

TO: James L. App, City Manager  
FROM: Mike Compton, Director of Administrative Services  
SUBJECT: Paso Robles Transit Services “Branding” Alternatives  
DATE: February 6, 2007

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Needs: For the Council to consideration transit system branding alternatives.

Facts:

1. The Council at their August 6, 2006 regular meeting adopted the Marketing Plan (Plan) prepared by Selena Barlow with Transit Marketing, LLC (copy enclosed).
2. The Plan identified various short comings in the City’s current marketing effort and recommended various objectives to address these short comings. The recommendations are summarized as follows:
  - Enhance the customer orientation of the transit system.
  - Increase visibility and build a more positive image through enhanced quality/consistency of the visual identify (brand).
  - Make the transit system easier to understand and use through enhanced passenger information and signage.
  - Build greater awareness of the transit services that are offered and how to use them among both potential riders and gatekeepers.
  - Build ridership among groups for whom transit offers advantages through targeted ridership programs.
3. The Plan identified five core strategies for meeting Plan objectives. They are summarized as follows:
  - Customer Service
  - Branding
  - Passenger Information
  - Media Advertising
  - Targeted Outreach
4. Most of the customer services recommendations have been implemented or are in the implementation stage.
5. Branding has not yet been completed. All of the core strategies listed above, other than customer service, can not be implemented until the branding component is completed.

6. Selena Barlow will be presenting various branding options for Council consideration in order to proceed with marketing strategy implementation.

Analysis  
and  
Conclusion:

Developing a system identify, commonly referred to as “branding”, is the most basic element of any transit marketing program. The system’s identify includes its name, logo, color scheme, vehicle design, signage, facilities and the ridership guide. The key to creating an effective system identity is for all these elements to be consistent and cohesive so that they expound a unified image, a broad based public awareness and visibility. When all the identity elements carry the same branding, they provide powerful marketing tools.

Initial focus for branding concepts was limited to green as the primary color because the current facilities are already green and green was perceived as being a more desirable color along the major streets of the City. Green also reflects the historical heritage of the City’s oak tree connection and, of course, the City’s name.

However, some Councilmen have indicated a preference to seeing branding alternatives wherein the primary color is maroon. Selena Barlow is prepared to present these alternatives along with the primarily green alternatives and new alternatives which have a somewhat equal blend of maroon and green for Council consideration.

Once the branding logo is decided, progress towards re-painting buses, installing logos, printing the guide and installing new bus stop signs can proceed. Should the primary color chosen be a color other than green, it will take sometime to complete the re-painting of bus facilities (shelters, benches and trash receptacles). The Council would also need to appropriate funds to undertake this particular endeavor.

As noted above, Selena Barlow will be presenting the branding alternatives including their potential for providing an effective marketing tool for the City’s transit services.

Should the Council not be able to immediately choose a branding theme, it would be desirable that they consider appointing an ad hoc committee to assist staff and outside expert with developing an acceptable branding theme. The City is about to be delivered three new buses and it is highly desirable to have the manufacturer complete the painting and install the logo before delivery.

Fiscal  
Impact:

The Council previously allocated funding the basic branding requirements. If the bus stop facilities require re-painting, the Council will need to authorize an additional appropriation to do so. It has been estimated by City staff that a full bus stop facility would cost \$5,000 to be re-painted and a partial facility about 1/3 that cost. Staff has submitted a State Transit Assistance grant application for the re-painting costs but

success of the application is not known at this time. The estimated cost for all bus facilities is \$105,000.

Options:

- a. That the Council choose a branding logo from the alternatives presented; or
- b. That the Council appoint an ad hoc committee to assist in the design of desired branding logo; or
- c. Amend, modify, or reject the above option.



















# PASO ROBLES CITY AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM MARKET ASSESSMENT AND MARKETING PLAN

Submitted by:

**Selena Barlow**

**Transit Marketing, LLC**

In conjunction with Transit Resource Center

FINAL

July 12, 2006

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# Introduction

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This document is a Market Assessment and Marketing Plan for the City of Paso Robles Transit System. The information summarized and analyzed herein has been collected from a variety of sources including:

- Interviews with City of Paso Robles staff and elected officials.
- Interviews with Laidlaw Transportation management and front line staff.
- Interviews with representatives of the Paso Robles community including businesses, employers, social service agencies, schools and Cuesta College.
- Review of previous SRTP, North County Transit Study and On-board Survey Report.
- A comprehensive review of PRCATS routes and facilities.
- A review of current PRCATS passenger information and promotional materials.
- Review of additional background documents provided by stakeholders interviewed.



The Market Assessment, which provides the basis for the recommended marketing plan, includes the following sections:

- **Situation Summary**  
Brief summary of PRCATS services and environment. This section will specifically address awareness, image and utilization and will identify key challenges and opportunities which the marketing effort must address.
- **Marketing Review**  
Critique of PRCATS's current marketing presence. This section will specifically address system identity and passenger information systems.

The Marketing Plan includes:

- **Marketing Objectives**  
Objectives to be addressed by the Marketing Program.
- **Target Markets**  
Identification and analysis of key target markets to be addressed by marketing strategies.
- **Marketing Strategies**  
Strategies have been grouped into five focal areas: Customer Service, Passenger Information, Branding, PR/Media Advertising/ Promotion, and Targeted Outreach.

# MARKET ASSESSMENT

# Situation Summary

## Service Area

The primary service area for PRCATS and Paso Robles Dial-a-Ride is the City of Paso Robles. However, the system does provide limited service outside the city limits, particularly to the Twin Cities Medical Center area, where it connects with Atascadero Transit.

In 2000 the City of Paso Robles had a population of 24,297. By 2004, the population had grown to nearly 27,000. With an average growth rate of 2.5%, the population is expected to exceed 45,000 by 2025.

The 2000 census showed the community to be characterized by the following factors.

- Adult population (18+) of 17,057
- Senior population (65+) of 3,262 (13.4%)
- Labor force of 10,803
- 8556 occupied households
- Average household size of 2.73
- Median household income of \$39,217
- 3,153 individuals below poverty level (13.6% of population)
- Hispanic population of 6,735 (27.7%)
- 3024 residents (15.9%) do not speak English very well or at all



## Service Overview

The City of Paso Robles operates two transit services – fixed route and dial-a-ride.

### PRCATS

Paso Robles City Area Transit System provides fixed route service within the City of Paso Robles and to the Twin Cities Medical Center. The system includes Routes A and B, which operate clockwise and counter clockwise on the same loop route providing hourly service in each direction; and Route C which provides two way, hourly service between Cuesta College at the north end and Twin Cities Medical Center in Templeton at the south end.



All three routes operate Monday through Saturday, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Ridership on the fixed route system was 143,000 in FY2005 and has grown further in recent months. Daily boardings are now approaching 500.

Key bus stops on the fixed route system (per the previous SRTP and the North County Transit Study) include:

- North County Transportation Center (8<sup>th</sup> and Pine)
- Stoney Creek/Dry Creek Apartments
- Commercial area around Niblick and River Rd.
- Spring and 34<sup>th</sup> Streets (near Housing Authority)
- Other stops along Spring Street
- Twin Cities Medical Center

The fixed route fare is \$1.00 for the general public, \$.50 for seniors and persons with a disability and free for children up to age 4. Seniors and disabled persons must show a City of Paso Robles pass in order to pay the reduced fare.

Fixed route passengers are able to transfer to RTA Route 9 at the Transit Center, or to Atascadero Transit at the Twin Cities Medical Center. In either case they must pay an additional \$.75 to board the other system's bus.

## Paso Robles Dial-a-Ride

Dial-a-Ride service is available to the general public within the city limits of Paso Robles. Regular Dial-a-Ride service operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Extended hour Dial-a-Ride service operates from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Note that ADA Complementary paratransit requirement is met by Runabout during time periods not served by Paso Robles Dial-a-Ride). Dial-a-Ride riders must call daily for service. Trip requests are allowed 2 to 24 hours ahead. No advance or subscription reservations are accepted.



Dial-a-Ride currently provides approximately 9,325 one way trips per year, or 25-30 trips per day. There is very little ridership during the extended hours. (It appears that this is due to low awareness and the higher fare.)

The Dial-a-Ride fare is \$2.00 for the general public and \$1.00 for seniors and persons with disabilities (with Paso Robles issued pass). During the extended hours all trips are \$3.00.

## Rider Characteristics

Ridership on the PRCATS fixed routes is made up primarily of regular users. The characteristics of the fixed route riders vary somewhat among Routes A, B and C.

- The vast majority of users (80-90%) ride 2 or more days per week. Nearly half ride daily.
- About two-thirds of the trips on all three routes are work or school related trips. On Routes A and B work trips dominate (35% and 37% respectively), while on Route C work and school trips are even at one-third each.
- Most fixed route riders are adults, 19-59 years old. There are more seniors on Route C (about 15%) than on other routes, while there are many more youths (40%) on Route B.
- Route C serves more riders who have a driver's license (38%) than Route A (23%) or Route B (16%).

- Sunday service, later weekday service and increased frequency are the most desired service improvements among the current ridership.

While the on-board survey report provided only summary information about the demographics of PRCATS riders, on-bus observation by this consultant and interviews with transit operators added detail. Significant segments of PRCATS ridership are made up of Hispanic families (particularly young mothers with children), middle and high school students and local service workers (some disabled, some not) traveling to work.

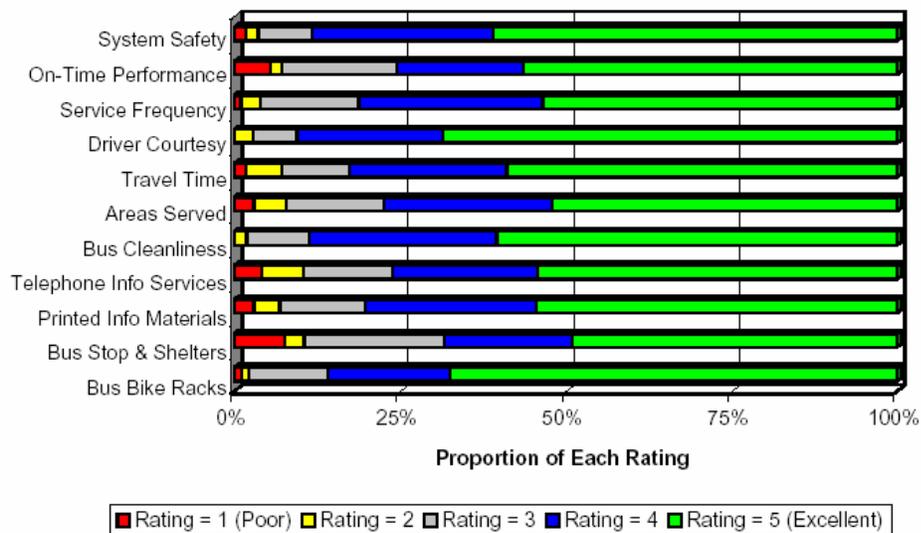
Paso Robles Dial-a-Ride ridership, like the fixed route, is dominated by regular users, however the demographics are quite different from the fixed routes.

- Three-quarters of Dial-a-Ride users ride 2+ days per week. Almost a quarter ride daily.
- Forty-four percent of Dial-a-Ride users also use other transit services.
- More than half of Dial-a-Ride trips are work or school related.
- The ridership is made up primarily of seniors and persons with disabilities. Forty-three percent are over 60 years old, while 35% are ADA Eligible.
- Only 13% of riders surveyed used the lift to board the vehicle.
- Less than 20% of Dial-a-Ride users have a driver's license. And the vast majority (88%) did not have a car available.
- Sunday service and later weekday service are the most desired improvements.

## Customer Satisfaction

Passengers responding to the on-board survey conducted as part of the North County Transit Study were asked to rate PRCATS service quality overall and on various dimensions. Most riders rated the service as good or excellent overall. The following chart from the NCTS report shows the ratings of specific service characteristics.

**PRCATS Fixed Route Service Ratings**

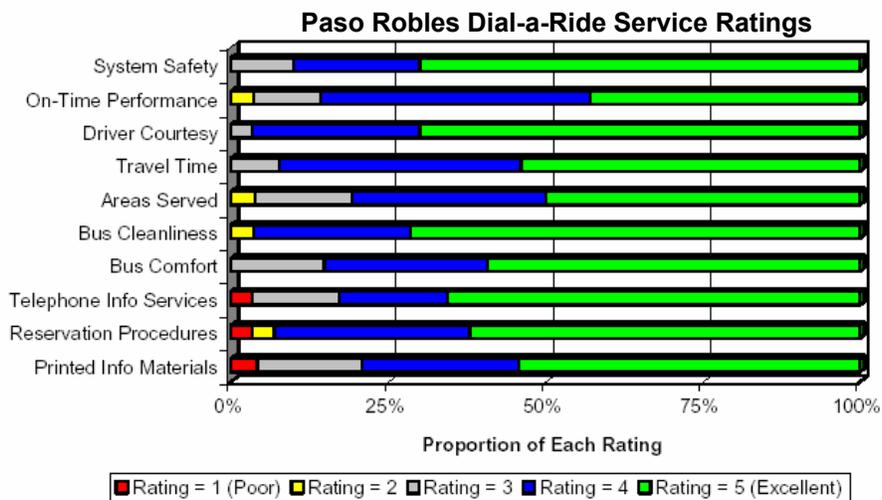


While most riders rated most factors as good or excellent, significant groups (20-25%) rated several factors as less than good. The factors which received the most ratings below 4 (good) were:

- bus stops and shelters
- on-time performance
- telephone information services
- printed information materials
- areas serviced

The highest levels of satisfaction (ratings of 5 for excellent) were for bike racks and driver courtesy.

