

TO: James L. App, City Manager  
FROM: Mike Compton, Director of Administrative Services  
SUBJECT: Short Range Transit Plan Update – Service Scenarios  
DATE: June 20, 2006

---

Needs: For the Council to affirm desired Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) scenario for delivery of transit services.

Facts:

1. The Council held a public workshop on May 25 at which time they were presented the draft SRTP and draft marketing plan
2. The draft SRTP identified three service scenarios. These service scenarios are identified as follows:
  - Scenario #1: Current service plan but Route C is converted to ‘super loop’
  - Scenario #2: Reallocation – Route C is replaced with midday shuttle, second DAR bus during peak hours and DAR Sunday service.
  - Scenario #3: Enhanced – Route C is replaced with midday shuttle, Spring/Niblick express and DAR Sunday service.
3. Upon conclusion of the presentation and after considerable discussion, the Council indicated a preference for Scenario #3.
4. The service options identified in the draft SRTP may mixed and matched in any combination the Council deems reasonable based upon desired level of service and cost. These service options are noted as follows:
  - Fixed Route / add earlier morning service – 6:00 a.m. or 5:00 a.m.
  - Fixed Route / add Sunday service
  - Fixed Route / add limited stop express service on Spring/Niblick
  - Fixed Route / add mid-day shuttle
  - Dial-a-Ride / add second bus at all times
  - Dial-a-Ride / add second bus at peak times
  - Dial-a-Ride / add Sunday service

Analysis  
and  
Conclusion:

The staff report prepared for the workshop noted that the SRTP update relied heavily upon the North County Transit Plan, a study undertaken by COG in 2004, to some degree upon the Long Range Transit Study undertaken by COG. One of the major findings of the North County Transit Study (NCTS) was the proposed “super loop” whose main objective was to make RTA Route 9 more express. Implementation of Phase II of the NCTS was intended to move RTA Route 9 to one hour headways during all operational hours.

The SRTP consultant did not favor continuing Route C due to its’ current poor performance. Additionally, he opinioned, based upon feedback from transit operator, that re-routing the bus through the Hwy 101/46E interchange may have schedule adherence difficulties due to traffic congestion. He also noted that the City would be paying for Cuesta College service twice; one, the City’s contribution to the RTA budget which includes service to Cuesta, and two, the cost of Route C serving Cuesta as well. He concluded that the converting Route C to the super loop, given its’ current routing, would not improve performance sufficiently to support implementation. It was also his understanding at the time of workshop that implementation of the super loop would not contribute to making RTA Route 9 more express. Given this situation, the Council at their May 25<sup>th</sup> workshop, indicated a preference for Scenario #3 which did not include Route C or the super loop.

As noted during the workshop, staff was in the midst of a live test to gauge the “on time” performance of running a bus up Spring Street to Hwy 46E to Cuesta College at the same time the regular Route C bus was traveling to and from Cuesta College. The test bus actually returned to the Transit Center from Cuesta College about five minutes sooner on the average than the regular Route C bus running its’ current route.

Additionally, it is now known that should the super loop be implemented, RTA Route 9 has developed a new routing schedule that nearly reduces travel time from Paso to San Luis Obispo to one hour headways. This is accomplished by eliminating service to Cuesta College, Twin Cities medical facilities and Templeton. While it remains too costly to move immediately to one hour headways every hour, doing so for the current eleven roundtrips between Paso and San Luis Obispo would represent major progress towards implementation of the NCTS and would benefit all North County commuters.

Progress towards implementing the NCTS, most particular making Route 9 more express is entirely reliant on implementation of the super loop. The COG, RTA, City of Atascadero and Cuesta College all favor its’ implementation. Converting Route C to the super loop in a “current service plan” scenario has both positive and negative attributes.

On the positive side:

1. It would provide seamless travel between Paso and Atascadero without a need to transfer.

2. It would provide additional capacity along a major portion of the Spring Street corridor if re-routed per the test.
3. It would continue to provide hourly service to Twin Cities medical facilities.
4. It would provide, given the plan to “hold over” at Cuesta College, significantly improved service to Cuesta College students, faculty and employees. “Hold over” meaning that a bus would arrive at Cuesta College prior to the hour and leave after the hour. Thus, potential student riders may use bus to get to class as well as catch a bus immediately after class.
5. It would provide opportunities for RTA Route 9 to become more express.
6. It would generate, regardless of ridership success, an additional \$22,500 in fare revenues (Cuesta College contribution in exchange for free student service).
7. *Providing reliable, timely service to Cuesta College is highly desirable given the Council’s recently adopted Economic Strategy has a heavy emphasis on education.*

On the negative side

1. Route C has always been a poor performer. There is no guarantee that conversion to the super loop, the improved service to Cuesta College nor the re-routing to Spring Spring will substantially improve its” performance.
2. One perspective is that the City is paying twice for the same Route C service to Cuesta College.

