

# CHAPTER 2

## INVENTORY OF INTERCITY SERVICES

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to assess the effectiveness of the intercity bus network in California in order to assist the state in defining appropriate policies. This report includes an inventory of existing intercity bus services, accompanied by a set of figures that represent these services geographically. The inventory is followed by a statewide evaluation of potential need and demand for intercity services. This evaluation includes a number of maps representing both population data and major potential intercity trip generators such as colleges and military bases. Another component of the evaluation is a more detailed evaluation of how the intercity bus network does or does not serve California residents, and includes a detailed assessment of connectivity between rural service providers and the national intercity network. The final section of this memorandum discusses funding policy and its implications on the provision and improvement of intercity bus services.

### OVERVIEW OF EXISTING CALIFORNIA INTERCITY BUS SERVICES

The State of California enjoys an extensive intercity bus network, with regular route service provided by at least six private operators. Many local public transit agencies also provide services that might be considered intercity. For the purposes of this study, only those local services that currently receive federal funding under 49 U.S.C. Section 5311(f) (S.5311(f)) are reviewed, since the rules behind this source of funding stipulate that the service must provide a “meaningful connection” to the national intercity network.

In addition to private carriers and local transit agencies, Amtrak California manages a large network of Amtrak Thruway motorcoach feeder routes to its rail network. The combination of Amtrak Thruway bus service and intercity rail passenger service overlaps with much of the Greyhound network and the two are generally perceived to be competitive providers of intercity surface transportation. Therefore, the feeder route network has been included in this study despite the fact that state law identifies Thruway routes as part of the rail network. Figure 2-1 presents a Statewide California intercity network that includes all of these services. Considering the size of the study area, for certain attributes, the state has been partitioned into three sections. Generally, a set of three figures will be used to discuss the relevant topic and their order will be Southern, Central, and the Northern sections of the state. In the following set



of figures (Figures 2-2, 2-3, and 2-4) intercity service is represented for each section along with a 10- and 25- mile buffer area surrounding each intercity stop depicting potential market areas.

### **National Bus Traffic Association (NBTA) Private Carriers**

The six private operators of intercity bus service include two members of the NBTA: Greyhound/Cruceros and Orange Belt Stages. NBTA members share common ticketing procedures and generally use the same bus stop or station within a given city. Their schedules are generally posted in *Russell's Official National Motor Coach Guide*. Prior to 1982, NBTA members constituted the entire intercity bus network, and many members of the public still perceive Greyhound as being the national network in itself (it is the only national carrier).

- **Greyhound Lines, Inc.** (GLI) remains the largest provider of intercity bus transportation in the state (Figure 2-5), despite having cut service to many communities over the last few years. The figure includes all intercity bus stops in the state, but the matter of discussion here is the service area for GLI. The level of service provided by GLI between California's major cities is detailed in Table 2-1. GLI routes to Mexico are generally operated by GLI's wholly owned subsidiary, Autobuses Cruceros. Cruceros services share the same ticket reservation system as GLI and appear on GLI timetables. Therefore, they are considered as a component of the GLI network for the purposes of this study.
- **Orange Belt Stages** is a smaller regional carrier based in Visalia, in the Central Valley, Figure 2-6. The figure includes all intercity bus stops in the state, but the matter of discussion here is the service area for Orange Belt Stages. It runs two daily fixed-route services. The first runs between Las Vegas and Hanford via Bakersfield and Visalia. This route stops in a number of towns along State Route (SR-) 65 between Bakersfield and Visalia. Orange Belt's other regular route service runs twice a day between Santa Maria and Visalia, with an extension to Bakersfield on one of the trips. Orange Belt's service between Santa Maria and Visalia is part of the larger Amtrak Thruway network, although it is operated independently as a "mixed-mode" service (see Subsection 1.4).

### **Non-NBTA Private Carriers**

Since the early 1980s, it has been possible to operate intercity bus routes in the US outside of the NBTA system. In that time, a number of Mexican bus companies have expanded into the United States (U.S.) to serve primarily Hispanic customers making trips between Mexico and the U.S. The service provided by these carriers has expanded to the point where many are now capable of providing intercity bus trips within the U.S. The greatest concentration of such Hispanic carriers is found in the Southwest, particularly in Texas and Colorado.

Gauging the extent of service provided by Mexican carriers is complicated by the fact that many of these bus companies do not publish and/or frequently modify their schedules. In some cases, Hispanic carriers have typically been more profitable than traditional US-based intercity operators. Hence, a number of Hispanic bus companies have been purchased by non-