A similar rating scale was used for Dial-a-Ride users. Here the lowest level of satisfaction was with printed materials, areas served and telephone information services. The highest satisfaction was with bus cleanliness, driver courtesy and system safety.



## Awareness & Image

The customer satisfaction ratings shown above, indicate that passengers have a positive opinion of Paso Robles' transit service. While no formal market research exists to allow an evaluation of the system's awareness and image among non-riders, interviews with a variety of stakeholders provide a reasonable assessment.

Awareness of the system is fairly low level. While virtually everyone knows it exists, they don't know much about how it works or how it relates to other transit services in the region. (For example, social service managers who were expressing the need for later evening service to get workers home, were not aware of the extended evening Dial-a-Ride service.) The general feeling is that "people who need the bus" have to figure it out for themselves.

PRCATS and Dial-a-Ride do not have a negative image to overcome. In fact, it doesn't have a strong image of any kind. Respondents felt that, in general, the service is probably fairly reliable. One stakeholder who works with the Latino community mentioned that it's not very customer friendly and that bus operators are "judgmental" but others said that they "don't hear complaints" about the system.

In other words, Paso Robles has a fairly neutral slate on which to build a positive image and enhanced awareness.

## Challenges and Opportunities

In seeking to build ridership and meet the changing needs of the growing Paso Robles community, the City faces a variety of service oriented challenges such as:

- The need to connect to areas near, but outside the boundaries of, the City of Paso Robles.
- The need for longer service hours to meet the needs of local work commuters.
- The need for increased capacity on Dial-a-Ride, or to provide an alternative type of service to meet the needs of the growing senior population and persons with disabilities.
- The need to improve transfer reliability, both within Paso Robles and to regional services.

These issues will be addressed in the Short Range Transit Plan element of this project. Service enhancements which will grow out of that plan will significantly increase the "marketability" of Paso Robles Transit.

Along with the service-oriented opportunities which will be presented by implementation of the SRTTP, the City enjoys a number of distinct marketing-oriented opportunities. Among these are the following.

Ridership of the fixed route services has grown, despite a less than exemplary passenger information program. Enhanced passenger information materials and expanded distribution of these materials will build awareness and make the system easier to understand and use, further spurring ridership growth.

Community organizations interviewed expressed a willingness to partner with the City in promoting transit ridership among their constituencies. Social service agencies are eager to provide transit information to their clients. Cuesta College is prepared to offer space for a campus transit display and to include transit information in their class schedule. Employers are willing to distribute paycheck stuffers and allow employee presentations to promote transit usage. The senior center is willing to work with transit staff to establish a stronger relationship with the senior community.

SLOCOG's upcoming "Senior Transit Mobility Training Pilot Project" will be an opportunity to begin establishing a stronger, more positive relationship with this growing population segment.

The new transit staff position which the City is planning to add will provide the human resource necessary to capitalize on these and other opportunities. The marketing strategies which have proven most effective in increasing transit usage are community based efforts which rely on direct outreach to target populations. These types of efforts require significant staff time and attention, but yield long term enhancements in awareness, image, ridership and community support.

# Marketing Review

This section will examine past marketing efforts, with particular attention to the core factors of system identity and passenger information.

## System Identity

A system's identity or brand is comprised of its name, logo, vehicle design, signage and facilities – all of the key elements that allow customers to identify anything that is part of the public transit system. A brand provides visual identity, but it also carries a strong image message. The brand often creates a person's first impression of the transit system, and for many non-riders, their primary impression. Hence the immediate image it conveys is very important.



## Name and Logo

Paso Robles' transit system does not have a distinct name or logo.

- The system as a whole is referred to as Paso Robles Transit Services (on the cover of the passenger guide).
- The fixed route service is labeled "Paso Robles City Area Transit System" on the buses and is often referred to as PRCATS.
- The dial-a-ride is labeled on the vehicles as Paso Robles Dial-a-Ride and referred to elsewhere simply as Dial-a-Ride.

## Vehicles

While similar cut-away style vehicles are used for the fixed route and dial-a-ride services, they are distinguished by the color of the stripe on the side of the vehicles. Fixed route buses have red striping, dial-a-ride vehicles have green. The "names" are simply reversed against the stripes in a consistent typeface. The dial-a-ride vehicles also carry the reservation phone number 239-TRIP which is good.



## Signage

Signage is a key element of a system's brand and serves two valuable purposes. First, it lets passengers know where to wait for the bus. Second, and equally important, it advertises the fact that transit service is available within a given corridor or to a specific destination. Seeing bus stops signs along the road informs or reminds travelers that they have a transit alternative. Bus stops on PRCATS Routes A and B are signed. However, stops on route C are not.



The bus stop sign does not include a system name at all. It simply says “Transit Stop” and shows a silhouette of the cut-away style bus. It does however include a Bearcat paw print “logo” which relates to the Paso Robles High School mascot but is used no where else in the system. The sign does not include a transit information telephone number.

## Facilities

The final aspect of a system’s identity is its public facilities. For PRCATS these include bus stops and shelters and the North County Transportation Center.

By far the most visible and eye-catching aspects of the fixed route system

are the green shelters which seem to be everywhere throughout the Paso Robles community. These shelters are attractive, well maintained and highly visible. They fit well with the character of the Paso Robles Community and communicate that transit is available throughout the town.

Unfortunately, there is no visual relationship between the shelters and the PRCATS buses. They are distinctly different colors (green vs red/white) and the system name does not appear on the shelters in any way.

The North County Transportation Center is a pleasant and attractive facility. However, like the other facilities, it contributes little to a cohesive system identity for PRCATS. At the NCTC, which is the focal point for the fixed route system, even the ubiquitous green shelter is absent. In fact, there is no shelter at the actual bus stop, shown at the right, simply a bench under a shade tree and the standard bus stop sign.

In summary, all of Paso Robles’ transit facilities – buses, shelters and transit centers are attractive and well maintained. They simply do not have a consistent visual identity. Thus they are not fulfilling their marketing potential for creating visibility and awareness for PRCATS.



# Passenger Information

Passenger information is the other most basic element of transit marketing. Without access to understandable passenger information, potential transit users are unable to make effective use of available services.

## Passenger Guide

The primary passenger information tool for PRCATS is the “Paso Robles Transit Services” guide shown at the right. The guide includes information about all three fixed routes. It includes a system wide map and schedules for Routes A, B and C, along with general information about both fixed route and dial-a-ride services. The guide is printed in English and Spanish versions.

Having all of the information available in a single publication is definitely a good approach. However, the current passenger guide suffers from a number of shortcomings:

- Due to its small size and two-color format, the map is virtually illegible. The type size on many of the street names is too small even for the general public and far too small for a senior audience. When supplies are short, the guide is sometimes reproduced by photocopying on 8 ½” X 11” paper. At this reduced sized, legibility is even worse.
- The routes are shown using patterned lines on the map. These are somewhat hard to distinguish and follow. In addition, there are no directional arrows to show which way the bus travels on one-way loops
- The guide includes a list of “points of interest” which are numbered and indicated on the map. Showing key landmarks is very important. However, using a large map and placing them directly on the map would be easier for the passenger to reference.
- The Transit Center is included in the list of points of interest and thus shown on the map as 3. However, it is never referenced on the schedules, which simply say 8<sup>th</sup> and Pine. The reader simply has to know that the transit center is at 8<sup>th</sup> and Pine – not necessarily a reasonable expectation for a new rider.
- There is no explanation of how to read the schedule which simply shows the minutes past the hour when the bus serves each stop. Many potential riders may not understand this right off.
- The schedule does not show the time of first and last bus. The text on the other side says the service operates from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., however this leaves the potential rider in some doubt about when the first or last bus arrives at a given stop.
- The type face used for headings, even though large, is difficult to read. (This seems to have been improved in the version that is on the website. In our meetings within the community we encountered more than one version of the guide – some did not have the current routing.)
- The guide doesn’t address transfers at all, either between PRCATS routes or to RTA or Atascadero.
- In the past, changes to the guide have been made after service changes are in effect. Changes to the guide need to LEAD not follow service changes, in order to adequately inform current riders and to provide marketing support for revised services.



## At-the-Stop Displays

Information panels have been placed in most or all of the PRCATS bus shelters. This is an excellent information tool. Unfortunately these displays use the same artwork used for the passenger guide and suffer from all of the same shortcomings.



## Telephone Information

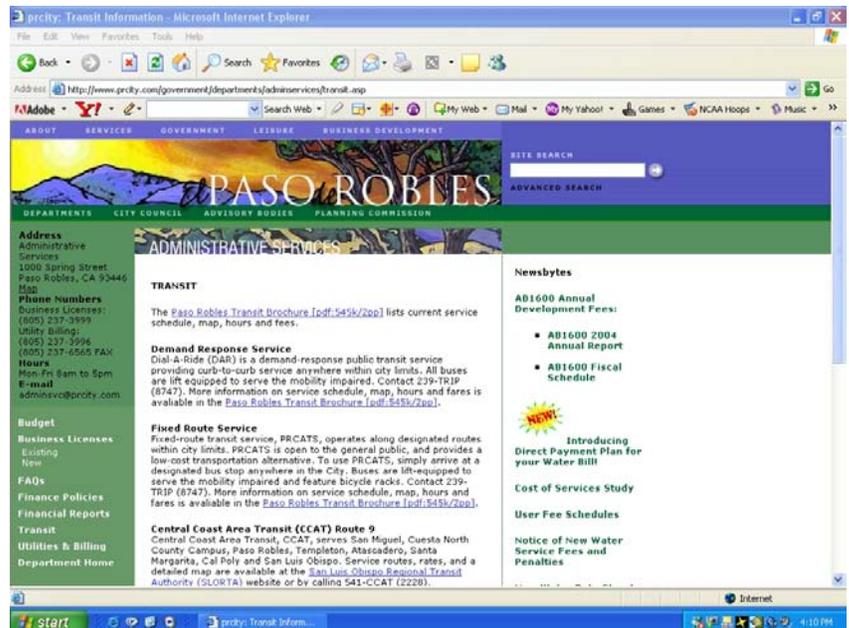
The most common way for new riders to access information about transit services is by phone. In addition, those wishing to use Dial-a-Ride services must call daily for a reservation. Telephone information is provided by the Laidlaw dispatch staff during all service hours.

Assistance is available in English only, as there is no bilingual staff.

Information is available only for Paso Robles services. There is no single telephone number that a passenger can call for information about transferring between PRCATS and other systems within the region.

## Website

From the City of Paso Robles website ([www.prcity.com](http://www.prcity.com)), it takes only two fairly easy clicks to get to the City's transit information page. Once there, an individual can easily download a PDF version of the current transit guide. (Of course the PDF is the same as the printed guide. However, on the computer screen you can enlarged portions of it to make it somewhat more legible.) Route and schedule information is not provided in any other format.



The transit information page also includes links to:

- San Luis Obispo RTA
- Greyhound
- Amtrak

It does not include a link to the SLO Regional Rideshare website ([www.rideshare.org](http://www.rideshare.org)) which offers a regional trip planner.

The website carries the City of Paso Robles brand, with no graphics specific to the transit system (i.e. no photo of bus or bus stop).

## Promotional Efforts

Past promotional efforts for PRCATS service have been limited. However, advertising has been placed in *Paso Robles Magazine*, the *Bearcats Boosters Sports Program* and on KPRL radio.

The ad shown at the right runs every other month in *Paso Robles Magazine*. *Paso Robles Magazine* is a good media choice because of its long shelf life and diverse audience, and the size of this ad is reasonable. However, the ad tries to do far too much in the given space and ends up being overly busy and confusing. The turn by turn descriptions of the routings are particularly confusing and unlikely to be understood by most potential riders.

A better approach would be to use the ad to attract the attention of potential riders and convey the benefits of using transit. Then encourage them to call for a free passenger guide which would provide all of the detailed information in a more user friendly format. If it is desirable for the ad to provide route specific information, a somewhat larger ad with space for a simplified route map would be appropriate.

*Let Us Do The Driving*

**RIDE....**  
**PRCATS**  
 Paso Robles City  
 Area Transit Service  
 Now Operating  
 Mon.-Sat. 7am-7pm



**DIAL-A-RIDE**  
*Operates*  
 Mon.-Fri. 6am-8pm  
**NEW SERVICE**  
 Connect to Route 9-  
 Call the day before  
 for 6 am pick-up



<b>Route A</b> <i>Begin 7am</i> 34th & Spring St.	24th St. to Black Oak Dr., south on Riverside to Creston Rd., Sherwood to Airport, Scott back to Creston Rd., Stony Creek to Paso Robles High School, Niblick Rd. to Spring St. and back to 34th St.
<b>Route B</b> <i>Begin 7am</i> 34th & Spring St.	Spring St. to Niblick Rd. to Rambouillet, Stony Creek to Creston Rd., Riverside to Back Oak Dr., 24th St. to Spring St. and back to 34th St.
<b>Route C</b> <i>Begin 7am</i> 8th & Pine St.	8th & Pine to 6th & Vine to Target, Hwy. 101 to Las Tablas/TCH, Posada Ln. to Hwy. 101 back to Target, to 6th & Vine, to 8th & Pine, to 10th & Riverside, to 24th & Riverside, to Hwy 46 & Buena Vista, to Cuesta College, to Hwy 46 and Golden Hill to Creston, to Creston & Niblick, to Albertson's, back to 1st & Spring, to 6th & Spring, and back to 8th & Pine.

