### **\*Update System Brand to Create a Family of Services**

It is recommended that El Dorado Transit update the system brand, with a focus on increasing visibility and enhancing the “general public” image of the transit services. The name El Dorado Transit should be retained, as it is a strong name with a high level of awareness. However the system would benefit from service specific names/logos which would create a “Family of services.” For example (not a recommendation....simply an illustration) you might have:

- El Dorado Local
- El Dorado 50 Express
- El Dorado Commuter
- El Dorado Dial-a-Ride (used on Dial-a-Ride, Sac Med and Paratransit)

A set of logos could be created which provided a unique brand for each service, but clearly tied them together as a family of services. At the right are two examples from systems that use a family of services approach to branding. They demonstrate the spectrum from very similar logos to more distinct, yet clearly related looks.



Key principles that should be applied in developing logos for El Dorado transit include:

- Simple, clean design.
- Immediately recognizable.
- Create a distinctive style and color palette for the transit system.
- Relate to transit and the service area.
- Flexible for various uses (horizontal and vertical, one color and multi color).

### **\*Utilize bold colors and graphics to increase visibility of vehicles and bus stops**

Once the new brand is developed, it should be carried through in bold graphics for all aspects of the transit system – particularly vehicles and bus stop signage. This is an opportunity to use El Dorado Transit’s capital assets to provide long-term promotional value.

## El Dorado Transit Market Assessment and Marketing Plan

Painting the commuter buses royal blue has already demonstrated the effectiveness of color in building visibility. This represents the first step in El Dorado Transit's evolution to a more contemporary and eye-catching look and can be used as a starting point for the rebranding effort.

Vehicle and Bus Stop Signage should be designed around the following principles which are illustrated by the photos at the right.

- Establish a bold color palette to be used consistently throughout the system. This might involve using the royal blue as the base color on all vehicles (possibly with different accent colors for each service). Or it might involve establishing a unique color for each type of service. In either case, El Dorado Transit should move away from generic white vehicles which convey a “social service” message.
- Use the logo boldly, in an eye-catching manner – so those who see the vehicles have no doubt about their purpose.
- Use vehicles to convey key pieces of information about El Dorado Transit such as web address, phone number and communities/destinations served.
- Bus Stop signs should carry through the same color palette and graphics as the vehicles. They should not only tell potential riders where to wait, but should make it clear to motorists and pedestrians that public transit is available to this destination or in this corridor.
- In addition, bus stop signs offer the potential to convey key service information, such as which routes serve the stop and where you can go from here. The bus stops signs shown here demonstrate two standard approaches to bus stop signage. The sign on the left conveys only the basic elements – system name/logo, universal bus symbol, phone number and website. The sign on the right utilizes decals applied to a basic sign (which includes the four key elements just described), to add



information about the routes serving that stop - route number and name, days of week served and hours of service. That sign also includes a bus stop number which can be used to secure stop specific information (e.g. realtime arrivals).

**Recommended Action Plan for Branding**

- Utilize the services of a professional graphic artist familiar with branding for public transit.
- Involve key stakeholders in the design and selection process.
- Develop logos and vehicle graphics for each of El Dorado Transit's services.
- Develop consistent bus stop signage to reflect the new branding.
- Launch the new brand in conjunction with the service improvement introduction in July 2015 and then support it with the Family of Services campaign discussed on page 41.



## Passenger Information In Print

### ★Update printed materials for all services

It is recommended that El Dorado Transit continue to publish printed guides for each of its services. In conjunction with the implementation of service improvements in July 2015, it is recommended that the guides be updated as follows.

#### Commuter Guide

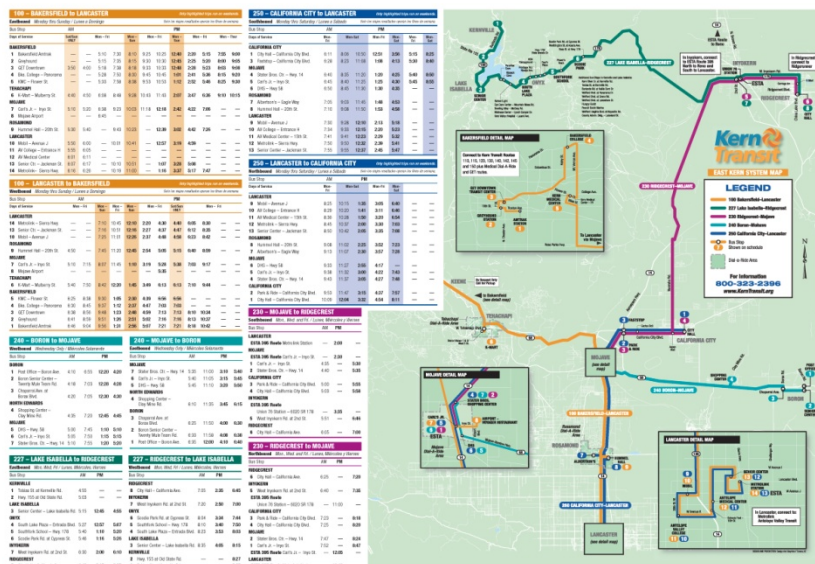
- Update graphics and colors to reflect new branding.
- Continue to include large, color coded map to illustrate routes, stops and park & rides.
- Continue to include schedules showing all stops.
- Update text, make as concise as possible.
- Add information about electronic information tools including Google Maps, realtime arrival information and alerts.
- Add information about using the 50 Express for midday trips back to El Dorado County.

#### Local Fixed Route Guide

There are two viable approaches to re-designing the local route guide to be more user friendly. One is to go with a large fold out guide (e.g. 24.5" X 18", folded to 3.5" X 9") with a full color system map that is more representational than the existing route maps. (A guide of this style from Kern County is shown at the right and in the appendix). The other is to create an individual guide for each route with a color map of that route and a small simple graphic showing how the route relates to the overall system. Given the high level of transferring among routes, it is recommended that El Dorado

Transit continue to publish a combined local route guide. The details of the format will need to be worked out with the graphic artist, however, the following principles should guide the design.

- Include in a single guide, the Placerville, Pollock Pines, Diamond Springs, Cameron Park and 50 Express routes. Also reference Paratransit, Dial-a-Ride and SacMed.



## ***El Dorado Transit Market Assessment and Marketing Plan***

- Redesign the current schedule book to be a large fold out piece which includes a full color system map, color coded schedules for each route and the minimum of text needed to convey critical information (fares, availability of alerts & trip planning on website, etc.).
- Use the map to show bus stop locations, primary reference streets, key destinations and transfer points.
- Include information about using the Commuter routes for occasional trips to Sacramento for shopping, recreation or intercity travel (Airport, Amtrak).

### **50 Express Guide**

In addition to including the 50 Express in the local guide, it may be useful to have a specific guide for use in promoting this intercity route as a Park & Ride route for intercity travel within El Dorado County or between El Dorado County communities and Folsom. This could be a much smaller piece which includes a color route map and schedule for just the 50 Express, plus information about transfer opportunities in both El Dorado and Sacramento Counties. This guide should highlight the key destinations served by the route: Park and Rides in Diamond Springs, Placerville, Cameron Park and El Dorado Hills; Folsom Lake College; the Iron Point Outlets and other locations directly served. The guide should highlight how riders can use Google Transit to plan inter-system trips to other destinations throughout Sacramento.

### **Demand Response Guide**

El Dorado Transit operates several demand response services – Complementary Paratransit, Dial-a-Ride and SacMed. Given that these are all operated through a single reservation system and likely share a similar client base, it may make sense to have an informational guide that covers them all. (Point for discussion.) The guide should include:

- A local service area map showing the area served by Dial-a-Ride and Paratransit and the pickup locations for SacMed.
- A Sacramento map showing the area and key medical destinations served by SacMed.
- Information about hours, fares, reservation policies and eligibility criteria for each service.
- Clear information about how Dial-a-Ride and SacMed can be used in tandem for medical trips.

