

TO: James L. App, City Manager  
FROM: Mike Compton, Director of Administrative Services  
SUBJECT: Short Range Transit Plan – Status Report  
DATE: September 16, 2003

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**Needs:** Council presentation of progress towards implementation of Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) recommendations.

**Facts:**

1. Transportation Development Act regulations require public agencies that utilize TDA funds for transit purposes to prepare a SRTP.
2. A SRTP is a five year transit plan to guide public agencies with regard to their transit operations and the use of TDA funds.
3. The SRTP was prepared by Moore & Associates located in Valencia, California.
4. The SRTP was presented to the Council at their September 18, 2001 meeting.
5. The SRTP made four systemwide recommendations, four demand response recommendations and four fixed route recommendations.
6. The purpose of this presentation is to present progress towards implementation of the recommendations or why certain recommendations should not be fully or partially implemented.
7. Progress towards implementing findings of the SRTP were presented to the Council's Transit Advisory Committee at their September 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. They were pleased with the progress and supportive of staff responses.

**Analysis  
and  
Conclusion:**

The SRTP, copy of executive summary attached, made twelve recommendations in the three categories noted above in Fact #5. The SRTP is a five year plan. While the City has five years to implement plan, it is desirable to implement appropriate recommendations as soon as possible or as funding is available. The specific recommendations and progress towards implementation are identified as follows:

## **Overall System**

1. Develop and implement a marketing and public information strategy – A very similar finding was made in the Performance Audit just presented to the Council at their last meeting, June 17<sup>th</sup>. While considerable progress has been achieved, further progress is warranted. Since the SRTP was prepared, a new brochure has been developed and widely distributed. Ongoing advertisements by radio, newsprint and a variety of special publications have been undertaken. Signage on all bus stops have been installed. And lastly, the City participates in special promotions; i.e. summer youth pass program, free ride September and free ride week. However, more effort is desired/needed towards Cuesta College students, employee transportation and both our senior and hispanic populations. Efforts continue.

The additional staff effort assigned to transit operations will assist in improving our marketing and advertising effort. Staff is also planning to purchase assistance from Moore & Associates in developing a marketing “plan”.

2. Improve operations reporting – Staff is implementing reporting changes to the current format that will track riders by route and, more importantly, track and report standard performance measures. Estimated completion date is October 31, 2003.
3. Investigate contracting and operational synergies with City of Atascadero – The cities share a Laidlaw project manager who oversees both operations and provides joint training. Both systems are now coordinated and meet on the hour from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Twin Cities. Our respective staffs are also discussing possibilities of joint fleet maintenance. Recent discision by Atascadero to use city employees for transit dispatching has limited available options for implementing this recommendation. Maintenance issue will be concluded by end of calendar of year.
4. Evaluate regional transit funding – This recommendation was controversial and was not supported by the Council of Governments (COG). There is some question as to whether or not the use of the regional service by north county population justifies the amount of TDA funding paid to the regional transit authority (RTA). This issue is now even more complicated due the recent designation of north county as an “urbanized area” and eligibility of FTA 5307 funding. FTA funding provides an even greater role by COG in local transit matters. However, a study will be undertaken later this calendar year that may shed some light on this issue.

## **Demand Response**

1. Allow 24 hour advance reservations – With only one DAR bus, providing for 24 hour reservations is very difficult. It is not an unlikely possibility that implementation might result in the entire bus being reserved for the whole day. Rather than 24 hour reservations, staff has implemented advance reservations to made after 5:00 p.m. daily.

2. Implement computer aided dispatching – Again, with only one DAR bus, computer dispatching would be both expensive and ineffective. The benefit would be minimal at best. Staff has not implemented computer aided dispatching nor does it recommend doing so.
3. Implement subscription service – The preparer of the SRTP seems to have overlooked the fact that Paso Robles only operates one DAR bus. Subscription service has been provided in past but was terminated due to the fact that there were so many “subscribers”, general public use was virtually eliminated. With only one DAR bus, subscription would now be even more difficult to accommodate. Staff does not recommend implementing subscription services.

### **Fixed Route Service**

1. Elimination of flag stops – This objective is nearly satisfied. Flag stops on Routes A and B have been eliminated. There remains some flag stopping on Route C because not all bus stops have been identified nor signs installed. Since Route C is a new service, installation of bus stop signage has been delayed until “kinks” are worked out of the route.
2. Installation of signage at all bus stops – This objective is nearly satisfied. As noted above, Route C signage has been delayed until “kinks” are worked out and final bus stops are established. Expect to have signage on Route C completed by end of calendar year.
3. Installation of bus headsigns – Still a work in progress. The two most recent buses on order will come with headsigns. Staff is currently evaluating headsigns for balance of fleet. Full installation is expected by November 30, 2003.
4. Implement a third fixed route – Accomplished. Route C began operations in May 2002.

### **Conclusions**

As noted above, considerable progress has been made towards satisfying the recommendations contained in the SRTP. Unless directed otherwise, analysis/evaluation of regional transit services will be postponed until the COG study is completed. Completion is expected summer or early fall of 2004. It is also expected that this study may identify “synergies” that might arise from additional joint efforts between Atascadero and Paso Robles transit systems. Staff will continue to improve marketing efforts and bus stop improvements.

With regard to DAR service, staff recommends not expanding the limited advance reservation service currently being provided. Nor does staff recommend implementing computer dispatching or subscription unless the Council is willing to invest in additional DAR fleet vehicles and related manpower.

By end of this calendar year, staff expects to have completed implementation of all the fixed route recommendations.

Fiscal  
Impact:

None, presentation only.

Options:

- a. Receive and file; or
- b. Amend, modify, or reject the above option.