*There are many convenient stops along each route.*

**Dial-A-Ride fare is \$2 one way • Book of tickets - \$20**  
SENIOR & DISABLED WITH PASS - \$1, CHILDREN UNDER 4 FREE - ALL FARES 6PM-8PM - \$3

**PRCATS fare \$1 one way • Book of 10 tickets - \$10**  
CHILDREN UNDER 4 FREE, SENIOR & DISABLED WITH PASS - \$06

\*All CATS buses provide bicycle racks  
 \*All CATS and DIAL-A-RIDE buses are fully accessible for disabled customers.

**For information or to arrange a Dial-A-Ride  
 Call 239-TRIP (8747)**

July 2005, Paso Robles Magazine

# MARKETING PLAN

# Marketing Objectives

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The Paso Robles Transit Marketing effort needs to address the following objectives.

- **Enhance the customer orientation of the transit system.**  
Insure that the transit service design, delivery and policies are built around the needs of customers and that both current and new riders can expect a positive experience.
- **Increase visibility and build a more positive image through enhanced quality/consistency of the visual identity.**  
Establish a coordinated brand for transit vehicles, stops, facilities and materials to increase visibility and improve the image of the transit network.
- **Make the transit system easier to understand and use through enhanced passenger information and signage.**  
To the novice rider, using transit can be a confusing and frightening prospect. Paso Robles should make the system as easy to understand and use as possible, for both existing and new customer groups.
- **Build greater awareness of the transit services that Paso Robles offers and how to use them among both potential riders and gatekeepers.**  
Currently everyone knows that Paso Robles has a transit system, but that is all they know. Marketing efforts should begin to build on the existing base of awareness by educating the general public about what transit services are available, how to get more information and how to access services.
- **Build ridership among groups for whom transit offers advantages through targeted ridership programs.**  
While awareness and a positive image are important prerequisites for ridership growth, they are not enough. Turning potential ridership into actual boardings requires targeted efforts that address the motivations and needs of specific user groups.

# Target Markets

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For ridership promotion efforts to be effective, they must address target groups for whom PRCATS offers distinct advantages. Based on a review of Paso Robles' population, transit services and current ridership base, the following segments appear to offer the greatest potential.

## Local Workers

While some Paso Robles residents commute to destinations outside the city, many less affluent residents work in local service and manufacturing industries. The key motivator for transit ridership among this target segment is having access to reliable, affordable, reasonably convenient transportation to dispersed worksites and at varied schedules. Wal-Mart, manufacturing sites such as Zurn Wilkins, shopping centers, hotels and shops/restaurants in downtown Paso Robles are key destinations for this segment.

## College Students

College students are traditionally a strong market for transit ridership. Cuesta College has an enrollment of 2500 students, of which 1218 live in Paso Robles and 503 in Atascadero. Many students, including English-as-a-Second-Language students, attend classes in the evening when transit service is currently unavailable.

## Secondary Students

Paso Robles is home to nearly 3500 youths between the ages of 10 and 17 – the age range where children are old enough to ride independently but still too young to drive or have a vehicle of their own. Paso Robles already appears to have a significant youth ridership among middle and high school students using the bus to travel to/from school. However there is a great deal of room for growth in ridership among youths, both for commuting and recreational purposes.

## Low Income Families

According to the 2000 census, 10.7% of families (656) and 13.6% of individuals (3153) in Paso Robles have incomes below the poverty level. Meanwhile, 735 households do not have a vehicle available for transportation. Low Income Families are a core ridership group for transit in any small community. These individuals often rely on the bus for transportation to work, social services, medical appointments and to meet basic daily needs. While they are often regarded as “transit dependent” – many in fact do not use transit but rely on rides, walking or biking. The potential to increase utilization among low income families exists.

## Latino Community

More than a quarter (27.7%) of Paso Robles population is Hispanic. This segment included 6,735 individuals in the 2000 census. Nearly 5000 residents said they speak Spanish. Most of these individuals also speak English; however 1,800 of these said they speak English “not well” or “not at all.” Given its size, the Latino community, both English and Spanish speaking persons, is clearly an important target group for transit ridership.

## Seniors

Individuals 65+ currently make up 13.4% of Paso Robles' population. According to stakeholders interviewed, this segment is growing faster than the overall population as senior oriented developments are added within and near the city. Like communities throughout the US, Paso Robles can expect to see the demand for senior oriented transit services grow.

## Persons with Disabilities

Persons with physical and cognitive disabilities currently utilize both the dial-a-ride and fixed route services. Marketing must support this important ridership group by providing appropriate communications and information in accessible forms. In addition, it appears, with effective travel training, there may be opportunity to move some daily riders from dial-a-ride to fixed route services.

## Visitors

PRCATS routes serve a number of hotels within Paso Robles. While visitors are not likely to be a large ridership component until a much higher level of service is provided, they do have the potential to make occasional trips if transit information is readily available at their lodging establishment.

## Gatekeepers for Transportation Disadvantaged Populations

In addition to direct targets for ridership, Paso Robles' transit marketing effort needs to consider indirect targets who are gatekeepers for groups with ridership potential. These include agencies and organizations that represent and work with:

- Persons with disabilities
- Non-English speaking populations
- Welfare recipients
- Seniors

# Marketing Strategies

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This section constitutes the core of the marketing plan. It outlines an action plan of strategies to be used in pursuing the identified target markets and accomplishing the objectives previously discussed. The strategies have been developed with the input of PRCATS staff and the stakeholders interviewed.

This action plan was created based on the Strategic Marketing Process illustrated at the right. A thorough review of PRCATS' situation, which was summarized in the previous Market Assessment, resulted in the identification of marketing objectives and target markets. Specific strategies were then developed to address the target markets and achieve the objectives.

The strategies are grouped into six focal sections which correspond to the marketing objectives. These include:

- Customer Service
- Branding
- Passenger Information
- Media Advertising
- Targeted Outreach

Each focal section begins with a restatement of the objective and a brief overview of the strategic approach. It then details specific tactics which can be utilized to implement the strategy.

In addition, there is a seventh section which includes marketing recommendations specific to the North County Shuttle service to be initiated in conjunction with Atascadero.



## Customer Service

**Objective: Enhance the customer orientation of the transit system.**

Customer orientation involves making decisions and establishing policies that meet the needs of customers and enhance customer service. Interviews with stakeholders and observations made by the consultants when riding the bus indicated that some policies seems to be “operations” rather than “customer” oriented. Following are a number of changes that Paso Robles may wish to consider to make the transit system more user-friendly.

- Utilize headsigns to provide clearer destination information.
- Revise transfer policy to increase customer convenience.
- Revise Dial-a-Ride reservation process to allow for advance reservations.
- Accept Medicare cards as proof of age/disability.
- Offer fare media appropriate for key target audiences.

## Utilize headsigns to provide clearer destination information.

Headsigns on buses can be a valuable information and marketing tool as they tell riders and potential riders where the bus goes. Many of the PRCATS buses have no headsign. Those that do provide minimal information – simply Route A, B or C. Ideally the headsign should include the following information:

- The route designation (A, B or C – the word Route is not necessary).
- The major street traveled on.
- The end point or key destination.



For example – Paso Robles riders are often confused about the difference between Routes A and B, since these two routes duplicate each other for a portion of their route. They must stop each bus and ask where it is going. This would be resolved by having a headsign that made it clear which bus would remain on Spring Street and which would be going the other direction. It would reduce the number of stops the bus must make and provide a higher level of comfort to users. Until headsigns can be added to all buses, window cards could provide some assistance.

## Revise transfer policy to increase customer convenience.

To avoid “transfer abuse,” PRCATS riders are allowed to make free transfers between bus routes only at the transit center. It would appear that there are cases when this would require significant out-of-direction travel for some passengers. A policy which penalizes honest customers simply to avoid the potential for fare abuse is clearly not customer oriented. It is recommended that the transfer policy be revised to allow transfers at other points where routes intersect.

## Revise Dial-a-Ride reservation process to allow for advance reservations.

The current dial-a-ride reservation policy allows only for same day reservations. Even passengers who used dial-a-ride daily (25% of all riders) must call in every day to schedule their trip. It appears that this policy has been utilized to limit demand on the service. However, it penalizes passengers, particularly seniors and those with disabilities, who rely on the service. A person with a medical appointment, which may have taken weeks to get, does not know until the day of the appointment if they have a way to get there. This clearly discourages people from using public transit as their primary mode of transportation. It is recommended that the reservation process be redesigned to allow for some advance and/or subscription trips. If it is necessary to limit demand, this might be more reasonably accomplished by limiting the service strictly to elderly and disabled riders.

## Accept Medicare cards as proof of age/disability.

Paso Robles requires that seniors and persons with disabilities hold a City of Paso Robles ID in order to qualify for the reduced transit fare. Many communities accept an individual’s Medicare card as proof. This reduces the need to issue dedicated IDs and is much more convenient for the passenger – eliminating the need to make a special trip to acquire the ID.

## Offer fare media appropriate for key target audiences.

Paso Robles currently accepts only two types of fare media – cash and 10 Ride Coupon Books. The 10 Ride Coupon Books are simply a convenience, offering the rider no discount over the cash fare.

One tool for building regular ridership and increasing frequency of use among existing riders, is to offer time based unlimited ride passes, such as daily, weekly or monthly passes. Such passes allow the passenger to pay for a given period of time and then ride as often as they wish to during that time period. This facilitates using the bus to run errands, drop children at day care or make other types of chained trips that are easy to do in a car, but difficult (and expensive) when you have to pay another fare each time you reboard the bus.

Time-based passes likely to be attractive to specific market segments are:

- Day Passes are attractive to seniors and low income families. The investment is small (usually the price of 2 to 2 ½ one-way trips), and allows the rider to run errands, visit friends or take care of personal business. (An example of a simple punch-style day pass is shown here.)
- 7-Day or Weekly Passes are attractive to low wage workers who are paid on a weekly basis as they allow the rider to pay for their week's transportation up front. Monthly passes are not as attractive to this group due to the higher cash outlay required. Weekly passes are generally priced at about 5 round trips. (An example of a punch-style 7-day pass is shown here).
- Monthly Passes are attractive to seniors who use transit exclusively and others who receive monthly support payments. They are also quite attractive to the parents of school students who are able to take care of transportation costs at the beginning of the month. Monthly passes are generally priced at around 20 round trips.

Time based passes can be offered at price levels that correspond to regular and discount fares. For example, the monthly passes at the right includes space for a sticker which indicates whether this pass is for use by the general public, a senior/disabled person, or a school student.



## System Identity/Brand

**Objective: Increase visibility and build a more positive image through enhanced quality/consistency of the visual identity.**

System identity or brand is the most basic element of any transit marketing program. A transit system's identity is composed of its name, logo, color scheme, vehicle design, signage and facilities. The key to creating an effective system identity is for all of these elements to be consistent and cohesive so that they build visibility, awareness, a unified image and a positive perception for the transit system. Buses and bus stop signs, which carry the brand identity, communicate with current and potential users 365 days per year and are hence very powerful marketing tools.



As previously discussed, Paso Robles transit system does not have a distinct or cohesive identity. While the vehicles, shelters and transit center are all well maintained, they in no way relate to each other visually. There is no established logo for the system, and no consistently used name.

- Create a consistent name and logo for use on all system elements.
- Revise vehicle design to create a clear visual relationship between the vehicles, bus stops and shelters.
- Install Bus Stops signage at all PRCATS bus stops.



## Create a consistent name and logo for use on all system elements.

As noted in the Market Assessment, the Paso Robles transit system does not have a distinct name or logo which would serve as the starting point for the creation of a cohesive identity. It is difficult to market and create awareness for something people aren't even sure about how to refer to. Therefore establishing a name and logo – a brand - for the system must be one of the first steps in the marketing effort.

Most transit agencies that operate both fixed route and paratransit operate them under a unified system name or logo with sub-brands for each. (A few examples are show at the right.) This is the approach that is recommended for Paso Robles.

The logo for 'e-tran' features a stylized green 'e' with a white arrow pointing right, followed by the word 'tran' in a blue, italicized sans-serif font.The logo for 'e-van' features a stylized green 'e' with a white arrow pointing right, followed by the word 'van' in a blue, italicized sans-serif font.

For Example you might use PR CAT as the name for the fixed route service and create a logo that incorporates the paw print used on the bus stop sign. Then you might call the dial-a-ride PR CAT *On Call* with a variation of the logo. Or you may wish to start from scratch and conduct a full renaming and rebranding of the system with input from stakeholders and the community.

The logo for Bloomington Transit features a stylized green 'BT' monogram above the text 'Bloomington Transit' in a green sans-serif font.

Either way, the desirable outcome in creating a family of logos for various services is to maintain a cohesive relationship and immediate recognition, while differentiating between different products. Steps in the process will include:

The logo for 'Access' features a stylized green 'A' monogram followed by the word 'Access' in a green sans-serif font, with a green wheelchair accessibility symbol to the right.

- Determine name to be used for the transit system overall. To be effective, a name should be short, clear and easy to refer to.
- Determine variations of the name to be used for fixed route and dial-a-ride services.
- Develop a logo for consistent use throughout the system. The logo should be clear, simple and immediately recognizable as the identifier for the transit system.
- Utilize the logo and names consistently on vehicles, bus stop signage and all passenger information and promotional materials.

## Revise vehicle design to reflect new brand and to create a clear visual relationship between the vehicles, bus stops and shelters.