### ***★Establish systematic distribution network for passenger information***

User-friendly passenger guides are only useful if they are readily available to potential riders. If broadly distributed in visible schedule holders, passenger guides can serve to build awareness and educate residents about the availability of transit services.

While El Dorado Transit has established a regular network of information outlets in the past, it is unclear how actively this network has been maintained and updated. Therefore it is recommended that El Dorado Transit staff take a fresh look at the information distribution system.

## ***El Dorado Transit Market Assessment and Marketing Plan***

- Begin by identifying high traffic locations in each community and for each target market of interest. Ask these locations if they would be willing to provide space for transit information in a visible spot.
- Provide the locations with a customized brochure holder such as the one shown here. (These are available from a variety of sources including Beemak Plastics ( [www.beemak.com](http://www.beemak.com) ) and can be imprinted with El Dorado Transit's logo and phone number.)
- Establish a contact person at each location who will let you know if the rack is empty. Refill racks on a regular schedule.



## **On-line**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the internet is where customers go for information about virtually any product. Transit is no exception. When asked where they would turn for transit information, potential riders invariably say on line. With that fact in mind, Trillium Solutions was asked to review El Dorado Transit's on-line presence and provide recommendations for improving the system's electronic passenger communications. Their technical recommendations, which were delivered as a separate memo, are included in their entirety in the Appendix. Following is a brief recap of the key considerations and recommendations.

### **★Implement Google Transit**

Use of on-line services such as Google Maps to get directions is one of the most common internet practices (behind only email and basic searches). Google Transit allows potential transit riders to get information in a trip planner format that is already familiar to most people. For a very modest investment of resources to maintain up-to-date GTFS data (General Transit Feed Specification – the data format required by Google), El Dorado Transit can be part of Google Maps and Google Transit which offers passengers a number of advantages:

- Provides easy access to El Dorado Transit information on smart phones and tablets as well as on computers.
- Avoids the difficulty that many potential riders have understanding transit schedules to plan trips, particularly those requiring transfers.
- Provides gatekeepers, such as social service and medical personnel, with an easy way to plan and print trip information for their constituents.
- Since other regional transit agencies are already in Google Maps, it will provide a seamless way of coordinating trips between El Dorado Transit, Regional Transit and other systems.

### **★Complete Website Redesign**

El Dorado Transit is planning to have its website redesigned to take advantage of current technology and software. Trillium's report lays out a detailed outline of features which will make



## El Dorado Transit Market Assessment and Marketing Plan

the website user-focused, easy to navigate, easy to update and attractive to potential users. The design principles recommended are intended to put the focus of the webpage on the needs of the current and potential rider, while also fulfilling the needs of the agency, board members and stakeholders. Key design recommendations include:

- **Header:** The header at top of all pages should present the agency name and brand (logo/colors) with a navigation bar that gives options for immediate rider needs such as Routes/Schedules, Demand Response Services, Fares and How to Ride information.
- **Above the Fold:** The primary focus of the front page should be on giving customers easy access to passenger information tools - a trip planner, systemwide map with links to schedules, service alerts and real time information. The space at the top of the home page that can be viewed without scrolling is limited, and cluttering it with items like non-urgent agency news or info makes it more difficult for riders who just need to plan a trip to do so.
- **Schedule Pages:** Schedule pages should include a route map, schedule, relevant alerts and connection information – everything the rider needs to use the route easily. Timetables should be displayed in HTML format. This will enhance access for the blind, load speeds, and search engine optimization.
- **Zoomable Map:** Potentially integrate a fully interactive, zoomable system map with features including links through to individual route pages, and ability to display individual routes.
- **Below the Fold:** There is much other information that needs to be housed on a transit agency website, but need not be presented on the top of the front page, or even on the front page at all. Items such as News Releases, Title VI Statement, Board Information, Plans & Reports, and Employment Info can be quickly accessed through a series of links below the fold in the footer of the website.
- **Responsive Design:** By setting the website to respond to the width of the screen being used the El Dorado Transit site will display properly on any size screen from desktop to smartphone.
- **Content Management System:** A CMS based website will allow agency staff to easily make routine updates to the website through a web-based interface.



These design principles are discussed in detail and fully illustrated in the Appendix.

### ***Service Alerts***

Traditionally, transit agencies had no way to communicate directly with riders for critical service information. Rather, agencies needed to broadcast that information, publishing service alerts in places where riders were likely to see them. Web technology makes it increasingly possible to send this type of information directly to riders. This presents a huge advantage to both riders and agencies. Service alerts sent directly to a rider through their preferred portal means that riders are much more likely to receive that info, and reduces the need for riders to remember to seek out information prior to their trip.

Most El Dorado Transit riders would like to be able to receive alerts about service delays or disruptions. The preferred method of receiving alerts is via text message, however a significant number of riders prefer email and a few choose Facebook.

An ideal alert notification system would (1) allow users to set preferences for what information they wish to receive (e.g. on what routes) and by what method and (2) sync all communication channels through a single agency portal so that staff need only post each alert once. The Trillium report provides options for implementing this type of robust customer portal for service alerts.

### ***In Realtime***

For a transit rider, having access to realtime bus arrival information reduces anxiety and increases the convenience of using transit. For the transit operator, making the information easily available to riders reduces the number of phone calls to ask where the bus is.

El Dorado Transit is currently working with RouteMatch to provide customers with realtime information. The Trillium report provides some additional options to consider for delivering realtime data in the future.

Whatever system is utilized, the key is being able to deliver the information to the customer in a variety of ways – from the website, on a smartphone or tablet, by text or by automated telephone system. While most El Dorado Transit riders have smart phones, local route riders are as likely to have basic cell phones.

### ***At-the Stop***

Signage at the bus stop can do more than build visibility and let passengers know where to wait. It can also be an important passenger information tool, especially for occasional or first time riders.



### ★Sign all bus stops with high visibility signage

El Dorado Transit currently has a mix of signed and flag stops. To the extent possible, it is recommended that all stops be signed with a sign that includes the basics – system name, universal bus symbol, phone number and website. In addition, instructions for accessing realtime information on a mobile phone should be included. The illustration at the right includes a bus stop number in print and Braille and a QRC code (Quick Response Code) for the bus stop which can be used to access realtime information by website, text or phone.

### ★Place information displays at high use bus stops and transfer points

Currently, El Dorado Transit provides schedule information displays at bus shelters. This practice should be continued and expanded to include a few key bus stops which currently do not have information:

- Bus stop at Folsom Lake College El Dorado Center
- Placerville Station

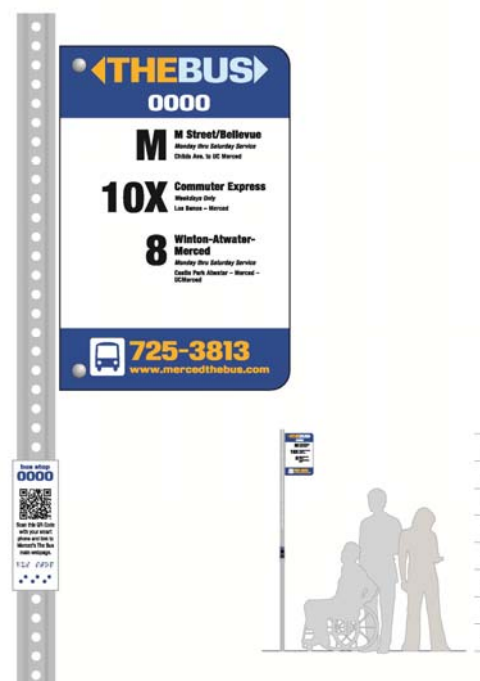
When updating graphics for the passenger guides, El Dorado Transit should also take the opportunity to update the graphics for the shelter displays. Where possible, a system map (with a You are Here sticker) should be included along with the schedules for the routes serving the specific stop.