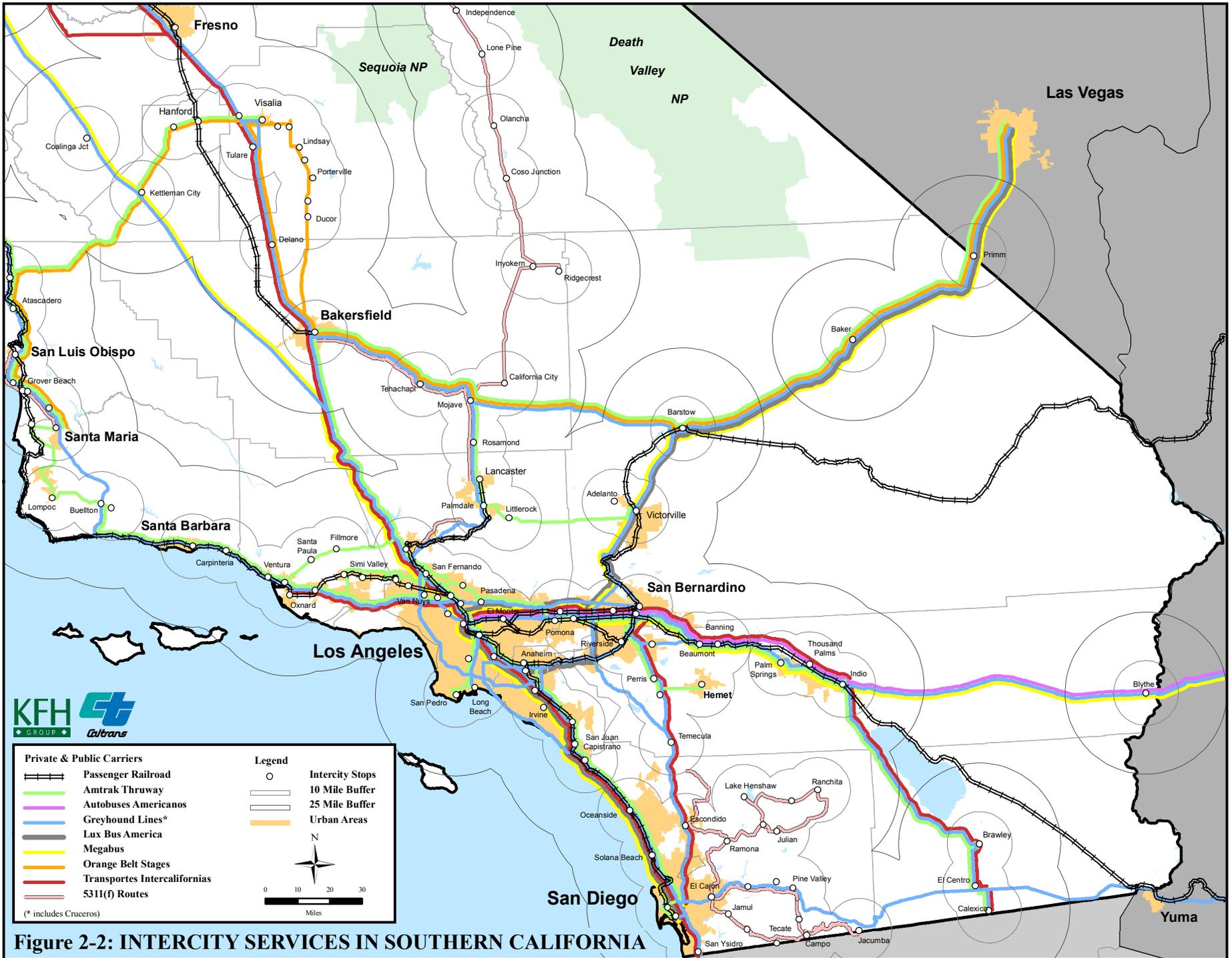


Figure 2-2: INTERCITY SERVICES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