As noted in the Market Assessment, PRCATS' green bus shelters are highly visible throughout Paso Robles. To build on this visibility, the new identity should create a strong relationship between the shelters and the vehicles. Hence, dark green should be a dominant color in the new identity and in the vehicle paint scheme. The photo shown at the right is a very quick and crude example of how the bus design might be made more consistent with the current look of the bus stops and shelters.



## Install Bus Stops signage at all fixed route bus stops.

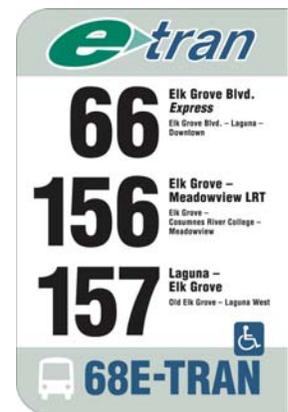
Signage is a key element of a system's brand and serves two valuable purposes. First, it lets passengers know where to wait for the bus. Second, and equally important, it advertises the fact that transit service is available within a given corridor or to a specific destination. Seeing bus stops signs along the road informs or reminds travelers that they have a transit alternative. Having a phone number prominently displayed on the bus stop sign also provides an easy way for the potential rider to get more information.

The current bus stop sign, which is used at most stops on Routes A and B, but not C, has a number of strengths. Key among these is the atypical shape which makes it stand out somewhat. However, the very muted color scheme has the reverse effect of making it "blend in" as one stakeholder put it. However, the design is clean and clear and it is obviously a bus stop. What it lacks is a system name or logo (the Bearcat paw could fill this role, but because it is not used elsewhere in the system it does not) and a phone number.

All fixed route bus stops should be signed with a sign that includes the new system logo, bus stop designator (such as a vehicle symbol) and the information phone number. Optionally, the sign can be designed to include decals which indicate the route letter and destination of routes serving the specific stop.

Sample signs from two other systems are shown here. It is not recommended that Paso Robles' bus stop sign look like these, they simply illustrate the types of elements that need to be included.

**Several Samples of consistent transit identities or brands are included in the appendix on page 56.**



## **Passenger Information**

**Objective: Make the transit system easier to understand and use through enhanced passenger information and signage.**

Along with system identity, passenger information is one of the most basic elements of transit marketing. It provides the “directions” for using the transit product. Without effective, easy to understand information, a transit system is simply not a complete product.

To be effective, passenger Information materials and systems need to have four characteristics:

- Easy to understand – if reading the passenger guide is too difficult, potential passengers will assume that using the system is the same and find another way.
- Accurate and up-to-date – if a passenger tries to use out-of-date information and has a bad experience as a result, the chances of getting them to try transit again are minimal.
- Readily available – the need to use transit often occurs unexpectedly when a car breaks down or ride falls through. The more easily available transit information is, the more likely the potential rider is to use the bus.
- Attractive and inviting – passenger information materials that are attractive, eye-catching and widely distributed can greatly increase a transit agency’s visibility. They become not just information tools, but promotional tools as well.

This section addresses strategies for enhancing Paso Robles’ overall transit passenger information program. Strategies detailed include:

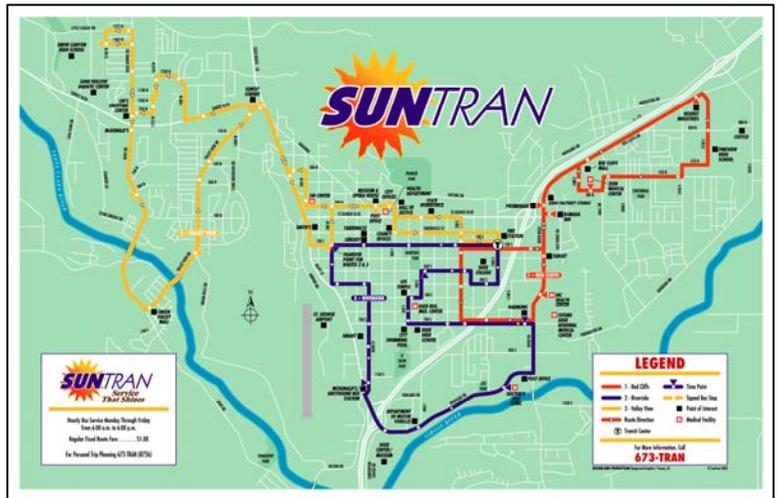
- Redesign the passenger guides to provide information in a format that can be more easily used and understood.
- Expand distribution network for new passenger guide.
- Provide Information in Spanish.
- Provide enhanced information displays at bus stops and the North County Transportation Center.
- Enhance transit section of Paso Robles website.
- Establish regional transit information phone number.
- Educate Gatekeepers to provide “Travel Training” for their constituents.

## Redesign the passenger guides to provide information in a format that can be more easily used and understood.

For a small transit system like Paso Robles, its passenger information guide is the single most important marketing tool. The market assessment included a detailed review of Paso Robles' current passenger information guide. While the current guide provides much of the information a rider needs to use the system effectively, it does not do so in a manner that is easy for the novice rider to understand. In addition, the guide does little to build visibility or a positive image for the system.

The passenger guide should be fully redesigned to include the following characteristics:

- Full color printing to allow for color coding of the routes and schedules. (Note: color printing costs have been reduced significantly by technology. Full color printing is not likely to be much more expensive than 2-color.)
- A size large enough to allow for complete information and easy legibility. (Possibly 11" X 17").
- System-wide map which shows:
  - Major streets; all streets served by transit.
  - Each route shown in a distinct color.
  - Regional services including RTA Route 9 and the North County Shuttle.
  - Transfer points.
  - Key destinations and landmarks, shown directly on the map.
  - Directional arrows on routes which are one-way.
  - Clear, easy to understand legend.



- Schedules for each route, color coded to the map. If clockface headways continue to be used, the existing schedule format can be continued. However, it needs to show first and last bus times at each stop. If the schedules vary from the hourly format to accommodate traffic, then a more traditional schedule format will be needed.

### ■ Fixed Route How-to-Ride Information

- Fares & Fare Media
- Elderly/Disabled Discounts
- Transfers (between fixed routes and to regional services)
- Bus Stops

### ■ Dial-a-Ride Information

- Reservations

SUNTRAN ROUTE SCHEDULE		Times are approximate and may vary due to traffic and weather conditions.											
ROUTE / TIMEPOINT		AM TIMES						PM TIMES					
<b>ROUTE 1 — RED CLIFFS</b>													
Depart OSC Transit Cn.	---	6:30	7:30	8:30	9:30	10:30	11:30	12:30	1:30	2:30	3:30	4:30	5:30
WIC Health Center	---	6:35	7:35	8:35	9:35	10:35	11:35	12:35	1:35	2:35	3:35	4:35	5:35
Fireworks Bldg	---	6:37	7:37	8:37	9:37	10:37	11:37	12:37	1:37	2:37	3:37	4:37	5:37
Discount Industries	---	6:41	7:41	8:41	9:41	10:41	11:41	12:41	1:41	2:41	3:41	4:41	5:41
Dean Medical Center	---	6:47	7:47	8:47	9:47	10:47	11:47	12:47	1:47	2:47	3:47	4:47	5:47
PrismaCare	---	6:50	7:50	8:50	9:50	10:50	11:50	12:50	1:50	2:50	3:50	4:50	5:50
Arrive OSC Transit Cn.	---	6:54	7:54	8:54	9:54	10:54	11:54	12:54	1:54	2:54	3:54	4:54	5:54
<b>ROUTE 2 — RIVERSIDE</b>													
Depart OSC Transit Cn.	---	7:00	8:00	9:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	1:00	2:00	3:00	4:00	5:00	---
100 South/200 West	---	7:04	8:04	9:04	10:04	11:04	12:04	1:04	2:04	3:04	4:04	5:04	---
McDonald's	---	7:08	8:08	9:08	10:08	11:08	12:08	1:08	2:08	3:08	4:08	5:08	---
Doctor's Free Clinic	---	7:11	8:11	9:11	10:11	11:11	12:11	1:11	2:11	3:11	4:11	5:11	---
Hormones	---	7:15	8:15	9:15	10:15	11:15	12:15	1:15	2:15	3:15	4:15	5:15	---
Recreation Center	---	7:20	8:20	9:20	10:20	11:20	12:20	1:20	2:20	3:20	4:20	5:20	---
Arrive OSC Transit Cn.	---	7:25	8:25	9:25	10:25	11:25	12:25	1:25	2:25	3:25	4:25	5:25	---
<b>ROUTE 3 — VALLEY VIEW</b>													
Depart OSC Transit Cn.	---	6:30	7:30	8:30	9:30	10:30	11:30	12:30	1:30	2:30	3:30	4:30	5:30
City Offices	---	6:34	7:34	8:34	9:34	10:34	11:34	12:34	1:34	2:34	3:34	4:34	5:34
Sumner Center	---	6:41	7:41	8:41	9:41	10:41	11:41	12:41	1:41	2:41	3:41	4:41	5:41
Sierra Pointe Apts.	---	6:00	6:47	7:47	8:47	9:47	10:47	11:47	12:47	1:47	2:47	3:47	4:47
360 N. Olive Dr.	---	6:04	6:53	7:53	8:53	9:53	10:53	11:53	12:53	1:53	2:53	3:53	4:53
Valley View/Pedden Mills	---	6:19	6:56	7:56	8:56	9:56	10:56	11:56	12:56	1:56	2:56	3:56	4:56
100 South/200 West	---	6:37	7:04	8:04	9:04	10:04	11:04	12:04	1:04	2:04	3:04	4:04	5:04
Main Street Post Office	---	6:22	7:09	8:09	9:09	10:09	11:09	12:09	1:09	2:09	3:09	4:09	5:09
Arrive OSC Transit Cn.	---	6:29	7:16	8:16	9:16	10:16	11:16	12:16	1:16	2:16	3:16	4:16	5:16

- Hours
- Fares
- Eligibility Requirements
- Contact Phone Numbers
- Holidays with no service

The guide should be designed with the needs of the rider in mind. It should focus on providing, in an easy to understand format, all the information a person needs to use the system effectively.

The guide should be made available in English and Spanish. This can be accomplished by producing two versions (as is currently done) or by creating a single bilingual guide (which makes distribution easier).

### **Expand Distribution Network for New Passenger Guide**

Like bus stop signage, passenger information materials can serve a promotional as well as informational function. If broadly and visibly distributed within the community, they will communicate to potential users that public transit service is available when you need it. When the need for transportation arises, they will then be available to aid the novice user.

Paso Robles should establish two types of information networks.

- **Establish brochure rack network for basic information distribution.**



Source:  
Beemak Plastics  
[www.beemak.com](http://www.beemak.com)

This should be a broad network of locations where the system map and schedule booklet are distributed in customized brochure holders such as the one shown here. (These are available from a variety of sources including Beemak Plastics and can be imprinted with new system logo and phone number.)

Begin by identifying high traffic locations along each route 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.

Establish a contact person at each location who will let you know if the rack is empty. Refill racks on a regular schedule. The list at the right will serve as a “thought starter” for identifying locations.

#### **Info Distribution**

##### **Locations**

- Government Offices
- Secondary Schools
- Senior Complexes
- Medical Offices
- Job Placement Offices
- Grocery Stores
- Social Service Offices that work with low income, elderly and disabled clients
- Stony Creek and other Apartment Complexes
- Chamber of Commerce

##### **Info Display Locations**

- Cuesta College
- Twin Cities Medical Center
- Human Services
- Senior Center

■ **Create “lobby displays” for high traffic destinations**

Lobbies at key destinations such as medical clinics, social service agency offices, senior centers or schools are excellent locations for transit information distribution. A number of gatekeepers interviewed as part of this plan indicated an interest in transit information displays for their lobbies.

- Social Service Department
- One-Stop Center
- Cuesta College
- Senior Center

Consider creating displays for high traffic locations that include a permanent mounted display in combination with a take-one rack. The display shown at the left was created for the Summit Stage in Summit County, Colorado. It includes a system map and frequency chart for the system, plus pockets for schedule booklets. It could be customized with a ‘you-are-here’ sticker to help users easily see what their transit options were. The plexiglass holder is a standard prefab model available from sources such as Displays2Go at <http://www.displays2go.com/product.asp?ID=1693> .



Source:  
Displays2Go

In some cases, simply providing a laminated copy of the passenger guide for posting on a bulletin board may be sufficient.

## Provide information in Spanish.

Paso Robles has a large Hispanic population. More than one quarter of the population is Latino and many of these individuals do not speak English well. Paso Robles provides printed schedule information in Spanish. If the system is to effectively serve and attract ridership from among this segment it will need to provide Spanish language information in a number of ways.

■ **Printed Information**

The new passenger guide should continue to be provided in Spanish. This can be accomplished either by making the piece bilingual (easier to distribute broadly) or by having separate English and Spanish versions as now.

■ **Information by Phone**

Currently PRCATS greatest obstacle in reaching the Spanish speaking community is its lack of Spanish speaking phone personnel. Spanish speaking persons calling in for a reservation or assistance have no access to the system. Spanish speaking staff should be added as soon as possible. Until that time, accommodation should be made using AT&T’s translation service, the RTA information center or some other mechanism.

■ **Spanish Language Information On Website**

Another channel for providing Spanish language information would be to have a “Spanish” button on the transit website. This would be an easy way to make information readily accessible to social service agencies that work with Spanish speaking clients. They could look up information for clients and provide them with Spanish language printouts.