It is, of course, critical that any information provided at the bus stop be updated and maintained to insure accuracy and readability.

### ★Develop consistent signage standards for park and ride lots

El Dorado Transit's park and ride lots are the point of access for many riders, particularly commuters. Signage relating to park and ride lots needs to:

- Brand the lots are part of the El Dorado Transit system.
- Provide way-finding to help new riders find the lot.



- Clearly identify where riders can park.
- Provide route and schedule information for the service from the specific lot – both commute and local routes.

## **In the Community**

### ***Establish Passenger Information Displays at High Traffic Locations***

Attractive, easy-to-understand transit information can have a promotional as well as educational value. During outreach for this plan, stakeholders responded very positively to the concept of establishing transit information displays at high traffic locations including colleges, social service offices, senior centers, medical clinics, etc. These displays would provide permanent low-cost advertising for the system and be seen by hundreds of people each week. In addition, they would provide a focus for the distribution of the new passenger guides.

These displays can be created using the graphics developed for the news passenger guides and pre-fabricated display units. There are many styles of displays which can be purchased on-line at sources such as:

[www.beemak.com](http://www.beemak.com)

[www.displays2go.com](http://www.displays2go.com)

[www.display-world.com](http://www.display-world.com)

The fixtures can be purchased in small quantities and customized with the addition of a digital print and a supply of El Dorado Transit passenger guides.

Different formats (counter top, wall mounted, free standing, etc) may be needed at different locations. In some cases, the display might simply be a laminated copy of the system map to post on a bulletin board.

On the following page are several examples of information display types. Ideally, the displays should:

- Visibly and attractively communicate the new brand
- Include information relevant to the particular location (e.g. SacMed information at medical facilities)
- Provide pockets for passenger guide distribution
- Promote the web-site for additional information, including Google trip planning

Like information at the bus stop, it is critical that these displays be maintained and stocked with current information. El Dorado Transit should create an inventory of information distribution locations which are visited and replenished on a periodic basis (monthly or quarterly).

#### **Where to place Community Info Displays**

Folsom Lake College  
El Dorado Center  
Social Service Agency  
Lobbies  
Senior Centers  
Apartment Complex  
Offices  
Housing Authority Facilities  
Medical Offices or Clinics  
Community Activity  
Centers  
Grocery Stores



### Sample Information Displays



### Recommended Action Plan for Passenger Information

- Launch realtime information application.
- Update passenger guides in conjunction with July 2015 service changes.
- Create distribution location list and systematic replenishment schedule.
- Launch new website, including service alert portal, in conjunction with July 2015 service changes.
- Utilize graphics developed for guides and website to enhance displays at bus stops.
- Identify viable locations for community information displays; determine best format; create, install and maintain displays.

## Marketing Strategies: Critical On-going Efforts

### Gatekeeper Relations and Communications

Many organizations serve as “gatekeepers” for potential transit riders. These include social service agencies, schools and colleges, youth programs, employment programs, support organizations for the disabled and elderly and medical services. These organizations, and particularly their front line employees, are often charged with identifying transportation options for getting their clients to programs, appointments, training, classes, interviews and jobs. As a result, they have the potential to serve as “salespeople” for El Dorado Transit.

Interviews conducted as part of the outreach for this plan made it clear that many gatekeepers would welcome a closer working relationship with El Dorado Transit and are very willing to serve as a conduit of transit information to their constituents.

Establishing a regular program of communications with these groups is a highly effective, low cost marketing strategy and should be an on-going element of El Dorado Transit’s marketing program.

- Create a simple database that includes the organization, contact person and contact information, including e-mail. These individuals should be provided with regular e-mail updates about changes in transit services and programs, availability of new passenger guides and other updates. When appropriate, E-mails can include an 8 ½” X 11” PDF flyer for printing and posting or distributing to co-workers and/or clients.
- Conduct “training” sessions at meetings of front line staff who need to understand how transit works so they can pass the knowledge on to constituents. These trainings would include an overview of the routes, how to use the schedules to plan trips, how to use the Google trip planner and information about demand response services.
- Provide the gatekeepers with “tools” for marketing transit to their constituents. These might include:
  - Bulletin board posters for their facilities
  - Permanent [transit information display](#) for their lobby
  - Targeted flyer for distribution to their population (e.g. students, clients, residents)
  - Or simply a supply of transit guides for distribution

Note: For the Commuter Routes, the Downtown Sacramento Transportation Management Association and its members are the primary gatekeepers for the regular ridership. These are addressed under [Service Specific Strategies](#).

#### Starter List of Gatekeepers

El Dorado County Health & Human  
Services  
Public Health  
Marshal Medical  
Other Medical Facilities  
Public Housing Authority  
Folsom Lake College  
Secondary Schools  
Senior Centers

## **News Calendar – Conventional and Social Media Relations**

There are a wide variety of no-cost ways in which El Dorado Transit can communicate news about the system to the community and its riders. These include a mix of conventional media (e.g. newspapers), in-house communications (on-board posters/ handouts, website), partner communications (organization newsletters) and social media (e.g. Facebook).

To maximize the exposure received, while minimizing the staff time required, it is recommended that El Dorado Transit develop a “news calendar” which will drive the content for all of these communications channels.

The news calendar should identify messages to be delivered during each month of the year, as well as the audiences/channels which are relevant for the specific message. For example, relevant topics might include:

- 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- Service changes
- New vehicles
- New shelters or other facilities improvements
- New fare media – Connect Card
- Introduction of Google Transit trip planning
- Introduction of new passenger guides or website
- Tie-ins with national or regional activities such as Earth Day, Dump the Pump Day, Try Transit Week, Veterans Day, etc.
- Special service to the Fair or other event
- Periodic feature articles about specific services – such as SacMed or using Commuter buses for intercity connections in Sacramento

A sample format for the calendar is shown below.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>News Release</b>	<b>E-mail to Stkholders</b>	<b>Community Poster</b>	<b>On-board Poster</b>	<b>Post to Website</b>	<b>Facebook Post</b>

## ***El Dorado Transit Market Assessment and Marketing Plan***

Here is an example of how the calendar might be used to drive communications efforts.

**Topic:** Introduction of Google Transit Trip Planning (Google Has Just Put El Dorado Transit On the Map!) Use the same content to create:

- **News Release:** To all local media. Focus on the fact that getting transit information is now as easy as getting driving directions, both for local trips and for trips to and throughout Sacramento area.
- **E-mail to Social Service Stakeholders:** Focus on how this will make it easy for case workers to provide their clients with trip plans for appointments and interviews. Provide a short article for them to include in their in-house newsletter or email communications.
- **Community Poster:** Create an 8 ½" X 11" PDF poster to send along with email – asking stakeholders to post on their bulletin boards.
- **On-board Poster:** Let riders know that they can now use Google Transit trip planner to plan trips, including transfers between routes and to Sacramento RT Light Rail or bus routes.
- **Website Posting:** Article on how to use the new trip planner and what other connecting systems are part of Google Transit.
- **Facebook Posts:** Post short message about the Trip Planner with links to the home page to encourage people to try it.

### **Recommended Action Plan for Critical On-going Efforts**

- Develop an E-mail list of “gatekeepers.” Build the list over time as additional contacts are made.
- Provide regular (e.g. quarterly) email updates about services, passenger information tools and other relevant topics. Include PDF posters when relevant information needs to be passed on to constituents.
- Develop a customizable presentation for use in conducting outreach to gatekeepers.
- Actively solicit opportunities to “train” front line staff about El Dorado Transit services. Re-train annually.
- Develop a News Calendar and update quarterly.
- Use conventional and social media to create exposure for news calendar topics.