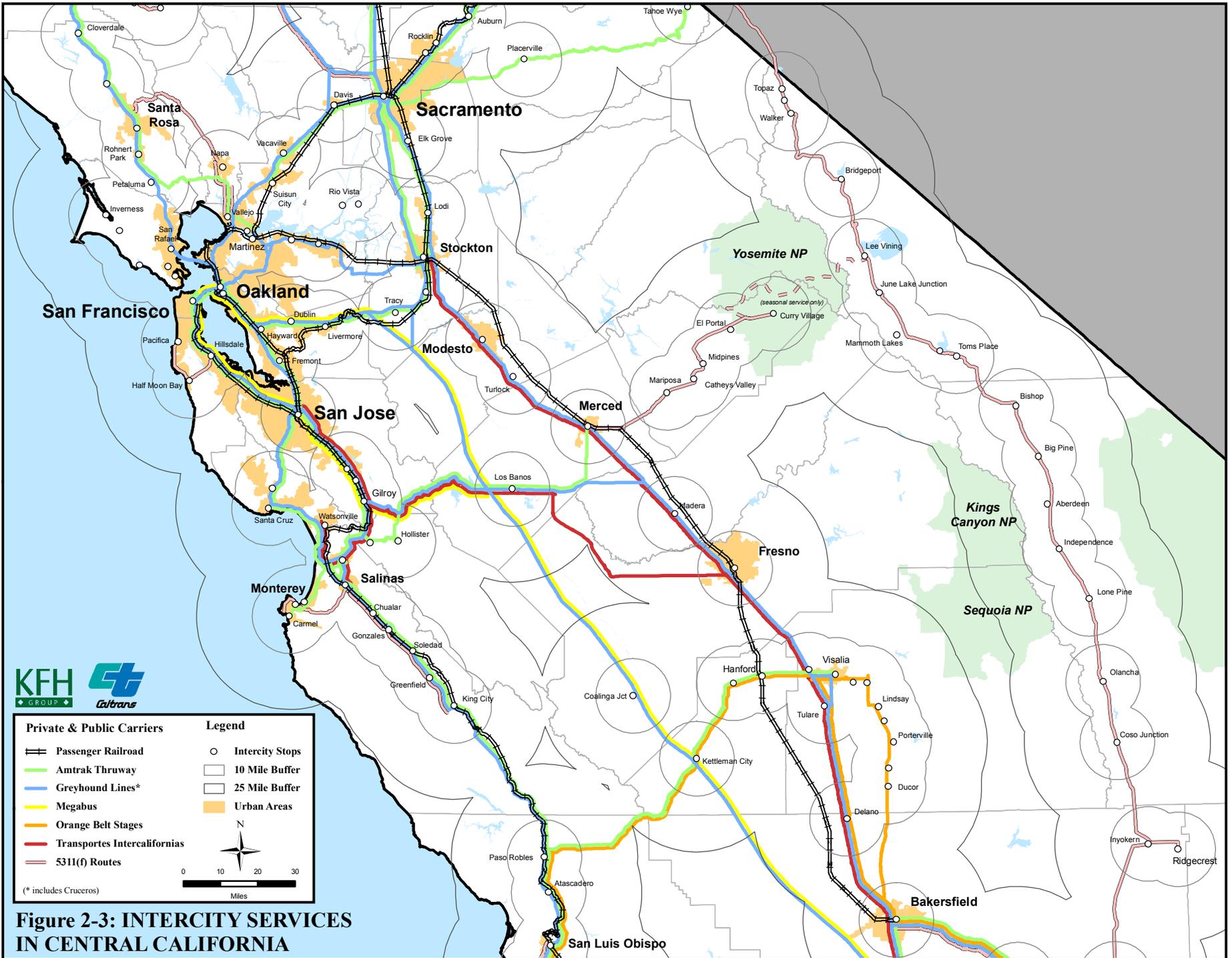
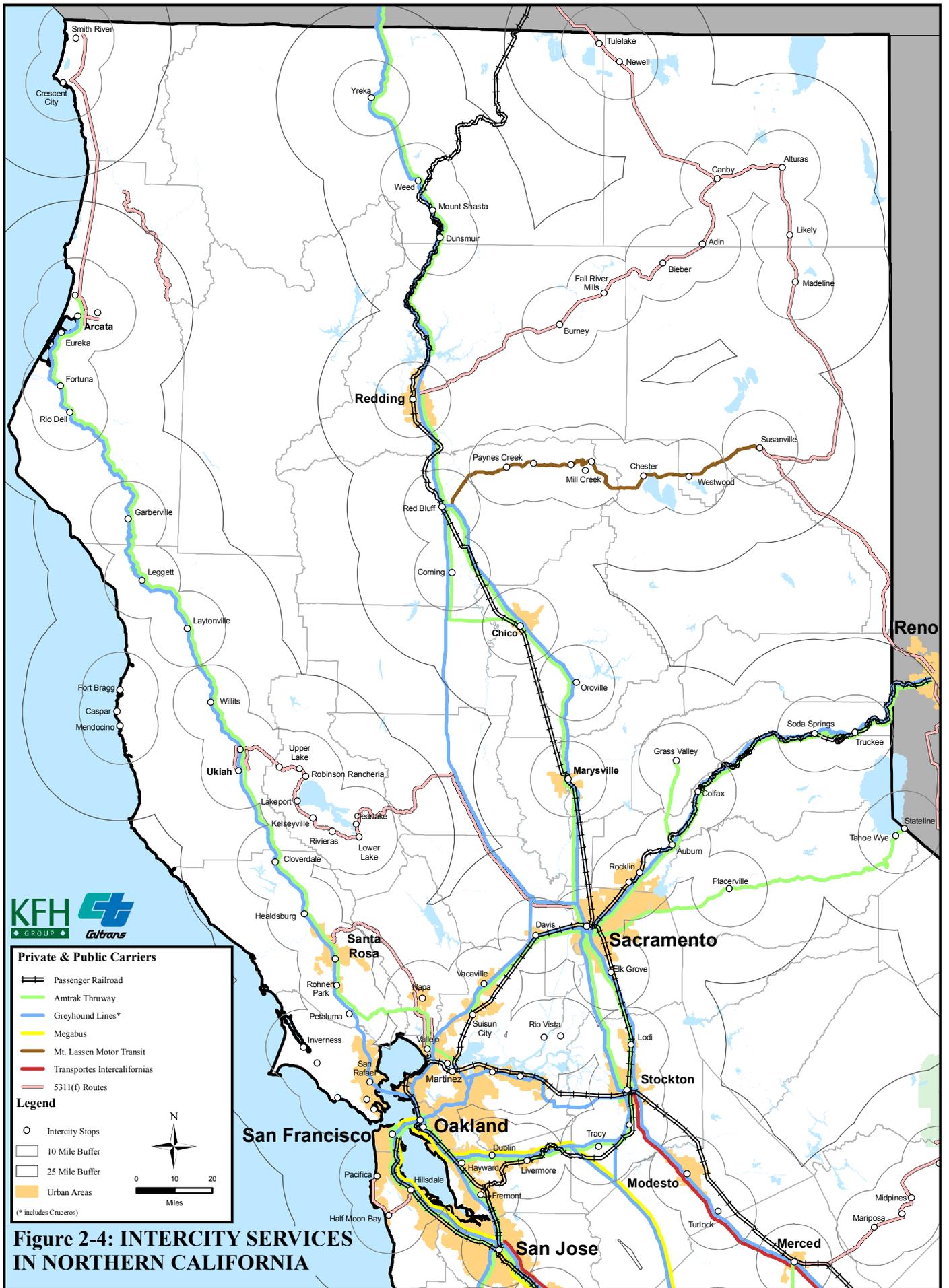