■ **Spanish “Cheat Sheet” for drivers**

Drivers are an important source of information for many riders. Unfortunately few or no PRCATS drivers speak Spanish. They therefore have trouble providing even basic assistance to Spanish speaking riders. A strategy used by some transit agencies is to provide drivers with a Spanish language cheat sheet of basic phrases. Such a cheat sheet has been developed in Colorado. Copies can be purchased for a nominal fee by contacting Carolyn Tucker at Colorado Mountain College.

Source:  
Carolyn Tucker  
Colorado Mountain College  
[ctucker@coloradomtn.edu](mailto:ctucker@coloradomtn.edu)  
970-945-8691

## Provide enhanced information displays at bus stops and the North County Transit Center.

The redesign of the passenger guide should also pave the way for improving the information provided at bus shelters and at the North County Transit Center.

■ **Bus Shelter Displays**

These should provide bilingual route, schedule and fare information for the routes serving a given stop. This can be accomplished by manipulating the artwork created for the passenger guide.



■ **North County Transit Center Information Kiosk**

A large information display or kiosk should be added at the Transit Center to provide information about both Paso Robles Routes and RTA Route 9. This kiosk should include an enlarged version of the Paso Robles system map, a route map for Route 9, and schedule, fare and transfer information for all routes, again bilingually.



## Enhance transit information website.

The internet is an increasingly important source of transit information, particularly for audiences such as school and college students and social service agency managers. Currently an overview of available transit services and a PDF of the Paso Robles transit guide are provided on the City’s website. As part of upgrading the system’s passenger information program, the internet presence should be enhanced as well. This can be accomplished in one of two ways:

■ Continue to maintain a transit page on the city’s website.

While this is the easiest alternative, it has a downside. The address for the transit page is:

<http://www.prcity.com/GOVERNMENT/departments/adminservices/transit.asp>

This is not an easy web address to promote.

- Establish a dedicated domain name for the transit system.  
This should be a web address which can be easily included on vehicles, bus stops and in promotional materials. For example, [www.PRCATS.com](http://www.PRCATS.com) is available. The domain name selected, of course, should coincide with the name chosen for the system.

Whatever web address is used, the site should provide complete, up-to-date information about the system. While having a downloadable version of the passenger guide is a good strategy for the website, transit information should also be provided in an easy to access, menu driven format.

For example, the site might include:

- Home Page: Clean menu driven, with easy links to all information
- Simplified system map of Paso Robles area
  - When you click on a route you get a detailed route map and schedule
- Complete schedule information
- How-to-Ride Information – organized around a clear menu
- Dial-a-Ride information
- Automated trip planning – link to the RTA rideshare site
- Links to/from regional transit providers, Cuesta College and other marketing partners

An example of a simple but effective website design can be seen at:

<http://www.amadortransit.com/>

## Establish regional transit information phone number.

SLO County has a diversity of transit services – many of which interconnect. However, the only source of information about all of the services is the regional rideshare website. There is no regional transit information phone number.

Paso Robles, in conjunction with the other transit providers, should identify a way of providing regional transit information without the passenger having to “call around.” Options include:

- Establish a regional information center that could provide route and schedule information for all services.
- Cross train each provider’s telephone information personnel and provide them with up-to-date route and schedule information for connecting services.
- Provide the capability for local transit providers to transfer callers to information personnel for other transit providers in the region.

## Educate Gatekeepers to provide Information and “Travel Training” for their constituents.

For some populations, particularly non-English speaking immigrants or persons with disabilities, the best way to provide transit information is through a “gatekeeper” such as a case worker, language instructor or some other social service provider. Outreach efforts should insure that these individuals and organizations have the knowledge and tools they need to effectively educate or travel train their clients.

■ **Conduct outreach to gatekeepers**

A number of the strategies included in this plan involve attending meetings and making presentations to various gatekeeper groups. This should be an on-going element of Paso Robles' transit marketing effort. At least once a year and any time service changes are planned, city or contractor staff should meet with all of its gatekeeper partners to enlist their aid in informing riders and potential riders.

Additional tactics for building and maintaining the support of gatekeepers include:

- Develop an e-mail list and provide e-mail updates regarding service changes or issues. (We've used this strategy to inform stakeholders interviewed as part of this project about the SRTP workshop).
- Consider holding a Social Service Worker event where they would be taken on a bus tour of the system, treated to lunch, educated about the transit services available in the Paso Robles area and sent back to their offices with a supply of transit information materials.

■ **Distribute passenger information through gatekeepers**

Gatekeepers, such as social service case workers, are often responsible for or involved in finding transportation options for their clients who need to travel to training, jobs or medical appointments. It is therefore critical that they understand what transit services are available and have the information necessary to assist clients with trip planning.

To aid these gatekeepers in their role as transit "salespeople" Paso Robles should make sure that they are provided with bilingual passenger guides and information displays for their offices, as well as phone numbers and e-mail addresses they can use to get personal assistance with trip planning or dial-a-ride reservations.

## **Public Relations, Media Advertising and Promotion**

**Objective: Build greater awareness of the transit services that Paso Robles offers and how to use them, among both potential riders and gatekeepers.**

It is recommended that Paso Robles use a two-step process for marketing its transit services.

The first step involves broad communications efforts to build awareness among the general population and educate potential riders about what the system has to offer. The second step involves more targeted promotional efforts which will work to generate trial and on-going ridership among segments for which Paso Robles' transit services offer advantages.

This section will address the first step - strategies for increasing transit's visibility within the overall community through a combination of public relations, advertising and special promotion. What these strategies have in common is that they reach a broad audience with the objective of building awareness and a positive image for the transit system. The next section will address strategies that relate to building ridership among targeted segments.

- Maximize exposure in local news media.
- Implement Service Enhancement Ad Campaign in conjunction with implementation of SRTP recommendations.
- Implement Try Transit Promotion to encourage trial ridership.
- Utilize on-going media advertising to maintain awareness.
- Solicit public speaking opportunities.

## Maximize Exposure in Local News Media

News coverage in local newspapers and on television and radio stations can provide an excellent channel for building awareness for Paso Robles' transit services. A News Release Calendar and related strategies will help to maximize the amount of news coverage received.

### ■ **Implement News Release Calendar.**

The more information the media has about Paso Robles' transit services, the more often they will cover them. Hence a regular calendar of new releases will increase the amount of coverage received. This calendar, which should be updated monthly, will identify newsworthy activities being undertaken by the City and its contractor. These might include:

- Introduction of new and revised services
- Delivery of new vehicles
- Introduction of new Passenger Guide
- Introduction of new fare media
- Installation of enhanced bus stop signage
- Regular route and schedule changes
- New bus stops or shelters
- Ridership growth
- Introduction of targeted promotional activities

For each of the items listed on the calendar, a timely news release should be issued to local media including: *Paso Robles Press*, *Paso Robles Magazine*, *SLO Tribune* and *KPRL*

### ■ **Solicit feature news stories about interesting transit users.**

In addition to basic news releases, Paso Robles staff should work with local news reporters to develop feature articles about individuals who benefit from using transit. By identifying subjects and suggesting them to the reporters, Paso Robles can increase the likelihood that such articles will be undertaken.

### ■ **Utilize public access TV channel.**

The public access television station can be another opportunity for creating visibility at little or no cost. They can be asked to air text information, public service announcements or even a video presentation about public transportation services in Paso Robles.

## Implement Service Enhancement Ad Campaign.

The SRTP and this Marketing Plan recommend a variety of service enhancements and revisions based on input from the community. The implementation of these changes should be accompanied by an aggressive marketing effort to insure that current riders have advance notice of the changes and that potential riders are made aware of their improved transit option.

Paso Robles may wish to use an approach similar to that used by SunTran of St. George, Utah in the ad/poster shown at the right. The ad highlighted each of the positive steps being taken to enhance the service.

The ads might highlight the two types of service – fixed route and Dial-a-Ride – and show the improvements being made to each.

### Local Fixed Routes

- New Midday Circulator Route
- New North County Shuttle
- Saturday Express Service on Spring/Niblick
- New Passenger Guide
- New buses?
- Additional bus shelters?

### Dial-a-Ride

- Sunday Dial-a-Ride service
- Advance reservations

This campaign would also be the ideal time to introduce a new name and look for the system, if Paso Robles chooses to implement the rebranding strategy discussed on page 22.



In essence, this campaign would introduce Paso Robles residents to their “new and improved” transit system.

## Implement Try Transit Promotion to encourage trial ridership.

Either in conjunction with National Try Transit Week in October or at another time, Paso Robles should continue to implement an annual free ride promotion as an incentive to trial ridership.

A free ride promotion can be conducted in one of two ways: By making the bus entirely free for a given period of time (e.g. a week to a month) OR by broadly distributing free ride coupons that are good for a limited period of time. In either case the free rides must be aggressively promoted via public relations and advertising to achieve the objective of generating trial ridership among new users.

## Utilize on-going media advertising to maintain awareness.

Advertising builds awareness and a positive image through repeated exposures. Therefore, Paso Robles should continue to advertise the system throughout the year – in both paid and free media. In the past the City has used *Paso Robles Magazine* and KPRL radio on a regular basis. To this we would add the Spanish Radio Station KXLM if possible.

In addition to paid media, there are some “free” media which are likely available to transit. These include the *Paso Robles Library and Recreation Services Activity Guide* and utility bill stuffers. These do not take the place of the more traditional media, but can be another opportunity for exposure at little or no cost.

One possible approach to on-going advertising is a testimonial campaign – showing real riders and how they benefit from using transit. This can be extremely effective in small communities. Selecting riders that represent the demographic segments you are trying to attract will send the message that “people like you” ride the bus. And using real people lends credibility to your message.

Testimonials are easiest to do in print ads (samples are included in the appendix), but, but can also be incorporated into radio or cable TV spots. Make a series of ads and/or spots featuring the different “types” of riders you hope to attract. For example:

- Local service workers who uses the bus to commute
- Cuesta College Student
- High school or middle school student who uses the bus on weekends
- Active senior citizen
- Hispanic mother who uses bus to shop and take kids to doctor
- Person in wheelchair who uses transit

Bus operators and dispatchers are generally very helpful in identifying riders who are suitable testimonial candidates. Generally it is nice to offer the rider a small gift for their time – such as a free ride pass for the quarter, lunch and a specialty item.

Depending on budget available, a testimonial campaign can use a variety of media:

- Local newspaper (*Paso Robles Magazine* and *Paso Robles Press*)
- Radio (KPRL and KXLM)
- Cable TV advertising (paid and/or public service)
- Community Access TV

Countywide public bus service connecting:

**“It’s a reliable way to get to work.”**  
— Michele Brousseau  
Angels Camp

Michele works in a doctor’s office in San Andreas and commutes to work on Calaveras Transit. She’s one of the many people from throughout Calaveras County who are discovering that the bus is a reliable way to work, school, shopping or wherever you’re going. Discover the new Calaveras Transit for yourself. Call us today for your free First Time Riders Guide.

**754-4450**  
Your ride is here.

**CALAVERAS**  
TRANSIT

Angels Camp  
Arnold  
Avary  
Columbia College  
Copperopolis  
Copper Cove  
Jackson  
La Grana  
Mokelumne Hill  
Mountain Road  
Orsinesville  
San Andreas  
Vallecito  
Valley Springs  
West Point

## Solicit public speaking opportunities.

Personal presentations can be useful in reaching a variety of segments with very customized, highly credible messages:

- **Business and Community leaders**  
Presentations at the Chamber of Commerce and Civic Clubs such as Rotary or Kiwanas can be used to educate these groups about the benefits that transit provides to the Paso Robles community.
- **Gatekeepers**  
Presentations at staff meetings for social service agencies or other gatekeeper organizations can educate these individuals about what transit offers their clients and how they can help to encourage transit usage among their constituents.
- **Potential Rider Groups**  
Presentations at senior centers or apartment complexes, college or school orientation programs, or to other groups of potential riders can be used to show them how they can use the bus to gain or maintain independence or access jobs/ training opportunities.

Paso Robles staff is already using public speaking as a tool with the initiation of its transit training class through the Library and Recreation Services program. This effort can be expanded with the development of a shorter, customizable presentation which could be offered to community and civic organizations such as those described above.

Any of these presentations can be made more effective with appropriate support materials. These might include:

- **Customizable PowerPoint Presentation**  
PowerPoint can be a useful tool for enhancing personal presentations with photographs and charts. (PowerPoint should not be expected to do the whole job – your personal presentation is what lends credibility and creates a personality for public transportation.) An advantage of PowerPoint is that the presentation can be easily customized for specific groups.
- **Appropriate Handout Materials**  
Each presentation should end with the distribution of a handout appropriate to the specific group. For potential users or gatekeepers, this might be passenger guide. However, for a non-rider or business group, a fact sheet demonstrating the benefits that transit provides to the community would be more appropriate.

## Targeted Outreach

### **Objective: Build ridership among groups for whom transit offers advantages through targeted ridership programs.**

The strategies outlined in the previous section target the broad Paso Robles community with the objective of building awareness and a positive image for PRCATS. However, the key to actually attracting new riders lies in identifying groups for whom the service offers advantages and then developing customized marketing efforts that target these segments.