## **Marketing Strategies: Promotional Campaigns**

### **40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign**

In 2015, El Dorado Transit will celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This will be a significant opportunity to secure earned media coverage and to thank riders and the community for their continued support. Activities relating to the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary might include:

- Develop a 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary icon or seal for use in combination with the new brand (which might be introduced around the time of the anniversary). Temporary decals can be added to buses and bus shelters.
- Issue a news release and provide the media with a brief history of the system.
- Hold and promote a “Forty and Free” event that allows passengers to ride free for a day or a week and encourages non-riders to give the system a try.

The 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary might be combined with the Service Improvement Launch Campaign (next section) which will actually be more meaningful to riders as it will offer them enhanced services.

### **Service Improvement Launch Campaign**

The service improvements planned for July 2015 will offer improved service for many local route riders. Cameron Park residents will have more frequent service; riders on other local routes will have somewhat later service; and Folsom College students and others traveling to Folsom will have service every two hours throughout the day.

This is an ideal occasion to initiate a campaign to stem the decline in ridership on the local routes, particularly if the enhanced services are paired with a higher visibility brand, improved passenger information tools, access to realtime arrival information and new fare options offered on the Connect Card.

The campaign should focus on all of the local routes (including 50 Express) and highlight the ways in which they are improving.

The primary messages should be: El Dorado Transit is improving bus service and making it easier to use by providing tech-savvy passenger information tools and passenger friendly fare media.

Communications channels for the campaign might include:

- Conventional and Social Media for each step leading up to the change
- Passenger communications – posters and handouts on the buses and at bus shelters
- Outreach to Gatekeepers – a full round of outreach presentations to promote the changes

## El Dorado Transit Market Assessment and Marketing Plan

- Newspaper advertising (Sac Bee, Mountain Democrat)
- Community Poster Campaign
- Bus Shelter Ads at key locations

One approach to communicating this multi-faceted message is to create a piece of artwork that could be used in a variety of ways (ad, poster, presentation slide). It would use a simplified local route map as the central graphic. It would be surrounded by small graphics and callouts to highlight each of the improvements and their relationship to the local system. The graphic at the right (although used for soliciting votes rather than riders) illustrates the basic concept.



## Family of Services Campaign

El Dorado Transit operates a variety of transportation services that meet the needs of specific market segments. Many residents are aware of one or more, but not all of the service provided. There are several advantages to building wide awareness of the family of services operated:

- Enhance El Dorado Transit's image as a public transit system that meets the needs of the entire community.
- Position all of El Dorado Transit's services as convenient, reliable, technology enhanced transportation options.
- Educate El Dorado county residents about services they might use either regularly or in certain circumstances.
- Educate residents about services that might be valuable to their family members, coworkers or clients – create referral sources.

It is recommended that El Dorado Transit follow up the Service Improvement Campaign with a broad-based public education campaign that:

- Highlights the new branding.
- Communicates the diverse menu of services that El Dorado Transit provides and how these benefit various groups of people.
- Conveys the concept that El Dorado Transit is more than you think...not just commuter service, not just service for the poor or elderly. It is a multi-faceted transit system that has something to offer almost everyone.

## ***El Dorado Transit Market Assessment and Marketing Plan***

- Positions El Dorado Transit as “state-of-the-art” by highlighting the technology enhancements – new website, Google Transit, realtime information and Connect Card.
- Encourages potential riders to check out the new website and Google Trip Planner tools to see if El Dorado Transit can work for them.

Communication channels for this campaign should be those that reach a broad audience.

- Newspaper advertising (Sac Bee, Mountain Democrat)
- Community Poster Campaign
- Bus Shelter Ads
- Bus Back Ads (with specific information about that service... e.g. 12 round trips to Sacramento every weekday.)

A possible creative concept would be to use a “representative rider” for each service to convey the benefits of the service and who uses it. Drivers could be engaged to help identify willing testimonials such as:

- A Sacramento Commuter (to speak for Commuter Routes)
- A Folsom College Student (to speak for Folsom Express)
- A Local Worker (to speak for local routes)
- A senior (to speak for DAR)
- A young mom with kids (to speak for SacMed)
- A person with a disability (to speak for paratransit)

Each rider could speak to a benefit of or improvement in a particular service. For example the local rider might talk about how easy using the bus is with real time arrival information.

Below is a VERY CRUDE mockup of this concept.

## The Many Faces of El Dorado Transit



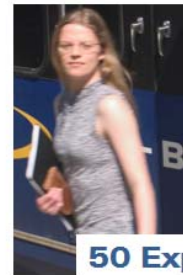
*Brief quote  
about the  
benefits of  
riding EDT.*  
Jane Doe  
Sacramento  
Commuter

**Commuter**



*Brief quote  
about the  
benefits of  
riding EDT.*  
John Doe  
Local Worker

**Local**



*Brief quote  
about the  
benefits of  
riding EDT.*  
Jane Doe  
FLC Student

**50 Express**



*Brief quote  
about the  
benefits of  
riding EDT.*  
Maria Doe  
Mother

**SacMed**



*Brief quote  
about the  
benefits of  
riding EDT.*  
Jane Doe  
Whatever

**Paratransit**



*Brief quote  
about the  
benefits of  
riding EDT.*  
Retiree &  
Shopper

**Dial-a-Ride**

**NEW EL DORADO  
TRANSIT LOGO**

eldoradotransit.com ■ 530.642.5383  
Google Trip Planning ■ Real Time Arrival App

### Recommended Action Plan for Promotional Campaigns

- Develop Service Improvement campaign to promote July 2015 service changes.
- Launch campaign in June 2015 and run through October 2015.
- Develop Family of Services campaign.
- Initiate campaign in 2016.

## **Marketing Strategies: Service Specific Promotion**

### **Local Routes & 50 Express**

Ridership on the local routes never fully recovered from the 2009 service cuts and has declined sharply over the past two years. The service improvements planned for July 2015 will serve to improve the attractiveness of the local services.

The previous section outlined a broad-based campaign to introduce the changes. The following more targeted efforts should be initiated as part of that campaign and then continued as on-going programs.

#### ***Cameron Park – Direct Mail, Ad and Poster Campaign***

Cameron Park riders will gain a great deal with the service improvement in July. They will have both more frequent service to Placerville and Folsom and better circulator service within the local area. These improvements will be an important message in the broad service improvement launch campaign previously discussed. However, El Dorado Transit should also consider campaign elements specific to Cameron Park residents.



- Direct mail post card – The USPS Every Door Direct Mail program makes it very cost effective to conduct direct mailings to residents in highly targeted geographic areas. A direct mail post card, highlighting the new improved Cameron Park service, could be mailed to all Cameron Park households within a quarter to half mile of the new Cameron Park circulator and 50 Express. The advantage of a post card is that a bold message can be conveyed immediately upon receipt of the card. It is not necessary for the resident to open an envelope or brochure.
- Cameron Park Life Print Ad – This is a monthly publication that is delivered by mail at no charge to households in Cameron Park and Shingle Springs.
- Poster Campaign – The mailing and ad could be supplemented with the placement of a poster (similar to the post card) on bulletin boards at apartment complexes, retailers, medical offices and community offices throughout the Cameron Park area.
- Partnership with Cameron Park Community Service District – include information about local transit service in the district's 3X per year recreation class schedule. Possibly include a map showing activity locations served by the circulator route.

### **Folsom Lake College - El Dorado Center & Main Campus**

About 2500 students take classes at the Folsom Lake College El Dorado Center served by El Dorado Transit's Diamond Springs route. Many of these students and other El Dorado County residents take classes at the main campus in Folsom as well. This is a prime target for local ridership. Interviews with Dale VanDam at the El Dorado Campus and Kay Kirkland at the Folsom campus identified the following communications channels for reaching students.