Figure 2-3: INTERCITY SERVICES IN CENTRAL CALIFORNIA



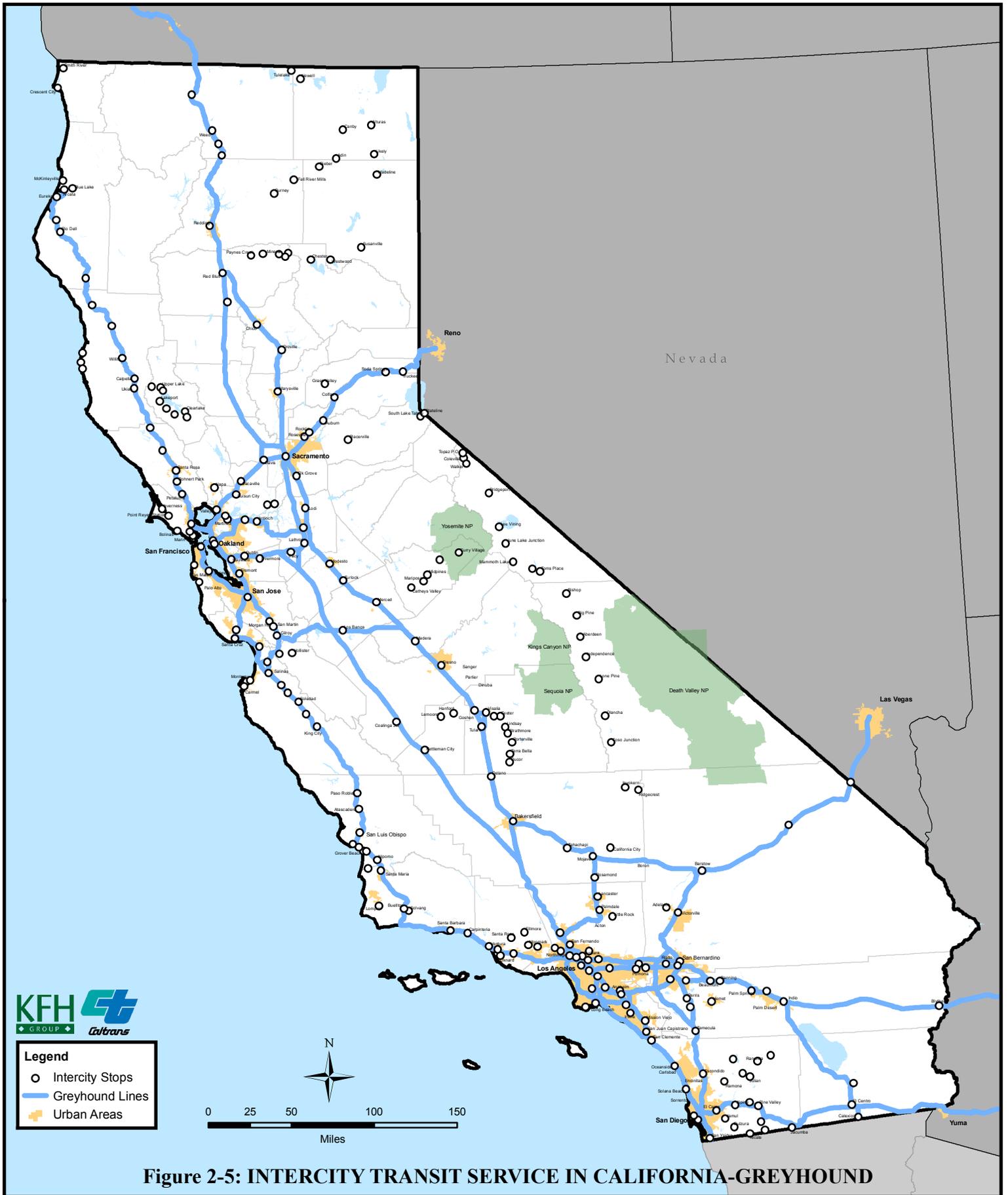
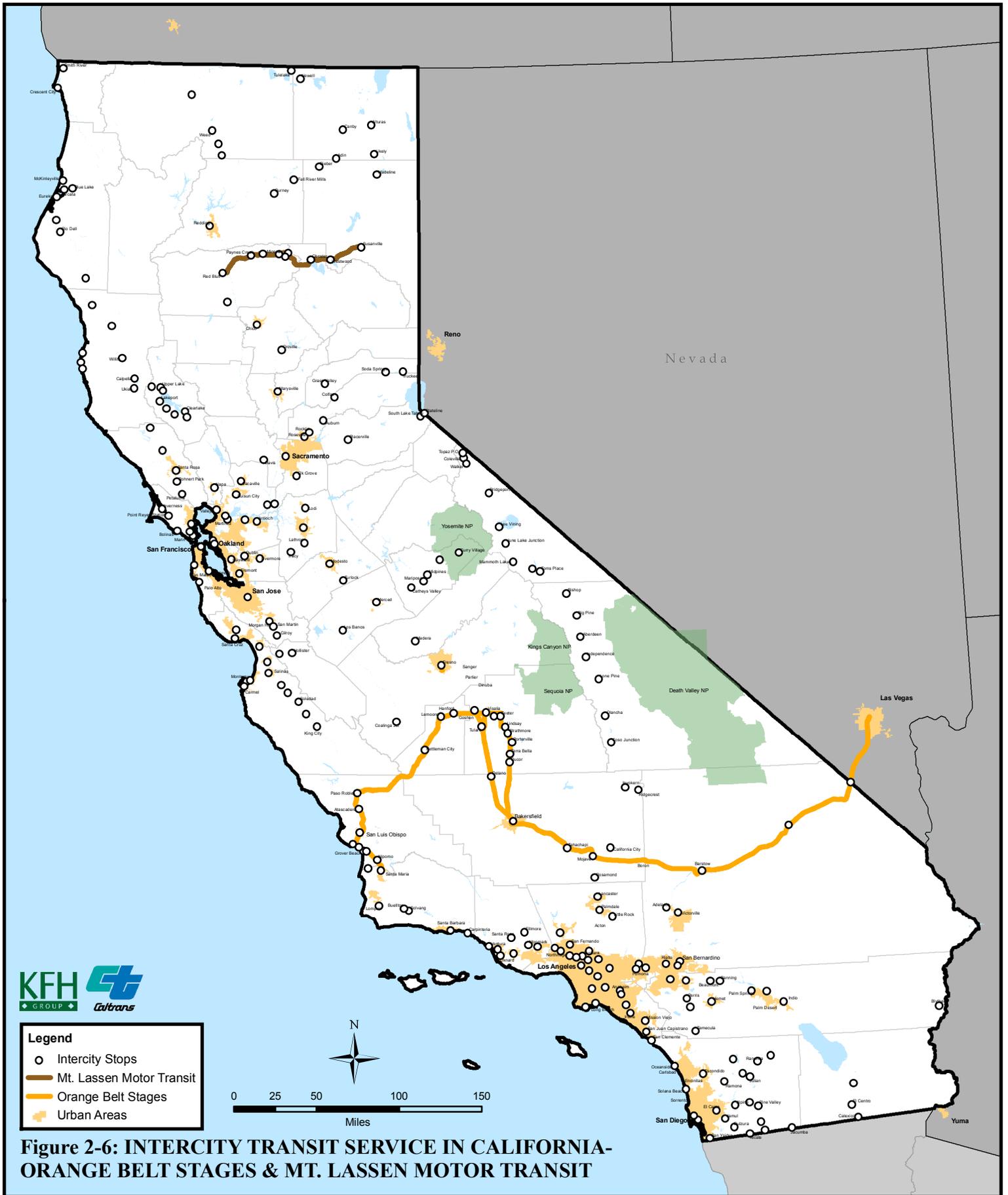


Table 2-1: DAILY TRIPS BETWEEN MAJOR CITIES IN CALIFORNIA ON GREYHOUND  
Read Left to Right.