Many of the strategies outlined in this section rely on working through local organizations and businesses (gatekeepers) to direct very specific promotional messages to constituencies with realistic potential for using some or all of Paso Robles' transit services. Community based marketing of this kind can be both low-cost and highly effective. In addition to its potential to attract new users, it also provides the opportunity to build on-going relationships with "gatekeepers" for various constituencies. The steps involved in developing community based marketing programs include:

- Identify gatekeepers for the target group you want to reach. (Contact information for identified gatekeepers is included with the strategy descriptions.)
- Develop a relationship with these gatekeepers. Meet with them to discuss the transportation needs of their constituency.
- Identify direct channels of communication that they can make available to you – such as distributing or posting transit information, articles in their newsletters, and opportunities for personal presentations to their clients.
- Develop customized marketing materials to take advantage of these channels. Include information that is of particular relevance to the target group.
- Work through the gatekeepers to implement on-going targeted marketing efforts.

Targeted programs addressed in this section focus on the following groups:

- Secondary School Students
- Senior Citizens
- Medical Providers and Patients
- Local Workers
- Latino Community
- Low Income Families
- Persons with Disabilities

## Secondary School Students

While it is clear that many middle and high school students use the PRCATS bus to travel to and from school, the school administrators contacted for input to the SRTP had little interest in the topic. Establishing a relationship with principals and administrators at Paso Robles High School, Flamson Middle School and Daniel Lewis Middle School can open up a variety of channels of communication for encouraging both commute and recreational ridership among students. Possible strategies include:

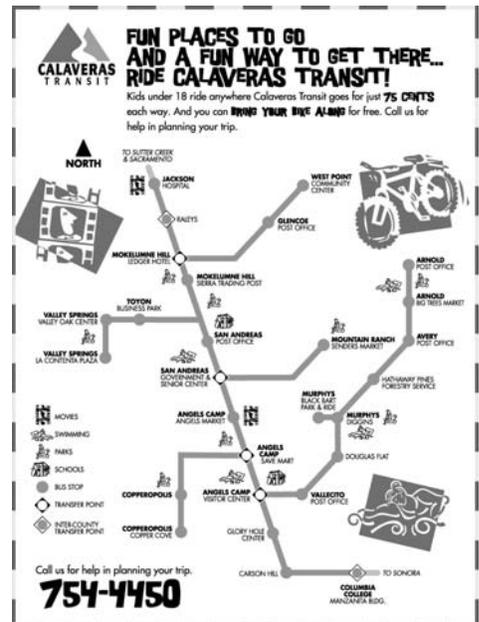
**Contact Info:**  
 John Morris  
 Asst. Superintendent  
 (In charge of info going out thru schools.)  
 District Office  
 238-2222 X207.

### ■ Back-to-School Promotion

Ask the school to distribute a promotional flyer to parents along with “Back-to-School” information. The flyer should include information about how the bus can be used to get to and from the specific school and after-school activities. Some transit agencies offer free rides during the first week of classes to encourage students (and parents) to see how easy commuting to school by bus can be. However, this should definitely not be done if overcrowding is an issue.

### ■ Summer Promotion

Consider developing a promotional flyer for distribution through the schools during the final week of classes before summer recess. The flyer should highlight destinations of interest to students (movie theaters, recreation centers, pools, shopping, etc.) and special fares/passes available for youths. (The flyer shown at the right was used by Calaveras Transit for this purpose.)



Many systems also offer a special steeply discounted summer pass for students, to encourage recreational ridership.

## Senior Citizens

As previously noted, individuals 65+ currently make up 13.4% of Paso Robles’ population and this is a growing segment. Most of these seniors are still currently driving. However, at some point many will be unable to and will need to rely on transit. The earlier they can be introduced to the system, the better.

Seniors residing at senior oriented apartment complexes served by the local fixed routes should be the primary target for promotional efforts. Residences mentioned by stakeholders are shown on the next page. This strategy becomes particularly relevant if a community service route is established as part of the SRTP implementation.

Strategies for encouraging transit ridership in partnership with senior complexes include:

■ **Lobby displays**

Information displays, similar to those described for the college and social service agencies, can be effective at senior residences as well. By placing the displays in highly visible areas (such as lobbies, dining rooms or near mailboxes) they will both build awareness and provide an easy information source.

■ **Customized schedules**

Seniors unfamiliar with transit use often find traditional passenger information confusing. Using desktop publishing, Paso Robles can easily create customized schedule flyers for these audiences. The schedule should show only the information most relevant to seniors at a particular residence. For example, the bus schedule might only show key destinations relevant to seniors (shopping and medical) and times of day practical for them to travel (don't show a trip to the grocery that they can't get back from). The schedule should use 12 to 14 point type for easy reading and highlight the 50 cent senior fare. These pieces can be laminated and posted in apartment offices or distributed to residents with their rent notices.

■ **Outreach presentations**

Personal on-site presentations are a very effective means of educating seniors about transit services. The presentation might include:

- A talk about how the system works, highlighting destinations of interest to seniors (grocery stores, Wal-Mart, Twin Cities Medical Center, Senior Center).
- An explanation of how to read the schedule.
- A trial ride on the bus, if possible.
- Each participant should be left with a passenger guide and a free day-pass for future use.
- You may also want to work with the facility manager to plan small group trips, using the regular bus schedule, as this will allow seniors a safe way to try out the bus in the company of friends.

Venues for presentations include senior residences, senior centers and senior volunteer programs.

■ **“Senior Mobility Training Pilot”**

The “Senior Mobility Training Pilot” project being sponsored by SLOCOG will provide a jumpstart for a valuable additional strategy for helping seniors make the transition from driving to using transit. The project will result in the training of “Transit Ambassadors” who will be able to “travel train” other seniors in their complexes or senior centers.

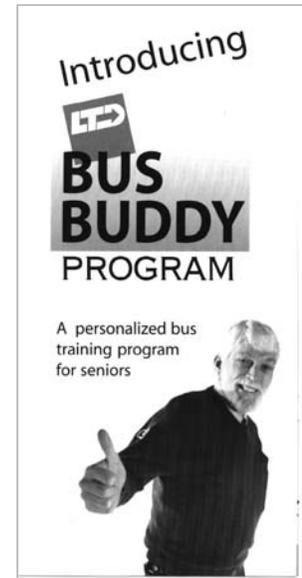
Similar strategies have been used by a number of transit agencies, including Lane Transit District in Eugene, Oregon. LTD referred to their program as the “Bus Buddy” program.

**Senior Residences**

- Sierra Bonita
- Creston Village
- Creston Garden Apts.
- Hacienda Del Norte
- Los Robles Terrace
- Oak Park Apts.
- Paso Robles Garden Apts.
- Riverview Apts.
- Villa Paseo Palms

Beyond the pilot project, elements of the program might include:

- Senior volunteers would be trained (and retrained as service changes) to conduct travel training with other seniors who request assistance in learning to use the bus.
- The availability of “Transit Ambassadors” would be promoted via posters/flyers at the Senior Centers, senior residences, social service agencies that work with seniors, and through news releases.
- When someone requests a “Bus Buddy,” they would be paired with a trained volunteer.
- The volunteer would arrange to meet the person and take them on a trial bus ride to a major destination (such as the grocery store). They would demonstrate all the steps involved in using the bus and leave the person, back at their origin, with a packet of information for future trips.



## Medical Providers and Patients

A key market for the midday circulator will be people going to appointments at Twin Cities Medical Center and the surrounding medical facilities and doctors’ offices. It will be important for these medical providers (particularly reception staff and people who schedule appointments) to be aware of and have information about both the midday circulator and the North County Shuttle service.

- Conduct an initial outreach to identify and speak with staff at each office. Make them aware of the new service. Secure contact information for a staff person at the location and provide them with a number to call with service related questions.
- Provide them with a supply of passenger guides and schedule holder which includes the phone number to call for refills. (The holder should be refilled periodically, even if they don’t call).
- Provide them with a laminated poster for placement in their lobby (if appropriate).
- Notify them via e-mail and/or direct mail whenever there is a service or schedule change.

## Local Workers

Over a third of the trips made on PRCATS are made by workers traveling to or from their jobs. Increasing the number of workers who use the bus to commute is the most effective way of building the ridership base as these individuals are likely to be daily riders.

The current potential to attract ridership among service workers is limited by the span of service. Many employees are able to get to work but not home, or vice versa. However, at some time in the future, it is likely that PRCATS service span will be expanded and local workers commuting to low wage service jobs will become an even more important target market.

Targeted strategies for promoting ridership among workers include:

- **Enlist employers as marketing partners.**  
Identify service and manufacturing employers such as hotels, retailers (Wal-Mart), downtown restaurants, manufacturing sites along Airport Road and other employers who are on transit

routes and have large pools of relatively low-wage workers who would benefit from having a cost effective commute option.

- Ask them to provide transit information to employees through break room posters or paycheck stuffers.
- Ask them to include transit information in the materials provided to new hires.
- Ask for the opportunity to make a presentation at employee meetings.

Representatives of Wal-Mart and Zurn Wilkens who were interviewed as part of this project were very open to these suggestions. Enlist the assistance of the Chamber of Commerce in reaching out to additional employers.

■ **Offer weekly passes sold only through employers.**

Most service employees are paid on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Many are unable or unwilling to commit the funds required to purchase a monthly pass. Consider offering a weekly pass which would be sold only through participating employers to their employees. A weekly pass sold for \$10 would provide a very affordable commute option.

■ **Periodic “Free Ride Fridays” for workers in uniform or with name tag.**

Promote commuting by bus by periodically offering a free ride day for workers. Anyone riding the bus in their work uniform or with a name-tag or employee ID would be given a free ride for the day. The free ride days could be publicized through news releases, posters in bus shelters and flyers/posters distributed through employers.

## Latino Community

A brief ride on the bus is enough to demonstrate the importance of the Latino community as a ridership segment. This general willingness of Hispanic residents to utilize public transportation paired with the fact that more than 27% of Paso Robles’ population is Hispanic make this a critical target group for the marketing effort.

■ **Distribute passenger information in Spanish.**

Given the size of the Latino community in Paso Robles, passenger information should be distributed in Spanish through a variety of channels:

- Telephone information – Spanish speaking personnel
- Printed Passenger Guide – bilingual or Spanish version
- On-board Notices to Passengers
- Information displays at bus stops and Transit Center

■ **Conduct outreach and information distribution through programs that work with non-English speaking population.**

There are a number of programs which specifically work with non-English speaking populations. Transit staff should work with these programs to identify opportunities for promoting transit awareness and use among their constituents. (For example, ESL programs can use transit schedules as a teaching tool for English learners.)

- Cuesta College ESL Program
- English Learner Program thru School District

**Contact Info:**

Cuesta College ESL Program  
Mia Ruiz  
591.6270

Paso Robles Public Schools  
English Learner Specialist  
Marisela Garcia  
237.3362 X218

North County Bilingual  
Networking Group  
Linda Quesenberry  
541.0143  
[vespecial@aol.com](mailto:vespecial@aol.com)

- North County Bilingual Networking Group– meets four times per year
- **Conduct information distribution through businesses and organizations frequented by the Latino Community.**  
Place information displays with Spanish language (or bilingual) passenger guides at locations frequented by Latino residents.
  - Catholic Church
  - Mexican restaurants
  - Latino grocery or video stores
- **Utilize Spanish language media.**
  - Charter Communications – Public Access Station.  
Several stakeholders referenced a Spanish language public affairs program hosted by Jose Luis Lemos (Latino architect) which is popular with Paso Robles’ Spanish speaking population.
  - KXLM, Radio Lazer is the Spanish language radio station which many Paso Robles residents listen to. This may be a channel for both paid advertising and public relations.

## Low Income Families

Low income families can be encouraged to use transit even more than they already do by making easy to use passenger information and appropriate fare media readily available. Gatekeepers who work with low income families are often charged with helping them access medical, social and educational services and are eager to act as “sales agents” for public transportation. Willing marketing partners for this segment include:

- **Housing Authority**

The Housing Authority complex at Spring and 34<sup>th</sup> has 148 apartments. In addition, they sponsor a recreation program and other activities that involve residents from surrounding neighborhoods. Hence, they are a gatekeeper for a large number of low income, working families. In fact, this complex already generates many transit trips on PRCATS. To encourage transit usage, the Authority is willing to provide space for an on-site bi-lingual transit information display. There may be also opportunities for personal presentations to residents.

- **Social Services**

The Social Services office in Paso Robles handles about 2000 active cases at any time. Of these, approximately 60% are Spanish speaking individuals. Social service case workers assist clients in identifying transportation services and provide them with scrip to pay their fare. The stakeholder interviewed was very interested in having someone from Paso Robles transit services attend their monthly staff meeting (last Thursday of each month) to provide an overview of the system. They were also interested in having a transit information display in the lobby.

**Contact Info:**

Housing Authority  
Gene Bergman  
238.5015  
prha@charter.net

Dept. of Social Services  
Liz Soloniuk  
237.3147  
lsoloniuk@co.slo.ca.us

- **One-Stop Center (located at Cuesta College)**

The One-Stop Center, an arm of social services, assists individuals looking for jobs. Often they help clients to “plot bus trips” to interviews and other activities and provide them with \$.25 tickets which can be used to pay their fare. This is an ideal location for a transit information display. Paso Robles should also meet with the center staff to insure that they fully understand the transit service and how to use it effectively.

- **Health Clinics**

Community health clinics are another appropriate place for distributing transit information and are generally eager to provide space for an information display.

## Persons with Disabilities

It is critical for any transit agency to work closely with organizations that serve persons with disabilities to insure that transit services are meeting this important need and to maximize utilization of the transit network.

According to transit operations staff, many persons with developmental disabilities use the dial-a-ride service daily to commute to jobs or workshops. Potential may exist to provide travel training that would allow those individuals that are able to utilize fixed route services for these routine trips. This would increase their independence while reducing the daily demand for paratransit trips.