- Electronic information screens around campus (Provide information to Public Info Officer Christy Hart 916.608.6993 to post)
- Permanent Info Display at El Dorado Campus (possibly in lobby of admin building)
- Future display in student lounge which is now being developed
- Potential to send emails to El Dorado Center students, (via their Gmail accounts), when the 50 Express is launched
- Student Bridge Day and Earth Day events– have a table (perhaps El Dorado Transit has in the past)
- Student Orientation Packets at the El Dorado Campus
- Campus newsletter to El Dorado Center faculty and staff

Key messages for students: New branding needs to communicate that this is service for everyone (not just elderly or poor). All day service to Folsom Campus – no need to drive or park. Focus on how technology can make using transit easier (even fun) with mobile friendly website, Google maps and realtime information.

### **Apartment Complexes/Affordable Housing along Routes**

El Dorado Transit serves a large number of apartment complexes that provide affordable housing for workers, low income families and students – key target groups for El Dorado Transit's local routes. A low cost marketing strategy for reach these groups is to provide the complex office with a schedule holder and passenger guides, plus a laminated copy of the system map for posting on a bulletin board or other location in the office. The location of the complex should be highlighted on the map so residents can easily see what their transit options are from there.

For key complexes, you may also wish to create a customized flyer for the management to distribute to residents. The consultant spoke with the rental manager at Cameron Park Village Apartments – a complex primarily for elderly persons. He had vague familiarity with El Dorado Transit services, but didn't have a passenger guide or any information for distribution to residents. He was eager for a display and passenger guides – which he felt would benefits his residents (“many of whom don’t driver and others who shouldn’t”).



## ***Secondary Schools***

About 11% of El Dorado Transit riders surveyed on local routes said they were middle or high school students. While the outreach for this plan did not include interviews with school district staff, other stakeholders commented on the potential to attract more ridership from among secondary students. They noted that school districts charge more for school bus service than the cost of using public transit.

El Dorado Transit should evaluate the ability of the transit network and schedules to serve the needs of various student populations including:

- Students commuting to school at El Dorado and Union Mine High Schools as well as charter schools and middle schools in the Placerville area.
- Students participating in after school activities and needing transportation home.

If it appears that El Dorado Transit's services can meet the needs of one or more of these groups, then the school district should be enlisted as a partner in marketing the services. Communications channels which the schools might be asked to make available to El Dorado Transit include:

- Distribution of targeted brochures or flyers which highlight the services El Dorado Transit offers that are relevant to students.
- Inclusion of transit information in school newspapers, newsletters or communications with parents and on the school website.

Even if El Dorado Transit services do not fill the school-year needs of students, youths can be encouraged to use the system for summer travel and activities.

## ***Transit Ambassador Program***

The fear of using transit the first time is a significant barrier to ridership, especially among older adults who have driven most of their lives. One strategy for addressing this is a "Bus Buddy" program through which Transit Ambassadors – volunteers who are highly familiar with the transit services – can introduce their peers to the system by taking them on one or more trial rides, showing them how to plan trips and providing them with passenger information materials and a free ride pass for their first solo trip. Transit Ambassadors can also conduct group trips of seniors from senior centers or complexes, giving them a chance to try transit in a fun, group environment.

The availability of these "bus buddies" can be promoted through gatekeepers for the senior population such as senior centers and complexes. Staff who work with seniors should be made aware of the service so they can recommend it to individuals they feel would benefit from some assistance learning to ride the bus.

## **50 Express**

In addition to inclusion in the marketing efforts for El Dorado Transit's local service network, two additional strategies are recommended specifically for the 50 Express.

### ***Promotion through 50 Corridor Transportation Management Association***

The 50 Corridor Transportation Management Association (TMA) works with employers and employees to identify alternative mode options for commuters traveling to jobs along the 50 Corridor including the Folsom area. The 50 Express will provide a significant improvement in access to this area from El Dorado County communities. El Dorado Transit staff should work with the 50 Corridor TMA to integrate information about the new service into their promotional efforts.

### ***Promotion to Commuters as a Midday Option***

As previously discussed, the service improvement most desired by commuter route riders is a midday return trip. Until that can be implemented, the 50 Express will provide a midday option for traveling from downtown Sacramento to El Dorado County park and ride lots. This information should be included in passenger information materials and other communications with commuter route riders.

## **Commuter Routes**

The commuter routes are currently used primarily by state employees and other workers traveling to jobs in downtown Sacramento. A few riders surveyed indicate that they transfer to Sacramento Regional Transit to reach their jobs, but the vast majority has service directly to their worksite.

### ***Promotion through Sacramento Transportation Management Association***

The Sacramento Transportation Management Association (TMA) has 205 members, representing more than 90,000 commuters. It provides them with alternative mode information, a guaranteed ride home program and the chance to participate in their Commuter Club.

The Sacramento TMA is the most cost effective tool for reaching commuters who work in the downtown Sacramento area and are well served by the commuter routes. It is recommended that El Dorado Transit:



- Establish a relationship with TMA staff to understand how best to communicate with their member employers.
- Provide the TMA with commuter route and schedule information in the preferred format for distribution to employers and commuters.
- Provide them with E-mail updates on the commuter services to share with their membership.
- Periodically attend Sacramento TMA meetings to provide updates on the commuter services and insure that ETCs at employers are fully familiar with what is available.

## Communication with Existing Riders

Many commuter route riders are long time customers of El Dorado Transit. Those who are newer to the service often found out about it from a coworker or neighbor who rides. Hence, a high level of communications with existing commute riders is important both in retaining and building ridership. Key messages in the near future should focus on:

### ■ Sign up for Alerts

94% of commuter route riders surveyed would like to sign up for service alerts. Many of these likely already receive alerts through El Dorado Transit's existing email alert system. Text message is the format preferred by most (66%), however 42% said email works for them, as most commuter riders (75%) have Smartphone. Once an enhanced alert system is implemented, commute riders should be strongly encouraged to sign up.

### ■ Real Time Information

Real time information, provided via RouteShout or another format, will be very attractive to commuter route riders. Again, 75% of them have Smartphones, so they will have immediate access to bus arrival information.

### ■ Connect Card Introduction

Many commuter route riders receive subsidies from the State or another employer and utilize monthly passes or tickets. They will be very interested to know how the Connect Card will work for them and are likely to enjoy not having to purchase a new pass every month (as only a limited number state offices sell the passes).

### ■ Promote 50 Express as a Midday Option

Encourage commuter route riders to use the Google Transit trip planner to see how to use the 50 Express (in combination with Light Rail) as a midday return option.

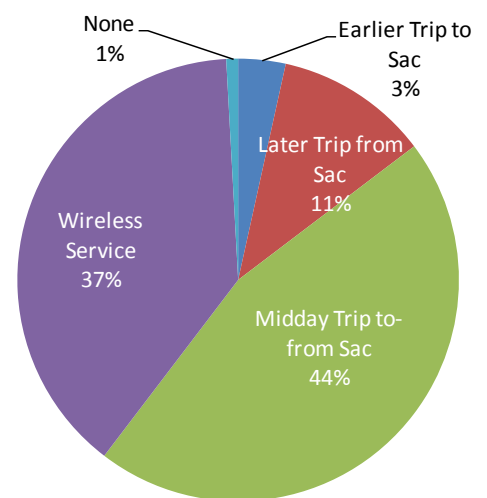
### ■ Wireless Service

While most commuter route riders have Smartphones which provide much of the same functionality, they still rated the desirability of wireless service on the buses very highly. 42% rated it as 5 on an importance scale of 1 to 5. When asked what one service improvement they would most want, 37% of riders said wireless service.