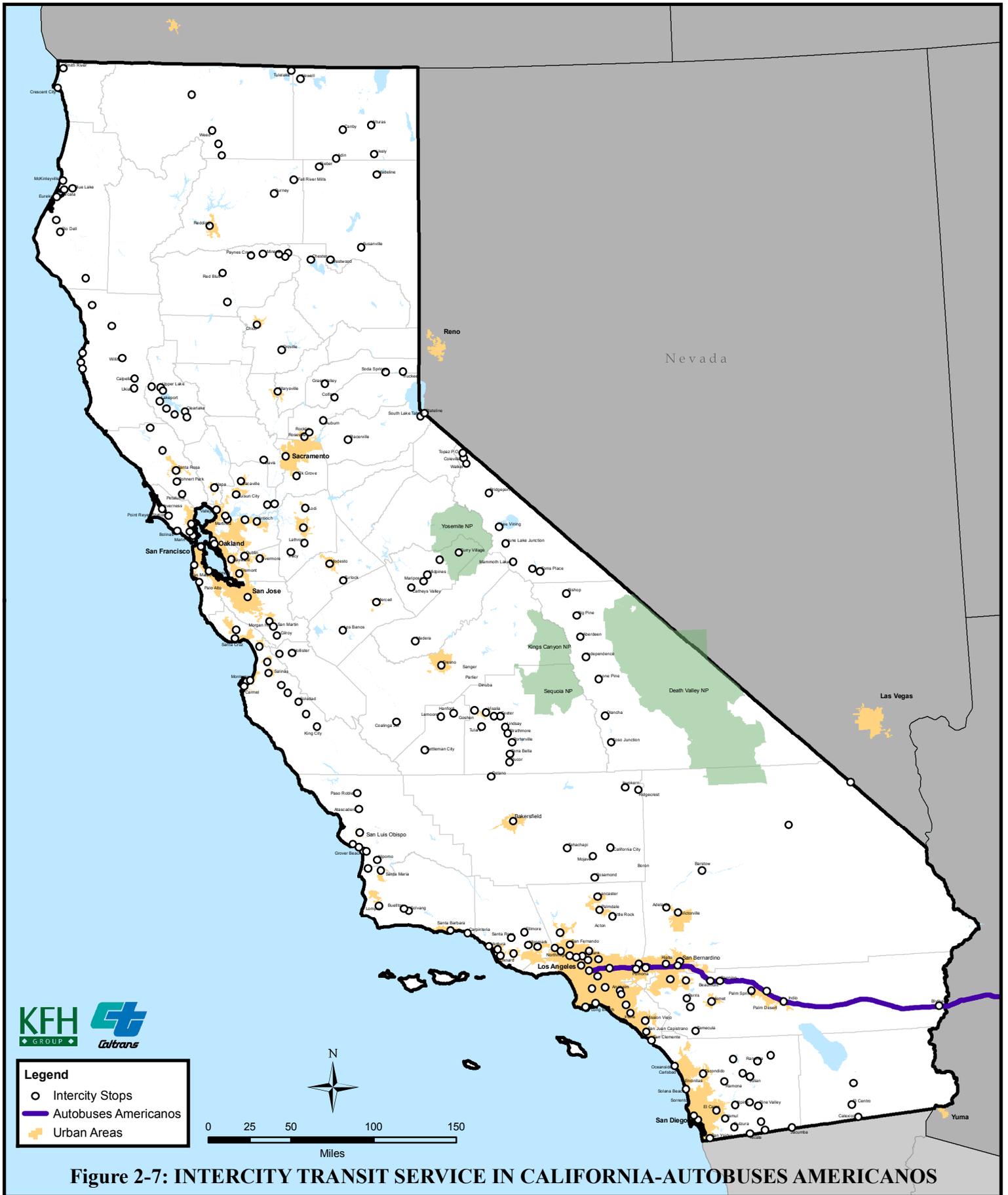
	Arcata	Bakersfield	Calteco	Fresno	Las Vegas, NV	Los Angeles	Merced	Modesto	Oakland	Redding	Reno, NV	Sacramento	Salinas	San Bernardino	San Diego	San Francisco	San Jose	San Luis Obispo	Santa Barbara	Santa Rosa	Stockton	Tijuana, BCN			
Arcata	-																								
Bakersfield		-		13 (+2)		13	6 (+1)	9 (+1)	3			6 (+1)				3					1		6 (+1)		
Calteco			-	2		4 (+1)																		6 (+1)	
Fresno			15	2		13	6 (+1)	9 (+1)	4			6 (+1)				5	2								
Las Vegas, NV					-	13 (+1)																			
Los Angeles				11 (+2)	13 (+2)	-	6 (+1)	9 (+1)	12 (+1)			8 (+1)	4 (+1)	15 (+1)	18	13 (+2)	7 (+2)	5 (+1)	6 (+1)					8 (+1)	
Merced				7		7	-	6 (+1)	1			5 (+1)				1								5 (+1)	
Modesto				9		9	7	-	3			6 (+1)				3								6 (+1)	
Oakland				4		11 (+3)	3	3	-		6 (+2)	10 (+2)	4 (+1)		21 (+5)	7 (+2)	4	4	4	1					
Redding										-		5													
Reno, NV									6 (+2)		-	6 (+2)				6 (+2)									
Sacramento				6		10	4	6	7 (+4)	5	6 (+2)					7 (+4)	0 (+2)							9 (+3)	
Salinas						4 (+1)			4						4 (+1)	4 (+1)								2	
San Bernardino						14																			
San Diego						18 (+1)								3										18	
San Francisco				5	1	13 (+3)	3	3	22 (+5)		6 (+2)	10 (+2)	4 (+1)				10 (+2)	4	4	1				8 (+1)	
San Jose				2		8 (+2)		7 (+1)	7 (+1)			0 (+2)	4 (+1)			9 (+2)	-	4	4					0 (+2)	
San Luis Obispo						4		4	4			4 (+1)	4 (+1)			4 (+1)	4 (+1)	-	4						
Santa Barbara						4		4	4			4 (+1)	4 (+1)			4 (+1)	4 (+1)	5 (+1)	-						
Santa Rosa						1			4				4 (+1)			1									
Stockton				6		10	4	6				8 (+1)					0 (+2)								
Tijuana, BCN				1		26 (+1)						1		18 (+1)											