## Introduction of North County Shuttle

In the fall of 2006, the Cities of Paso Robles and Atascadero have agreed to combine PRCATS Route C and Atascadero's El Camino shuttle to form the North County Shuttle, a service that will connect the two cities. The combined route will serve:

- Cuesta College (at the north end of the route)
- The North County Transportation Center (where it will connect with PRCATS routes A and B)
- Twin Cities Medical Center
- The community of Templeton
- Atascadero's commercial zone along El Camino Real corridor

Changes to RTA Route 9, making it a more direct service to San Luis Obispo, will make this the primary route in the Atascadero-Paso Robles-Cuesta College corridor.

The new route will provide hourly service from Monday through Friday, offering a seamless connection between the communities. This will offer a number of advantages to existing and new passengers:

- The direct routing will eliminate the issue of transfer connections at Twin Cities Medical Center and provide passengers with an easier, more reliable trip.
- New service will be offered in the Templeton area.
- Residents of all three communities will have easy access to commercial, medical and education destinations.
- Schedules will be adjusted to better match class times at Cuesta College.

The hybrid, cross-jurisdictional nature of this service will warrant specific marketing efforts to build awareness among potential users in the full service area. This section will address strategies for marketing the North County Shuttle.

- Establish a unique name and brand identity for the intercity service.
- Create and install signage consistent with the identity.
- Create and distribute a passenger guide consistent with the identity.
- Provide information on internet as part of the enhanced Paso Robles transit site.
- Conduct introductory campaign throughout service area.
- Target market the North County Shuttle to Cuesta College students.
- Target Market the North County Shuttle to medical providers.

## Establish a unique name and brand identity for the intercity service.

Because the new route will be an intercity route, providing direct service between three communities, it should be uniquely branded to communicate this fact. The name selected for the service should have the following characteristics:

- Encompass the full service area
- Imply directness and convenience (NOT use the word “loop” which implies a circuitous routing)
- Be short and clear – easy to say and read

Possible names might include:

- North County Shuttle
- North County Connector
- North County Direct



Or you might take an approach such as that used in La Grande, Oregon (logo shown here). They used the simple name “Shuttle” to refer to the service but included the key destinations as part of the logo.

- Atascadero-Paso Robles-Cuesta College SHUTTLE

Once a name is selected a logo and color scheme should be created for use on all aspects of the route – vehicles, signage, passenger guide, etc. In this way, it will be easy for passengers to distinguish the new service from the local routes. Also, the vehicles and signage will serve a promotional function in letting potential riders know that a new, direct intercity service is now available.

## Create vehicle and bus stop signage consistent with the identity.

Distinct bus stop and vehicle signage which clearly communicates the intercity nature of the route will offer 365 day per promotional value. The vehicle illustration and bus stop signage show below are from an intercity service in Southeastern Arizona. The graphics on the signs and vehicles make it clear that the route connects three communities – thus serving as a key marketing tool.



Create and distribute a user friendly passenger guide consistent with the identity.

A dedicated, attractive passenger guide for the new service should be designed to serve both as the primary information tool and an important promotional item. The guide should provide everything a rider of the new route needs to know, including information about transferring to PRCATS or RTA Route 9. Consider a design that can be used both as a folded brochure and as a poster. Two samples are shown below.

**EOU - LA GRANDE - ISLAND CITY SHUTTLE**

**RIDER'S GUIDE**

**963-BUSS**

General Fare \$1.00  
Seniors and Persons with Disabilities \$.75

**963-BUSS**

EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2005

**MONDAY-FRIDAY HOURLY SERVICE 7:30 am - 5:55 pm**

TIMEPOINT	ROUTE	OUTBOUND	RETURN
EOU	0:00	A	:55
HUMAN SERVICES	:04	B	:51
SAFWAY	:08	C	:47
MAX SQUARE	:11	D	:44
RAC	:13	E	:42
BENTON PARK	:14	F	:41
ALBERTSON'S	:22	G	:33
WAL-MART	:25	H	:30

*Saturday and Weekend Evening Schedules on Back*

**LEGEND**

- MONDAY-SATURDAY DAYTIME ROUTE
- FRIDAY & SATURDAY EVENING ROUTE
- ROUTE DEVIATION
- TIMEPOINT
- POINT OF INTEREST

**Fares**

Fare Category	Within One Community	Between Sierra Vista and Bisbee	Between Sierra Vista and Douglas	Between Bisbee and Douglas
Adults	\$1.00	\$3.00	\$5.00	\$3.00
Senior/Disabled	50¢	\$1.50	\$2.50	\$1.50
Students	75¢	\$2.00	\$3.00	\$2.00
Children (under & with adult)	Free	Free	Free	Free

**Westbound: Douglas to Sierra Vista**

	Weekdays	Saturday			
Douglas/CIS Transp. Office (15th and Dolores)	5:20	6:32	3:45	8:30	4:30
Cochise College (Douglas Campus)	5:32	6:44	3:57	8:42	4:42
Bisbee (Old Douglas Rd. and "B" Street)	5:55	7:07	4:20	9:05	5:05
Bisbee (Hwy 92 and Camino Court)	6:03	7:15	4:28	9:13	5:13
Palominas	6:14	7:26	4:39	9:24	5:24
The Mall at Sierra Vista	6:34	7:46	4:59	9:44	5:44
Cochise College	6:42	—	—	—	—
Angis	6:47	—	—	—	—
Sierra Vista Regional Health Center	6:52	7:54	5:07	9:52	5:52
Vista Transit Transfer Center (Wilcox & Coronado)	6:55	7:56	5:10	9:55	5:55

**Eastbound: Sierra Vista to Douglas**

	Weekdays	Saturday			
Vista Transit Transfer Center (Wilcox & Coronado)	5:00	7:07	5:13	10:05	6:05
Sierra Vista Regional Health Center	5:03	7:10	5:16	10:08	6:08
Angis	—	—	5:21	—	—
Cochise College	—	—	5:26	—	—
The Mall at Sierra Vista	5:11	7:18	5:33	10:16	6:16
Palominas	5:31	7:38	5:53	10:36	6:36
Bisbee (Hwy 92 and Camino Court)	5:41	7:49	6:04	10:47	6:47
Bisbee (Old Douglas Rd. and "B" Street)	5:49	7:57	6:12	10:55	6:55
Cochise College (Douglas Campus)	6:12	8:20	6:35	11:18	7:18
Douglas/CIS Transp. Office (15th and Dolores)	6:24	8:32	6:47	11:30	7:30

*PM times shown in Boldface type. Times are approximate and may vary due to traffic and weather conditions.*

**COCHISE COMMUTER**

Connecting Cochise County's Communities

TRIP PLANNING ASSISTANCE: 800-338-2474

**COCHISE COMMUTER**

CONNECTING COCHISE COUNTY'S COMMUNITIES

**COCHISE COMMUTER**

SIERRA VISTA BISBEE DOUGLAS

For Personal Trip Planning  
**800-338-2474**

## Provide information on internet as part of the enhanced Paso Robles transit site.

Complete information about the new route should be included on the enhanced Paso Robles transit website discussed on page 28. You may wish to consider purchasing a second dedicated domain name for the North County Shuttle (such as northcountyshuttle.com) as this would cost less than \$30 per year. This domain name, which could be used on North County Shuttle vehicles and signage, could simply take internet users to the North County Shuttle section of the full website.

## Conduct introductory campaign throughout service area.

The introduction of the new service should be accompanied by as much fanfare and exposure as possible. You need to build awareness for the new service and communicate the many improvements it offers area residents. Strategies for accomplishing this should include:

### ■ **Preview Communications to Current Riders**

Current riders of Paso Robles Route C (as well as other Paso Robles routes) and the El Camino Shuttle need to be given advance notice of the new combined service. This should be accomplished using on-board posters and handouts. The new North County Shuttle passenger guide should be distributed to current users a few weeks before the service change occurs.

### ■ **Media Events & Exposure**

The introduction of the North County Shuttle should be treated as an entirely new service to maximize its newsworthiness and media exposure. Two milestones which would justify a press conference or media event are:

- *“Unveiling” ceremony to introduce the new identity*  
This should be a chance for the media to preview the new identity and service plan. Ideally, it should occur when a vehicle is available with the new identity graphics. Media participants should be provided with kits which include complete information about the new service – including a copy of the passenger guide.
- *Kick-off event to mark the first day of service*  
The first day of service is, of course, another opportunity for media attention. Invite the media, along with local officials and community leaders to participate in the event which might be held at Twin Cities to symbolize the linking of the old services. Alternately, it might be held at Cuesta College to highlight the new route’s role in bringing students from throughout the north county to the campus. Either way, you should plan to have both key officials and happy riders there for the media to interview.

In addition, there will be other milestones which should be publicized via news releases to local newspapers and radio station. These include:

- Finalization of the service plan and announcement of the start-up date
- Availability of the passenger guide
- Installation of new bus stops and/or shelters along the route

■ **Introductory Advertising Campaign**

In addition to publicity, paid advertising should also be used to create exposure for the start-up of the North County Shuttle. Local newspaper ads and radio spots should focus on the key advantages and destinations that the new route will offer.

- Direct, hourly service connecting Paso Robles, Templeton and Atascadero, Monday through Saturday.
- Easy, direct access to Cuesta College (with schedules that match class times).
- Convenient service to Twin Cities Medical Center and surrounding medical offices.
- Lots of shopping opportunities – service commercial areas in Atascadero and Paso Robles.

Consider an ad approach that utilizes a simplified route map and highlights all the great destinations that are on this single, convenient route.

**Lodi to Galt to Sacramento Every Day Every Hour**

SCT/LINK's Hwy 99 Express provides direct intercity service connecting Galt with Lodi, Elk Grove and Florin Mall in Sacramento. The Hwy 99 Route runs Monday thru Friday, with hourly service all day, from 5:20 a.m. to 7:20 p.m.

The Hwy 99 express provides free transfers to local routes in each community so you can go wherever you need to go. For a complete route map and schedule pick up our Hwy 99 Express guide or call us and we'll send you one.

**SCT/LINK**  
Linking Galt, the Delta, Lodi and Sacramento  
(209) 745-3052 or (800) 338-8676  
[www.sctlink.com](http://www.sctlink.com)

Media utilized for the campaign should include local newspaper and radio:

- *Paso Robles Press*
- *Paso Robles Magazine*
- *Atascadero News*
- English and Spanish Radio Stations
- *News Flash* (Campus Newsletter at Cuesta College)

You may wish to include the SLO Tribune in the media mix during the introductory period.

■ **Introductory Free Ride Period**

To build trial ridership of the new route, consider an introductory free ride period. If the free ride period includes the first week or two of classes at Cuesta College, it could be promoted as an opportunity for students to try a new way of commuting to campus. If free rides are offered, this would, of course, be a key message in the print and radio advertising campaign, as well as in news releases.

■ **Direct Mailing and Outreach to Key Gatekeepers**

The importance of gatekeepers, such as social service agencies, senior complexes and schools, as transit salespeople was discussed on page 29. The same recommendations apply to the North County Shuttle. These individuals should be informed and educated about the new service well in advance, and provided with passenger guides which they can pass on to their clients, students and residents.

## Target market the North County Shuttle to Cuesta College students.

With an enrollment of 2500 students, of which 1218 live in Paso Robles and 503 in Atascadero, Cuesta College will be a key destination on the new North County Shuttle route. The college administration is willing to partner in promoting transit ridership, hence a variety of channels exist for communicating with Cuesta College Students.

- **Include transit information in the class schedule published by Cuesta College.**

Cuesta College's administration would like to be able to include transit information in the class schedule which they publish twice a year. This information should be customized to the needs of students commuting from Paso Robles or Atascadero to the campus. Note that the lead time is long on this publication – plan ahead.

- **Place permanent passenger information display at Cuesta College.**

One way to build visibility among students while providing easy access to transit information is to establish a permanent transit information display at a high traffic location on campus (e.g. cafeteria in the new student center). This display should provide permanent mounted information (route map and schedule) plus a supply of Passenger Guides and/or flyers specific to the college.

The photo to the right shows a display created for Mercer College to promote the transit system in Macon, Georgia. It utilizes a standard display fixture and a digitally printed poster to create a customized, yet cost-effective display.



- **Distribute customized orientation handout to new students.**

Create a targeted information piece that specifically addresses how to commute to Cuesta College on transit from the surrounding region. Ask the college to distribute this to new students in their orientation packets or have a table on campus and hand it out during the first week of classes.

- **Ask Cuesta College to include a transit link on its home page (particularly during on-line registration.)**

College students are heavy users of the internet and most of Cuesta's enrollment occurs on line. Ask the college to include a link from their website to the enhanced transit information website.

- **Make Cuesta College a sales outlet for North County Shuttle and Paso Robles transit fare media.**

Cuesta already sells passes for RTA and would like to also sell Paso Robles fare media. This would make purchasing fare media far more convenient for students who use the bus.

■ **Provide articles for the *News Flash***

Cuesta College publishes a monthly campus newsletter. Provide them with articles about transit issues that are relevant to students (such as introduction of the North County Shuttle, the initiation of pass sales on campus, introduction of the new passenger guide).

**Target Market the North County Shuttle to medical providers and patients.**

Another key target market for the North County Shuttle will be people going to appointments at Twin Cities Medical Center and the surrounding medical facilities and doctors' offices. It will be important for these medical providers (particularly reception staff and people who schedule appointments) to be aware of and have information about the North County Shuttle service.