Negative item #2, wouldn’t be as negative as once perceived should Route 9 successfully transition to one hour trip time between Paso and San Luis Obispo as it may be agreed that City (and all of North County) benefits from this improved service.

Given that the positive attributes appear to outweigh the negatives and the broad based support for the super loop, it is recommended that Council consider implementation on a one year trial basis subject to Route 9 moving to the one hour trip time. Implementaton of super loop is Scenario #1.

What about Sunday service, Spring/Niblick Express and the midday shuttle as was provided for in Scenario #3? Staff has analyzed the cost/revenue data and has determined that there are sufficient resources to implement additional transit service options should the Council wish to do so. The Council could even implement the bulk of Scenario #3 while retaining the super loop and still make a larger than usual contribution to street & road improvements. Re-routing super loop to Spring Street generally improves service along most of the street. Thus, the Spring/Niblick Express is not recommended at this time. However, the Council could add limited Sunday service subject to strict performance criteria and the midday shuttle to serve seniors and the disabled.

Fiscal  
Impact:

The City would not incur any additional cost to convert Route C to super loop as it is cost neutral. The marginal cost of Sunday service per the draft SRTP was identified as \$18,165. Staff has projected the full cost for 8 hours per day at \$14,366 or \$10,429 net of fare revenues. The marginal cost of the midday shuttle was identified as \$118,383 while the staff projected full cost is estimated at \$102,142 or \$81,714 net. It is possible that the super loop and/or Routes A & B may need to start earlier and/or end later in order to compliment Route 9.

The attached exhibit summarizes the cost and revenue factors and illustrates how the Council may allocate significant TDA resources towards streets & roads if they wish.

Options:

- a. That the Council direct staff to implement Scenario #3 without the Spring/Niblick Express and include the super loop subject to Route 9 reducing total one trip time to one hour; or
- b. Amend, modify, or reject the above option.

**City of El Paso de Robles  
HYBRID Option #1 and #3  
Projections Available TDA**

		Projected 6/30/2006		
Beginning Cash Balance 7/1/05	Actual Spent Thru 5/31/06	Projected Est. 6/30/06	\$	598,037
Revenues as of 5/31/06:				
DAR	\$ 17,383	\$ 18,963		
CATS	99,101	108,110		
TDA Local Transit	251,043	334,724		
TDA RTA Transit	109,482	145,976		
FTA 5307	-	265,799		
Interest	12,203	14,644		
STA	28,266	37,688		
	517,478	925,904	\$	925,904
Expenses as of 5/31/06:				
DAR	140,257	163,805		
CATS	461,566	541,152		
RTA	108,791	148,495		
Transit Center	47,158	56,450		
Capital	114,831	114,831		
	872,603	1,024,733	\$	(1,024,733)
Projected Cash as of 6/30/06 <sup>(a)</sup>			\$	499,208

<sup>(a)</sup> FTA 5307 is actually a receivable and the last qtr. TDA may also be a receivable

**FISCAL YEAR 2007**

Beginning Cash Balance 7/1/06:	\$ 499,208
Projected Operating Revenues - Current Operations	137,239
FTA 5307 & Cuesta Contribution	262,500
TDA Local Transit Only	770,256
STA	38,000
S RTP & Marketing Plan & Marketing Implementaton	(68,148)
Streets & Roads Contribution (per budget)	(35,000)
Projected Transit Expenses FY 2007	(733,155)
Projected Non-direct Expenses FY 2007	(143,400)
Capital Acquisitions (3 buses for current service level):	(262,500)
Projected Resources Before New Service Options as of 6/30/07	\$ 465,000
Transit Reserve	(100,000)
Transit Contingency	(72,856)
Sunday Service - net of revenue projections	(10,429)
Midday Shuttle - net of revenue projections	(81,714)
Resources Available for Additional Service Options	\$ 200,000