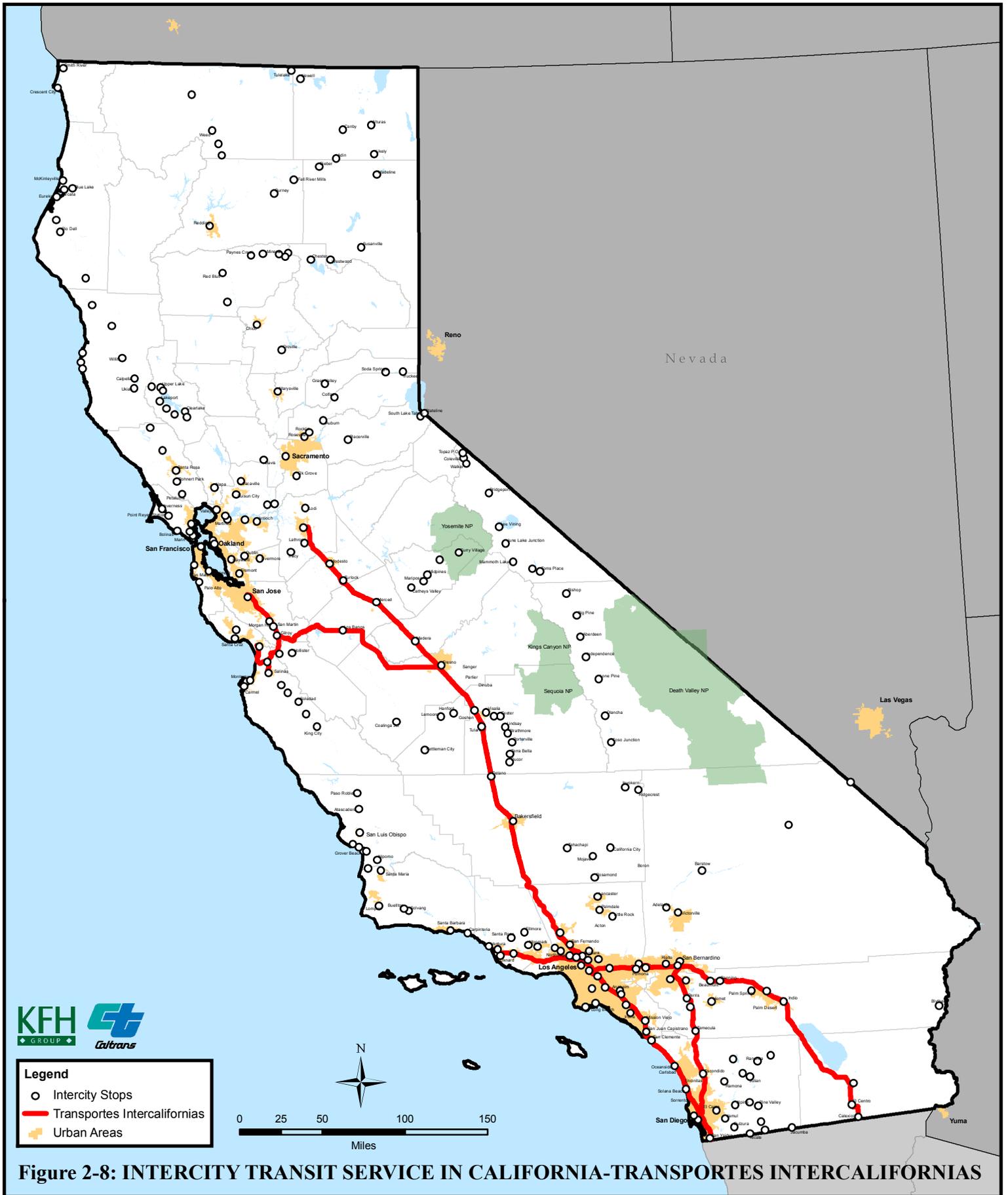
Source: www.greyhound.com



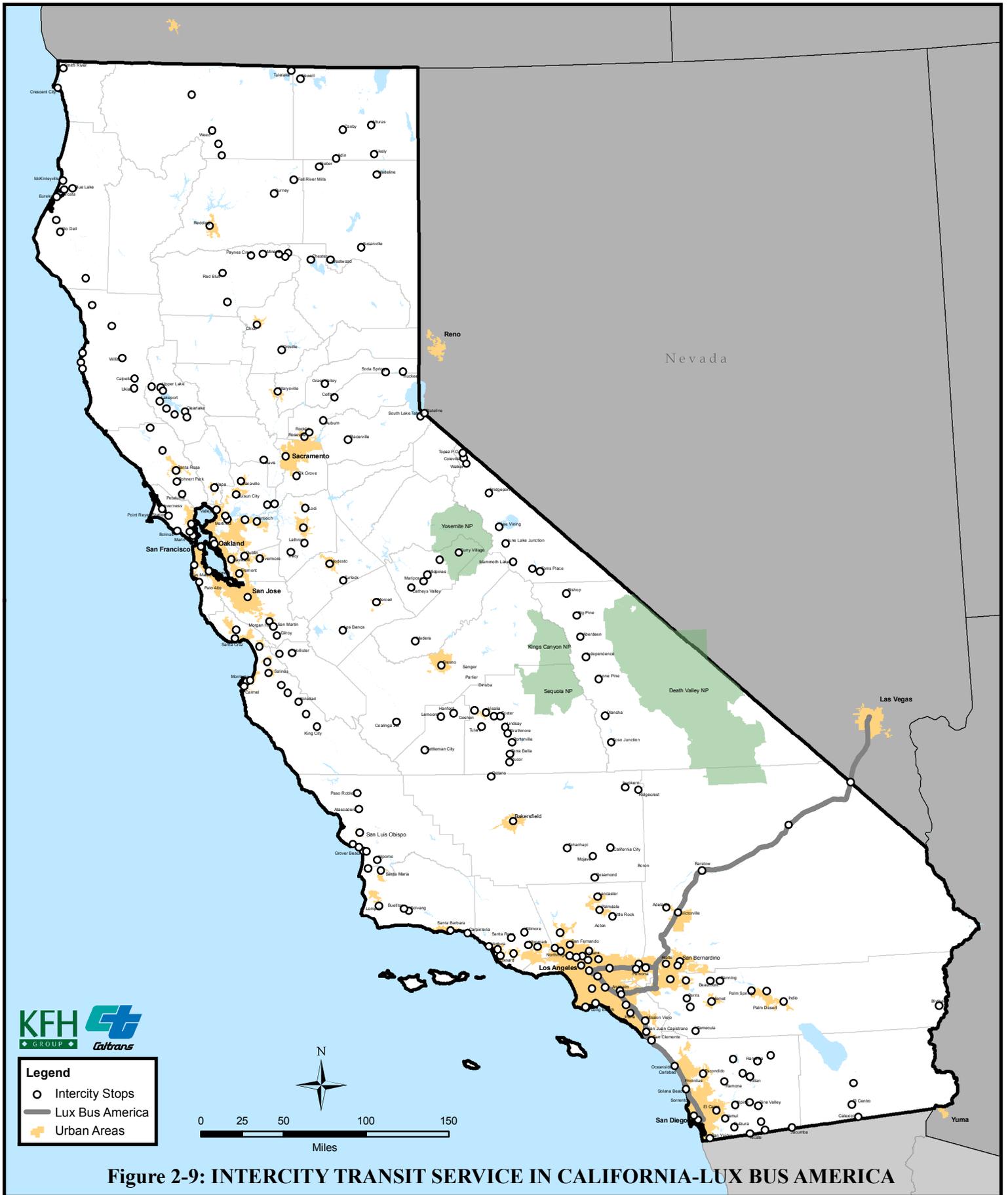
Hispanic carriers. Despite this trend, most Hispanic carriers remain outside of the NBTA system. There are currently at least three major Mexican carriers operating in California: Autobuses Cruceros, Autobuses Americanos, and Transportes Intercalifornias. In addition, there are several non-Hispanic, non-NBTA private intercity bus operators in California, including LuxBus America, Megabus, and Mount Lassen Motor Stages.