## Addition of Midday Trip

Asked about the importance of various service improvements, 34% of commuter route riders gave a Midday trip to/from Sacramento the highest rating (5 on a 5 point scale). Another 28% rated it a 4. However, when asked if they could have only one improvement from a list of four, 44% of the riders chose a Midday trip as their one choice.

**Most Important Improvement  
Commuter Routes**



Adding a midday trip to the Commuter schedule would both improve satisfaction (security) among current riders and make the service more attractive for occasional use by non-commuter rider.

### ***Cross promote to Other El Dorado Transit Riders for non-commute trips***

About 10% of local route riders say that they have used the commuter routes in the past 3 months, while another 20% say they have used them but not recently. There is potential to promote the commuter routes as an option for occasional trips to Sacramento for shopping, medical appointments or connections to intercity travel. However this potential is complicated by three factors:

- Access to the commuter routes is only possible at Park and Ride lots, so local routes riders may have some difficulty accessing them. (The 50 Express may make this easier).
- Most commuter routes have capacity and can absorb a modest number of non-commuter riders. However, some key trips may not have capacity and regular riders will not appreciate being crowded.
- The commute hour timing of the commuter routes makes them less functional for other types of trips as you need to plan to be in Sacramento all day and have limited options for connecting to intercity travel. The addition of a midday trip would greatly enhance the attractiveness for non-commute uses.

It is recommended that local route passenger information materials make it clear that commuter routes are an option for occasional trips and can be ridden for a daily cash fare.

## **El Dorado Hills**

During the coming year, El Dorado Transit will introduce a taxi voucher program for seniors and persons with disabilities in the El Dorado Hills Community Services District. Following are three strategies for building visibility and awareness among the target population.

### ***Promotion through El Dorado Hills Community Services District & Senior Center***

The Community Services District in El Dorado Hills, including its Senior Center, will be a key marketing partner in promoting the new taxi voucher program. During outreach for this plan, they suggested a number of strategies for communicating about the program:

- Website link – a link on the El Dorado Hills Community Services District website with information and the voucher application.
- Activity Guide – the district recreation program publishes a seasonal activity guide. They recommended a “coming soon” article in the Winter Guide and focus on the new taxi voucher program in the April guide in the Senior Activities section.

## El Dorado Transit Market Assessment and Marketing Plan

- Outreach at Parties – the Senior Center hosts parties 4 times per year which attract 225-250 seniors. The program could be announced at the Valentine party and table tents or handouts with information about the program included on all tables. Possibly have a drawing for a set of vouchers as a door prize.
- Nutrition Program presentation – make a presentation at the senior nutrition program. DAR is considered cost prohibitive by the lunch program participants. The taxi would be less expensive and would allow groups to come together for a single fare. (Contact: Michele Hunter 530.621.6161)
- Display at Senior Center – an information display (or displays) at the senior center will be seen by people coming in for a variety of activities.

### Newspaper – Earned and Paid Coverage

Local newspapers with potential to reach seniors in El Dorado Hills include:

- Village Life
- El Dorado Hills Telegraph
- Senior Times (from Placerville)

El Dorado Transit should solicit earned media (articles) through targeted news releases and contacts, as well as place paid advertising in these newspapers. Once the program is established, consider creating a testimonial ad using an early adopter to communicate the advantages of the taxi voucher program.

### Outreach/Info Displays at Senior Complexes

Senior complexes and communities in El Dorado Hills represent another set of potential marketing partners. Senior Center staff mentioned the Four Seasons (400) and Versante (100) as good locations for outreach and information displays.

## Sac Med

The SacMed service targets a highly specific market – individuals traveling to Sacramento for medical appointments. These riders are likely to have limited transportation options due to age, disability or low income.

**"I love riding MBTA because I can be independent. And the price is so reasonable."**

"I've been riding MBTA since 1993. I take the bus shopping, to the doctor and to visit friends. I've made lots of friends on the bus. You can really get around on MBTA. It's like having a car but you save a lot of money!"

**Marie Barr**  
Retiree  
Yucca Valley

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## ***Simplify Reservation Process***

The current demand response reservation system requires that reservations for the SacMed service be made at least 4 days ahead. However, reservations for a connecting Dial-a-Ride trip (to access the SacMed bus) can only be made three days ahead, so a second call must be made. This is unnecessarily burdensome and confusing for the typical SacMed rider (who is likely elderly or low income). If an individual is relying on transit to get to a medical appointment, they need to have the security that they will be able to make the entire trip on time. It is highly recommended that the policy be amended such that SacMed riders can reserve their entire trip with a single phone call.

## ***Medical Provider Outreach and Displays***

The primary gatekeepers for SacMed's target population are the medical providers who are referring patients to specialty care in the Sacramento area. It is important for these individuals (staff at doctor's offices and clinics) be familiar with the service and its parameters, so that they can recommend it to clients who need transportation and can schedule their appointments accordingly.



Creating this awareness will require outreach to medical offices and clinics throughout the El Dorado Transit service area. While the initial effort will be labor intensive, it can be used to establish on-going communications which will be less so.

- Provide front desk staff at each location with a customized information brochure which explains SacMed service, clearly identifies the medical facilities served and makes it clear during what time frame appointments must be schedule.
- Collect contact information for the office manager at each location to facilitate follow-up communications.
- Offer each location a schedule holder with pockets for a SacMed brochure as well as a local route guide. Additional guides to replenish the display can be mailed to the contact person.



**Recommended Action Plan for Service Specific Promotional Efforts**

- Implement El Dorado Hills' communications efforts in conjunction with launch of taxi voucher program.
- Implement the following targeted efforts relating to local routes and 50 Express in conjunction with July 2015 service improvement.
  - Cameron Park direct mail and poster campaign
  - Folsom Lake College Communications – focus on 50 Express improvement
  - Work with 50 Corridor TMA to promote 50 Express as a commute option
- The remaining targeted programs are less time sensitive. They can be implemented as staff time permits. Most are on-going strategies that should be maintained over time.

## Complying with ADA and Title VI Communication Requirements

There are a number of FTA requirements which transit systems must comply with in their communications process. Some of these relate to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). More recently new Title VI requirements have been mandated. AMMA Transit Planning was asked to provide some general guidance based on their extensive experience working with transit agencies to develop and implement ADA and Title VI plans.

### Title VI Communications Compliance

#### *Limited English Proficient Materials and Communications*

El Dorado Transit's Title VI Plan documents the LEP populations and identifies public participation process by which it will ensure LEP individuals have full access to transit services and to the decision making process. This section serves to delineate the areas and specific activities where El Dorado Transit will need to monitor to ensure continued communication with LEP individuals and compliance with Federal Title VI regulations.

Table 1 below identifies the populations within El Dorado County that speak English less than "very well." This data, extracted from the American Community Surveys 2012 5-year Estimates, represents the most current US Census data available for the region. As demonstrated in Table 1, there are an estimated 5,332 Spanish-speaking LEP individuals in El Dorado County, making up 3.12% of the population. According to Title VI Regulations FTA C 4702.1B, vital documents should be translated into LEP languages for which the population is 1,000 individuals or 5% (whichever is less). While there are many more LEP communities identified in Table 1, the Spanish-speaking LEP group is the only population requires written translation according to the Safe Harbor Provision<sup>1</sup>. Even accounting for the margin of error, the other LEP populations do not come near 1,000 persons or 5% of El Dorado's population.

As stated in the Title VI Plan, El Dorado Transit is committed to translating vital materials into Spanish and will monitor the changes in LEP populations to continue assessing into which other LEP languages it should translate.

Table 2 below identifies what public information materials are currently being translated and provides guidance for improving those materials. Table 3 describes what El Dorado Transit may need to translate according to future activities.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Safe Harbor Provision stipulates that, if a recipient provides written translation of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes five percent (5%) or 1,000 persons, whichever is less, of the total population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered, then such action will be considered strong evidence of compliance with the recipient's written translation obligations" (FTA C4702.1B Chapter III-9).