- Conduct an initial outreach to identify and speak with staff at each office. Make them aware of the new service. Secure contact information for a staff person at the location and provide them with a number to call with service related questions.
- Provide them with a supply of North County Shuttle passenger guides and schedule holder which includes the phone number to call for refills. (The holder should be refilled periodically, even if they don't call).
- Provide them with a laminated poster for placement in their lobby (if appropriate).
- Notify them via e-mail and/or direct mail whenever there is a service or schedule change.

*Note that if the senior-oriented "Community Service" route is implemented, also serving the medical facilities, these outreach efforts should promote that service as well.*

# Marketing Budget

Paso Robles' annual transit operating budget is approximately \$800,000. The rule of thumb in the transit industry is that approximately 2% of the operating budget should be allocated to marketing expenditures, beyond the provision of basic passenger information. This would be approximately \$16,000 per year for promotional marketing efforts. Add to this approximately \$2500 per year for maintaining and printing the passenger guide for a total recommended communications budget of \$18,500. (This budget does not include the cost of producing and installing signage or vehicle graphics as these should be covered under capital budgets).

The following chart includes an estimated marketing budget for FY 2006-7 and FY 2007-8 for implementing the key strategies outlined in this plan.

<b>Recommended Marketing Budget</b>			
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Activity/Expense</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
<b>Passenger Information</b>			
Redesign the passenger guides to provide information in a format that can be more easily used and understood.	Design & Produce	\$5,000	\$1,500
	Print	\$1,500	\$1,500
Expand distribution network for new passenger guide.	Brochure Holders & Display Racks	\$1000	
Provide Information in Spanish.	Make all bilingual	Included in other budgets	
Provide enhanced information displays at bus stops and the North County Transit Center.	Fixtures	capital	
	Create Displays	\$1500	\$1000
Enhance transit section of Paso Robles website.		City staff	
Establish regional transit information phone number.		operations	
Educate Gatekeepers to provide "Travel Training" for their constituents.		Staff	staff
<b>System Identity/Brand</b>			
Create a consistent name and logo for use on all system elements.	Design & Produce	\$3000	
Revise vehicle design to create a clear visual relationship between the vehicles, bus stops and shelters.	Create Design	\$250	
	Re-graphic Buses	capital	
Install Bus Stops signage at all PRCATS bus stops.	Design Signage	\$250	
	Produce & Install	capital	

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Activity/Expense</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
<b>PR, Advertising &amp; Promotion</b>			
Maximize exposure in local news media.	News Release Calendar	staff	
Implement Service Enhancement Ad Campaign in conjunction with implementation of SRTP recommendations.	Design & Produce Ad	\$1200	
	Media Placement	\$3500	
Implement Try Transit Promotion to encourage trial ridership.	Design Ad	\$1000	\$1000
	Media Placement	\$2000	\$2000
Utilize on-going media advertising to maintain awareness.	Design Campaign		\$1500
	Media Placement		\$6000
<b>Targeted Outreach</b>			
Cuesta College Students	Targeted Materials	\$2000	\$2500
Secondary School Students			
Senior Citizens			
Latino Community	Transit Info Displays	\$1000	\$1500
Low Income Families			
Local Workers			
Persons with Disabilities		staff	staff
Gatekeepers		staff	staff
Total Annual Budget		\$23200	\$18,500
Less Marketing Plan Creative Budget		\$4650	0
<b>Required Marketing Budget</b>		<b>\$18550</b>	<b>\$18500</b>

# Appendix

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- **Contact List**

This list includes contact information for persons interviewed and for additional contacts suggested by those interviewed.

- **Sample Testimonial Campaigns**

- **Examples of Consistent Transit Identities/Brands**

# Contact List

Contact	Position	Organization	Phone	email
<b>Business/Employers</b>				
Michelle Wilhoit	Store Manager	Wal-Mart	238-1212	
Diane Lyman	Human Resources Mgr	Zurn Wilkins	238.71	<a href="mailto:diane.lyman@zurnwilkins.com">diane.lyman@zurnwilkins.com</a>
Norma Moye		Main Street Asso.	238-4103	
<b>Social Services</b>				
Debbie Aiello		County Dept. of Social Services	237-3110	<a href="mailto:daiello@co.slo.ca.us">daiello@co.slo.ca.us</a>
Liz Soloniuk		County Dept. of Social Services	237.3147	<a href="mailto:lsoloniuk@co.slo.ca.us">lsoloniuk@co.slo.ca.us</a>
Lori Deckert	Employment Specialist	County Dept. of Social Services	237-3121	<a href="mailto:ldeckert@co.slo.ca.us">ldeckert@co.slo.ca.us</a>
Gene Bergman	Executive Director	Housing Authority	238-5015	<a href="mailto:prha@charter.net">prha@charter.net</a>
Tony Ruiz	Works with groups	Paso Robles Police Department	227-7460	
<b>Education</b>				
Sandee McLaughlin		Cuesta College North County Campus	591-6204	<a href="mailto:smclaugh@cuesta.edu">smclaugh@cuesta.edu</a>
Karen Urquhart-Tacket	Diretor Contract Education & Community Programs	Cuesta College North County Campus	546.3131 X2229	<a href="mailto:ktacket@cuesta.edu">ktacket@cuesta.edu</a>
Marisela Garcia	English Learner Specialist	Paso Robles Public Schools	237-3362 X218	
<b>Seniors</b>				
Lynda Holt	Sneior Programs	Senior Center	237-3881	<a href="mailto:lholt@prcity.com">lholt@prcity.com</a>
Jan Stemper	Senior Rep.	Parkside Real Estate	238.3746	<a href="mailto:janstemperbrown@tcsn.net">janstemperbrown@tcsn.net</a>
Jack Sloan	Senior Rep.		591.521	<a href="mailto:dorsloan@sbcglobal.net">dorsloan@sbcglobal.net</a>
Jean Raymond		Agency on Aging	226-8893	<a href="mailto:jraymond@udel.edu">jraymond@udel.edu</a>
<b>Elected Officials</b>				
Frank Mecham	Mayor		227-7214	<a href="mailto:fmeccham@prcity.com">fmeccham@prcity.com</a>
Gary Nemeth	Councilman		227-7210	<a href="mailto:gnemeth@prcity.com">gnemeth@prcity.com</a>
Fred Strong	Councilman			<a href="mailto:fstrong@prcity.com">fstrong@prcity.com</a>
Harry Ovitt	Supervisor		781-5450	<a href="mailto:hovitt@co.slo.ca.us">hovitt@co.slo.ca.us</a>
<b>Other</b>				
Lisa Quinn	Rideshare Program Coordinator	SLO Regional Rideshare	781-4462	<a href="mailto:lquinn@rideshare.org">lquinn@rideshare.org</a>
Bob Chute	Publisher	Paso Robles Magazine	2391533	<a href="mailto:prmagazine@charter.net">prmagazine@charter.net</a>
Anne Quinn	Staff Writer	Paso Robles Press	237-6060 X203	<a href="mailto:anneq@pasoroblespress.com">anneq@pasoroblespress.com</a>
<b>Government Partners</b>				
David Lily	Regional Transit Manager	SLORTA	781-4472	<a href="mailto:dlilly@slorta.org">dlilly@slorta.org</a>
Eliane Guillot	Senior Planner	SLOCOG	781-5711	<a href="mailto:equillot@slocog.org">equillot@slocog.org</a>
Valerie Humphrey	Admin. Assistant (?)	Atascadero	461-5000 EXT	<a href="mailto:vhumphrey@atascadero.org">vhumphrey@atascadero.org</a>

# Sample Testimonial Ad Campaigns

**"I get to keep my independence."**



Rae Hartenberger volunteers in the gift shop at her local hospital, goes to Bible study once a week, visits the library, runs errands to the bank and pays her bills on the first of the month – without having to rely on family members for a ride.

"My daughter is always willing," she says, "But she just doesn't have that much time."

Rural Public Transportation gives Rae the freedom to keep her own schedule. It helps her daughter, too.

Throughout Missouri, Rural Public Transportation makes it possible for people just like Rae to remain active members of their communities. It's a service that takes many forms, goes by many names and serves many needs.

**For information about Rural Public Transportation in your area, call:**

— Rae Hartenberger  
Fredericktown, MO



**"I like to ride on the bus and be with my friends."**



Like most teenagers, Alicia Welch and her friend Freya like to go out by themselves to shop, have ice cream and run errands. Rural Public Transportation gives them that freedom.

Alicia's busy mom, Julie, appreciates the freedom Rural Public Transportation gives her, too. "Alicia can go out and be more independent," she says. "She doesn't have to rely on mom."



Throughout Missouri, Rural Public Transportation makes life better for people just like Julie, Alicia and Freya. It's a service that takes many forms, goes by many names and serves many needs.

**For information about Rural Public Transportation in your area, call:**

— Alicia Welch, driver Kenny Skornia and Alicia's friend, Freya Hermann, MO



**"It's like another blessing from God."**



Mary Northern loves to cook. When she discovers that she's missing an ingredient, she says, "I can just call the transit, go to the store and get it."

Mary began using Rural Public Transportation to visit the nursing home after her husband became ill. Now it's a lifeline for her. "My daughter lives way off, and my son – he has to work. I don't want to depend on them and feel like I'm a burden already. I'm still too young for that!"

Throughout Missouri, Rural Public Transportation takes people just like Mary wherever they need to go. It's a service that takes many forms, goes by many names and serves many needs.

**For information about Rural Public Transportation in your area, call:**

— Mary Northern  
Dexter, MO



**"It's like you're riding with a friend."**



When JoAnn McHenry chose a rural community for her new home, bus service played an important part. Not only could she go to medical and hair appointments, the grocery store, and even the courthouse to vote, she quickly learned her way around town and met her new neighbors.

"The people are friendly and so are the bus drivers," says JoAnn. "If you need help, you've got somebody there to help you."



Throughout Missouri, Rural Public Transportation allows people just like JoAnn to be a vital part of their communities. It's a service that takes many forms, goes by many names and serves many needs.

**For information about Rural Public Transportation in your area, call:**

— JoAnn McHenry  
Fulton, MO



**“The bus is a blessing for me.”**

— Zelma Altmeyer  
San Andreas

Zelma doesn't like asking friends for a ride. And with the new Calaveras Transit she doesn't have to. Zelma rides the bus to the post office, hairdresser, shopping and doctor's appointments. She calls ahead and they deviate to pick her up right at her door. You too can enjoy the convenience and freedom of Calaveras Transit. Call today for a free First Time Riders Guide.

**754-4450**  
Your ride is here.



Countywide public bus service connecting:

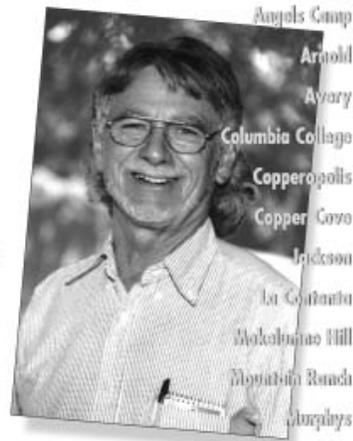
- Angels Camp
- Arnold
- Avery
- Columbia College
- Copperopolis
- Copper Gove
- Jackson
- La Grana
- Mokelum Hill
- Mountain Ranch
- Murphys
- San Andreas
- Vallecito
- Valley Springs
- West Point

**“Word is getting around... Calaveras Transit is for everyone.”**

— Vernon Mayhall  
Bus Operator

Vern has been driving a bus in Calaveras County for eight years. When he started driving, the transit service was just for seniors. But now the new Calaveras Transit offers countywide bus service for everyone. And Vern says the word is getting around. Folks of all ages are discovering the ease and convenience of riding Calaveras Transit. Call today for your free First Time Riders Guide.

**754-4450**  
Your ride is here.



Countywide public bus service connecting:

- Angels Camp
- Arnold
- Avery
- Columbia College
- Copperopolis
- Copper Gove
- Jackson
- La Grana
- Mokelum Hill
- Mountain Ranch
- Murphys
- San Andreas
- Vallecito
- Valley Springs
- West Point

**“It’s a reliable way to get to work.”**

— Michele Brousseau  
Angels Camp

Michele works in a doctor's office in San Andreas and commutes to work on Calaveras Transit. She's one of the many people from throughout Calaveras County who are discovering that the bus is a reliable way to work, school, shopping or wherever you're going. Discover the new Calaveras Transit for yourself. Call us today for your free First Time Riders Guide.

**754-4450**  
Your ride is here.



Countywide public bus service connecting:

- Angels Camp
- Arnold
- Avery
- Columbia College
- Copperopolis
- Copper Gove
- Jackson
- La Grana
- Mokelum Hill
- Mountain Ranch
- Murphys
- San Andreas
- Vallecito
- Valley Springs
- West Point

**“I don’t have to rely on someone else for a ride.”**

— David Neill,  
Calaveras High School  
Valley Springs

David, like other teens in Calaveras County, has discovered how easy it is to ride the new Calaveras Transit. The countywide system gives teens the freedom to go where they want, when they want. For school, jobs or just for fun. To find out where Calaveras Transit can take you, call us today for a free First Time Riders Guide.

**754-4450**  
Your ride is here.



Countywide public bus service connecting:

- Angels Camp
- Arnold
- Avery
- Columbia College
- Copperopolis
- Copper Gove
- Jackson
- La Grana
- Mokelum Hill
- Mountain Ranch
- Murphys
- San Andreas
- Vallecito
- Valley Springs
- West Point

# Samples of Consistent Transit Identities/Brands