- **Autobuses Cruceros** and **Autobuses Americanos** are both wholly-owned subsidiaries of Greyhound Lines. Cruceros service runs from southern California to Tijuana and Mexicali, and is included as an integral part of the Greyhound network for the purposes of this study (see Subsection 1.1). Autobuses Americanos runs a service from Los Angeles to Phoenix that may be separate from that provided by Greyhound, Figure 2-7. The figure includes all intercity bus stops in the state, but the matter of discussion here is the service area for Autobuses Americanos.
- **Transportes Intercalifornias (TI)** is an independent bus operator based in Tijuana, Mexico. TI offers multiple daily trips between its major terminals in Tijuana, Mexicali, San Ysidro, San Diego, Los Angeles, Santa Ana, San Fernando, Oxnard, Fresno, Stockton, and San Jose, see Figure 2-8. The figure includes all intercity bus stops in the state, but the matter of discussion here is the service area for TI. The TI network largely overlaps with Greyhound service in Southern and Central California. However, the two providers do not serve the same stations and do not make provisions for customers who might attempt to connect from one service to the other.
- **Lux Bus America** is an intercity bus operator based in Orange County. Its main offices are in Orange, but its bus services operate out of a terminal in Anaheim. Lux Bus operates daily routes between Las Vegas, Anaheim, Los Angeles, and San Diego, see Figure 2-9. The figure includes all intercity bus stops in the state, but the matter of discussion here is the service area for Lux Bus America. These routes operate at fixed hours between selected hotels and resorts in all four cities. Passengers buy their tickets online and select their pick-up and drop-off location from a list. The primary target markets appear to be out-of-state tourists visiting Disneyland and anybody going to Las Vegas.
- **Megabus** (Figure 2-10) is an intercity bus operator with a California base in Los Angeles. Megabus offers multiple daily trips between Los Angeles' Union Station and terminals in San Diego, Tempe, Las Vegas, San Jose, Oakland, and San Francisco. The figure includes all intercity bus stops within the state, but the matter of discussion is the service area for Megabus. The routes of the bus line do not offer intermediate travel between cities outside of Los Angeles, instead only offering direct connections between Los Angeles and one of the other six cities. Passengers can only purchase their tickets on-line and the first four tickets sold on a given trip sell for one dollar, with the price rising to more competitive levels once all tickets at this available fare are sold.
- **Mount Lassen Motor Transit's (MLMT)** main operations concentrate on charter services from northeastern California for long-distance shopping, gambling, and