## El Dorado Transit Market Assessment and Marketing Plan

This table represents El Dorado's plan for ensuring Title VI compliance and, just as importantly, ensuring full and equal access to its services for LEP individuals. They will provide an important reference as El Dorado Transit updates its printed and electronic passenger information tools.

These public information materials were identified according to guidance provided by the FTA on vital documents. Vital documents are those that "provide access to essential services"<sup>2</sup>

Table 1: Limited English Proficient Populations in El Dorado County

<b>B16001: LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME BY ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH FOR THE POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OVER: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate</b>			
<b>El Dorado County, California</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>% of Total Population</b>	<b>Margin of Error</b>
Total Population	171,136	100%	+/-101
<b>Spanish or Spanish Creole: Speak English less than "very well"</b>	<b>5,332</b>	<b>3.12%</b>	<b>+/-626</b>
French (incl. Patois, Cajun): Speak English less than "very well"	154	0.09%	+/-90
Italian: Speak English less than "very well"	32	0.02%	+/-35
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole: Speak English less than "very well"	22	0.01%	+/-34
German: Speak English less than "very well"	181	0.11%	+/-100
Other West Germanic languages: Speak English less than "very well"	2	0.00%	+/-5
Greek: Speak English less than "very well"	8	0.00%	+/-11
Russian: Speak English less than "very well"	171	0.10%	+/-139
Polish: Speak English less than "very well"	11	0.01%	+/-18
Serbo-Croatian: Speak English less than "very well"	10	0.01%	+/-16
Other Slavic languages: Speak English less than "very well"	43	0.03%	+/-53
Persian: Speak English less than "very well"	397	0.23%	+/-268
Hindi: Speak English less than "very well"	39	0.02%	+/-48
Other Indic languages: Speak English less than "very well"	15	0.01%	+/-16
Other Indo-European languages: Speak English less than "very well"	15	0.01%	+/-22
Chinese: Speak English less than "very well"	451	0.26%	+/-209
Japanese: Speak English less than "very well"	27	0.02%	+/-30
Korean: Speak English less than "very well"	139	0.08%	+/-88
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian: Speak English less than "very well"	24	0.01%	+/-39
Thai: Speak English less than "very well"	3	0.00%	+/-6
Laotian: Speak English less than "very well"	7	0.00%	+/-16

<sup>2</sup> "Vital written documents include, but are not limited to, consent and complaint forms; intake and application forms with the potential for important consequences; written notices of rights; notices of denials, losses, or decreases in benefits or services; and notices advising LEP individuals of free language assistance services. Examples of vital documents include an ADA complementary paratransit eligibility application, a Title VI complaint form, notice of a person's rights under Title VI, and other documents that provide access to essential services" (FTA C4702.1B, Chapter III-9).

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Vietnamese: Speak English less than "very well"	237	0.14%	+/-247
Other Asian languages: Speak English less than "very well"	59	0.03%	+/-69
Tagalog: Speak English less than "very well"	206	0.12%	+/-160
Other Pacific Island languages: Speak English less than "very well"	92	0.05%	+/-106
Hungarian: Speak English less than "very well"	12	0.01%	+/-20
Arabic: Speak English less than "very well"	6	0.00%	+/-10

**Table 2: El Dorado Transit Spanish Language Materials Currently Available**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Location: Where posted and Disseminated</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Future Actions to ensure LEP Access and Participation</b>
Local Schedules	El Dorado Transit Offices On buses Health & Human Services Chamber of Commerce One Stop Center	According to Title VI Plan	- Post Spanish language schedules on the website - Advertise availability
Contact information on website	<a href="http://www.eldoradotransit.com">www.eldoradotransit.com</a>		- Consider including a translator hyperlink at the bottom of the page to make the site accessible for LEP individuals
Title VI Complaint Form	El Dorado Transit Offices; Title VI Plan; El Dorado Transit Website: <a href="http://www.eldoradotransit.com/legal.htm">http://www.eldoradotransit.com/legal.htm</a>	Title VI information is available on Legal Notices page. Title VI Notice to the Public is available on homepage	-Consider developing a Title VI tab on homepage that leads directly to all Title VI materials.
El Dorado Transit Homepage with ADA paratransit information	Hyperlink at the bottom of the page to Spanish translation: <a href="http://www.eldoradotransit.com/index.htm">http://www.eldoradotransit.com/index.htm</a>		- Consider including general service information (Non- ADA) in Spanish

**Table 3: LEP Public Information Future Activities**

<b>Event / Activity</b>	<b>Documents</b>	<b>Actions to ensure LEP Access and Participation</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>TITLE VI COMPLIANCE</b>			
Title VI Compliance	Title VI Complaint Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Translate into Spanish</li> <li>- Make available on website and at office</li> </ul>	Per FTA C4702.1B
Public meetings	Meeting Notices; Flyers; Agendas;	Translate into Spanish and Disseminate with English versions	Per El Dorado Transit's Title VI Plan.
Forms on website <a href="http://www.eldoradotransit.com/forms.htm">http://www.eldoradotransit.com/forms.htm</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Application for ADA Paratransit</li> <li>- Bike Locker Rental Agreement</li> <li>- Subscription Dial-A-Ride Request Form</li> <li>- Dial-A-Ride Application</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Translate into Spanish</li> <li>- Make available wherever English versions are available</li> </ul>	Per FTA C 4702.1B Vital Document definition.
Fare and Service Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 30 Day Advance Notice of Public Hearing</li> <li>- Information posted onboard vehicles</li> <li>- Materials at public hearing</li> <li>- Surveys</li> <li>- Requests and invitations for input</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Translate any related documents into Spanish</li> <li>- Make available wherever English versions are available</li> <li>- Provide Spanish interpretation at any public hearing or workshop</li> <li>- Consider holding more than one public meeting to accommodate work schedules</li> <li>- Consider holding public hearings at locations near bus stops, and in the evening</li> <li>- Invite comments via phone, email, letters, and at public meetings</li> </ul>	<p>Per FTA C 4702.1B, policies and practices must ensure service and fare changes do not result in disparate impacts on the basis of race, color, or national origin.</p>

## ADA Compliance

This subsection addresses compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 in relation to various communication elements and features set forth in Title II of the ADA. These nondiscrimination requirements seek to ensure that persons with disabilities are afforded the ability to understand what is being communicated.

### ADA Service Communications

The availability of ADA service needs to be clearly and consistently communicated in passenger information materials – both in print and on the website. El Dorado Transit has a bold notice on its website to make users aware of recent changes to the ADA service as a result of FTA findings. Once all issues are resolved, the language used to communicate about ADA service should be carefully reviewed to ensure that, while complying with the rules, it is also clear, relevant and user friendly for the rider.

### Website Accessibility

Increasingly, persons with disabilities, like everyone else, rely on the internet for transit information. This is particularly true for those with sensory limitations such as blindness or deafness. As El Dorado Transit plans to upgrade its website during the year ahead, it will be important to consider the guidelines for website accessibility.

The U.S. Dept. of Justice has developed guidelines on website accessibility to aid state and local governments in complying with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Table 4 following presents common website problems and solutions suggested by the Office of Civil Rights.

**Table 4 Improving Website Accessibility**

Website Common Problem	Website Solution
Images Without Text Equivalents	<b>Add a Text Equivalent to Every Image</b>  Adding a line of simple HTML code to provide text for each image and graphic will enable a user with a vision difficulty to understand what it is. Add a type of HTML tag, such as an “alt” tag for brief amounts of text or a “longdesc” tag for large amounts, to each image and graphic on your agency’s website.
Documents Are Not Posted in an Accessible Format	<b>Post Documents in a Text-Based Format</b>  Always provide documents in an alternative text-based format, such as HTML or RTF (Rich Text Format), in addition to PDF. Text-based formats are the most compatible with assistive technologies.
Specifying Colors and Font Sizes	<b>Avoid Dictating Colors and Font Settings</b>



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	Websites should be designed so they can be viewed with the color and font sizes set in users' web browsers and operating systems. Users with low vision must be able to specify the text and background colors as well as the font sizes needed to see webpage content.
Video and Other Multimedia Lack Accessible Features	<b>Include Audio Descriptions and Captions</b>  Videos need to incorporate features that make them accessible to everyone. Provide audio descriptions of images (including changes in setting, gestures and other details) to make videos accessible to people who are blind or have low vision. Provide text captions synchronized with the video images to make videos and audio tracks accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
Other Considerations	<p>Include a "skip navigation" link at the top of webpages that allows people who use screen readers to ignore navigation links and skip directly to webpage content.</p> <p>Minimize blinking, flashing or other distracting features.</p> <p>If they must be included, ensure that moving, blinking or auto-updating objects or pages may be paused or stopped.</p> <p>Design on-line forms to include descriptive HTML tags that provide persons with disabilities the information they need to complete and submit the forms.</p> <p>Include visual notification and transcripts if sounds play automatically.</p> <p>Provide a second, static copy of pages that are auto-refreshing or that require a timed-response.</p> <p>Use title, context and other heading structures to help navigate complex pages and elements.</p>
For additional information see: <a href="http://www.ada.gov/websites2.htm">http://www.ada.gov/websites2.htm</a>	

Detailed website guidelines for developers can be found at:

<http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/communications-and-it/about-the-section-508-standards/guide-to-the-section-508-standards>

## **Reasonable Accommodation Regarding Public Meetings and Provision of Materials in Accessible Formats**

The concept of “reasonable accommodation” grows out of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act with regard to the employment of persons with disabilities. It has relevance to communications policies to be developed by El Dorado Transit in two areas.

- ***In convening public meetings***, it is important to offer the opportunity for individuals to request such accommodation as may meet their communications needs. This could include a signer, proficient in American Sign Language to assist someone who is deaf. It could include provision of materials in an accessible format other than what is available to sighted audiences.

Any person with a disability who requires a modification or accommodation in order to participate in this meeting should contact the El Dorado Transit \_\_\_\_\_ [Clerk of the Board] at telephone (XXX) XXX-XXX, no less than two (2) business days prior to this meeting to enable El Dorado Transit to make reasonable arrangements to assure accessibility to this meeting.

- ***In provision of public documents***, it may be necessary to provide these in accessible formats, for those who are visually impaired. Accessible formats can vary. For example, it could be large print format for persons with low vision; it could be Braille for blind persons who can read Braille; it could be CD or text-based document for a blind or low-vision person using a computer reader or screen reader to read a document out loud.

For more information on reasonable accommodation, see:

<http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/accommodation.html>

## Marketing Budget – 3 Year

The general rule of thumb is that a small urban or rural transit system should spend about 1% of its annual operating budget on passenger information and marketing. For El Dorado Transit, this would amount to a marketing and communications budget of about \$65,000 per year.

El Dorado Transit's FY 2013-14 budget included \$10,000 for marketing. However, it appears that other funding was used to print passenger guides possibly bringing the total amount closer to \$15,000-20,000, still far short of the 1% level.

The following budget outlines the costs involved in implementing the strategies outlined in this plan and provides a starting point for developing a line item budget.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>One Time &amp; Immediate Costs</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Website Development & Maintenance	\$30,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Passenger Guides Redesign & Printing	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Rebranding – Logo Development	\$20,000			
Bus Stop Signage & Displays	Capital cost	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
Vehicle Signage	Capital cost			
Newspaper (print & online) Campaigns		\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Direct Mail Campaign (Cameron Park, other target areas)		\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Poster & Flyer Printing		\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
Passenger Info Displays		\$500	\$500	\$500
Graphic Design Support		\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$65,500</b>	<b>\$65,500</b>	<b>\$65,500</b>

## Three Year Action Plan

### Immediate – 2014/15

#### Branding

- Develop logos and vehicle graphics for each of El Dorado Transit's services (utilizing services of a professional graphic artist and involving key stakeholders).
- Develop consistent bus stop signage to reflect the new branding.
- Launch the new brand in conjunction with the service improvement introduction in July 2015 and then support it with the Family of Services campaign.

#### Passenger Information

- Launch realtime information application.
- Update passenger guides in conjunction with July 2015 service changes.
- Launch new website, including service alert portal, in conjunction with July 2015 service changes.
- Utilize graphics developed for guides and website to enhance displays at bus stops.

#### Critical On-Going Efforts

- Develop an E-mail list of "gatekeepers." Solicit and conduct "training presentations" in advance of July 2015 service changes.
- Develop a News Calendar with milestones leading up to July 2015 changes. Use conventional and social media to create exposure for news calendar topics.

#### Promotional Campaigns

- Develop Service Improvement campaign to promote July 2015 service changes.
- Launch campaign in June 2015 and run through October 2015.

#### Service Specific Promotions

- Implement El Dorado Hills' communications efforts in conjunction with launch of taxi voucher program.
- Implement the following targeted efforts relating to local routes and 50 Express in conjunction with July 2015 service improvement.
  - Cameron Park direct mail and poster campaign
  - Folsom Lake College Communications – focus on 50 Express improvement
  - Work with 50 Corridor TMA to promote 50 Express as a commute option

## **2015/16**

### **Branding**

- Continue implementation of rebranding of vehicles and bus stops.

### **Passenger Information**

- Create distribution location list and systematic replenishment schedule for passenger guides.
- Identify viable locations for community information displays; determine best format; create, install and maintain displays.
- Maintain and update website.
- Maintain and update at-the-stop information.

### **Critical On-Going Efforts**

- Develop an E-mail list of “gatekeepers.” Solicit and conduct “training presentations” in advance of July 2015 service changes.
- Develop a News Calendar with milestones leading up to July 2015 changes. Use conventional and social media to create exposure for news calendar topics.

### **Promotional Campaigns**

- Complete Service Improvement Campaign, with focus on building local route ridership.

### **Service Specific Promotions**

- Implement service specific strategies as staff time and resources permit, and as ridership objectives dictate.

## **2016/17**

### **Branding**

- Complete rebranding of vehicles and bus stops.

### **Passenger Information**

- Maintain passenger guide distribution and information displays.
- Maintain and update website.
- Maintain and update at-the-stop information.

### **Critical On-Going Efforts**

- Maintain and expand e-mail list of “gatekeepers.” Communicate regularly with e-mail updates and PDF posters for distribution.
- Annually “retrain” front line staff at key social service and medical stakeholders.

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- Update news calendar quarterly and use to drive content for conventional and social media

### **Promotional Campaigns**

- Develop Family of Services campaign.
- Initiate campaign in 2016.

### **Service Specific Promotions**

- Implement service specific strategies as staff time and resources permit, and as ridership objectives dictate.

## **2017/18**

### **Passenger Information**

#### **Critical On-Going Efforts**

- Maintain and expand e-mail list of “gatekeepers.” Communicate regularly with e-mail updates and PDF posters for distribution.
- Annually “retrain” front line staff at key social service and medical stakeholders.
- Update news calendar quarterly and use to drive content for conventional and social media

### **Promotional Campaigns**

- Continue and build on family of services campaign. Promote additional service enhancements.

### **Service Specific Promotions**

- Implement service specific strategies as staff time and resources permit, and as ridership objectives dictate.



# Appendix

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- Passenger Survey Charts
- On-line Presence Review
- Kern Transit Guide
- Advertising Media Options