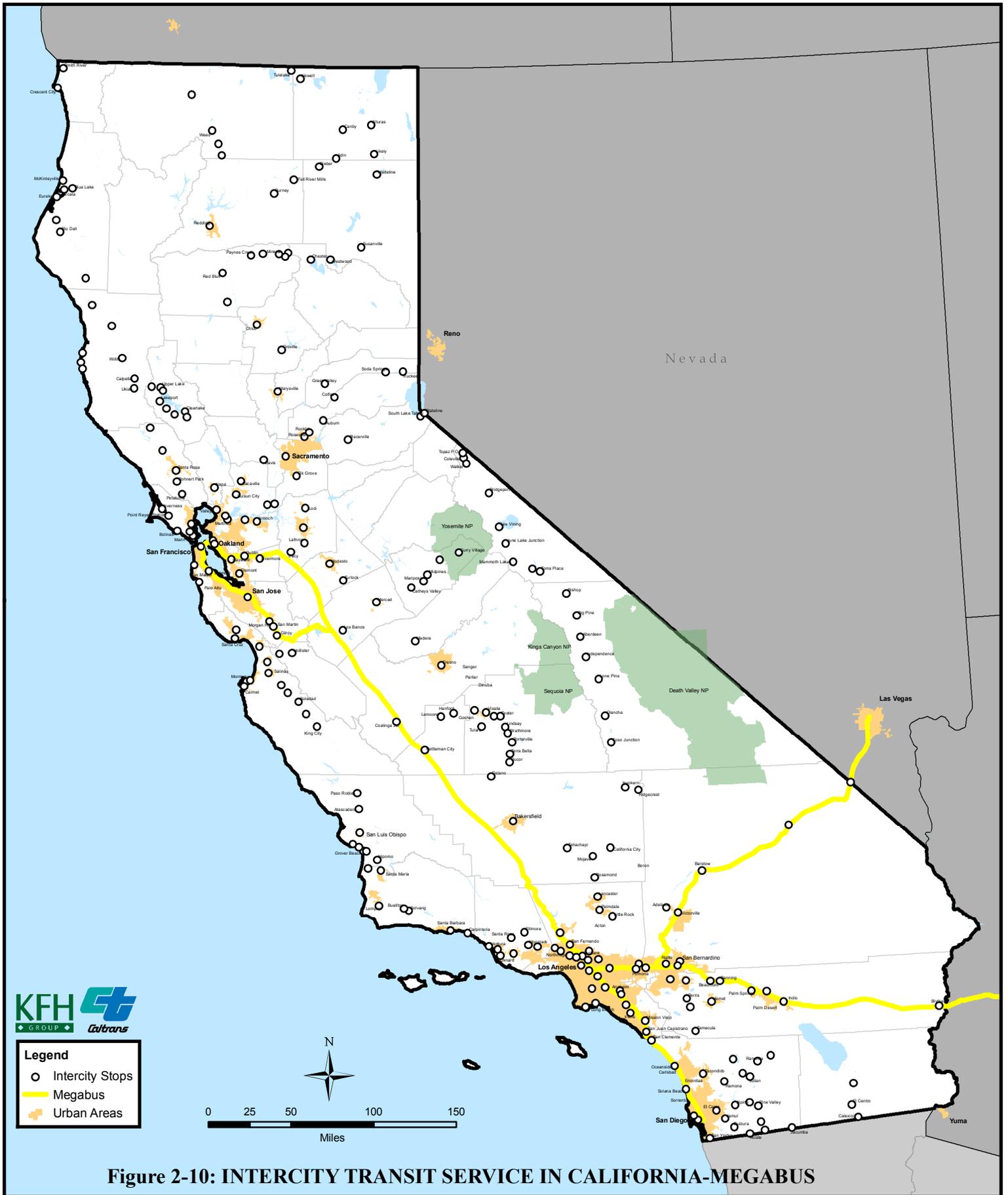




**Figure 2-8: INTERCITY TRANSIT SERVICE IN CALIFORNIA-TRANSPORTES INTERCALIFORNIAS**



**Figure 2-9: INTERCITY TRANSIT SERVICE IN CALIFORNIA-LUX BUS AMERICA**

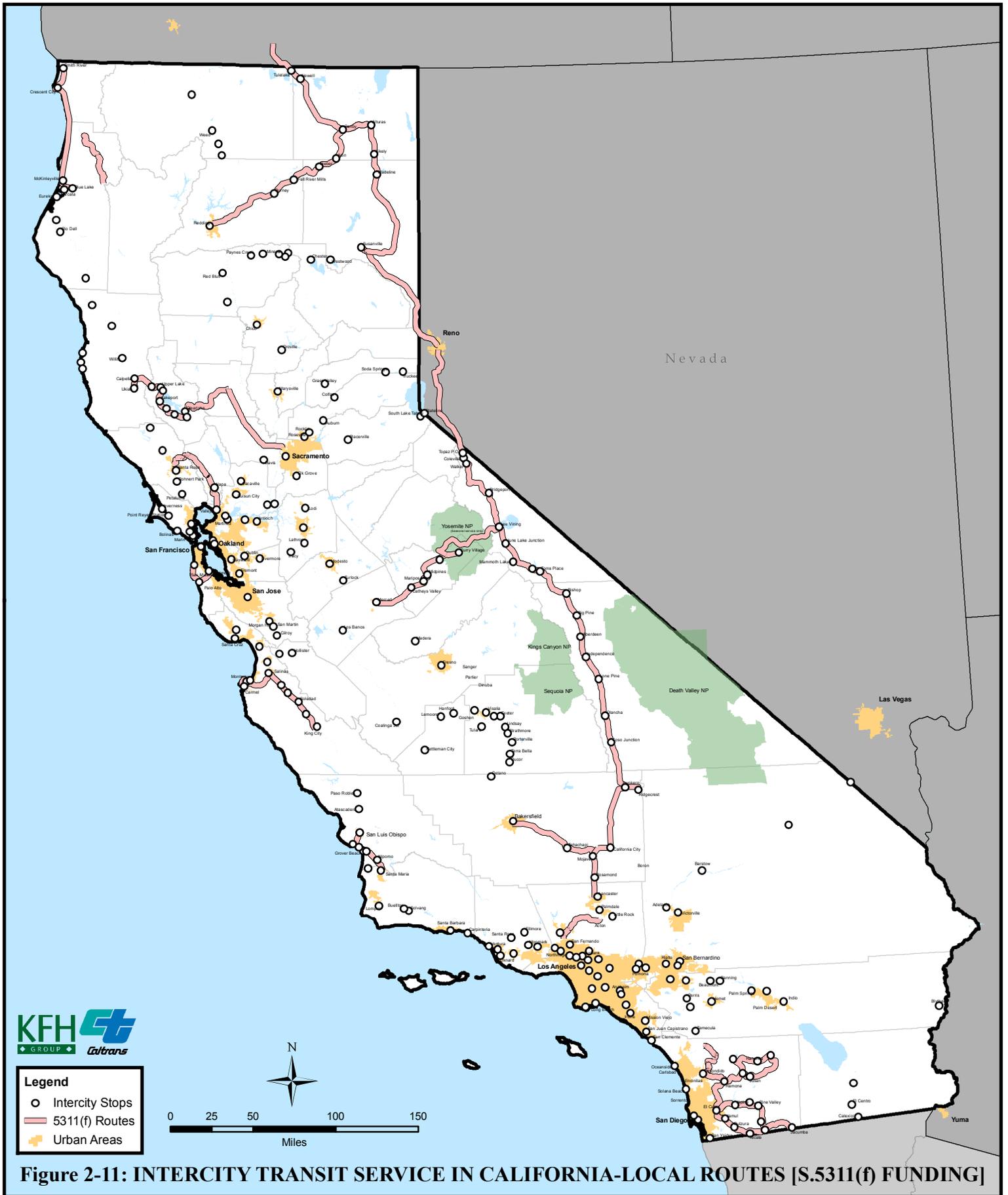


entertainment trips. This service is represented in the previous figure, along with Orange Belt Stages. The figure includes all intercity bus stops in the state, but the matter of discussion here is the service area for MLMT. However, MLMT does operate one daily trip from Red Bluff to Susanville. It should be noted that MLMT does not share facilities with Greyhound in Red Bluff, nor does it advertise this route as an intercity service; rather, it is advertised as a “one-day getaway”. Nevertheless, this route is included in *Russell’s Guide*, and we have therefore chosen to include it in this study.

### **Rural Section 5311(f) Services**

There are many rural transit routes run by public transit agencies that connect two or more towns. However, services funded under S.5311(f) of the SAFETEA-LU federal transportation bill are required to provide a “meaningful connection” to the national intercity network. In many cases, S.5311(f) services exist to re-establish service in small towns that have been cut out of the national intercity network over the past 25 years. The national intercity network could be considered to include all carriers who are listed in *Russell’s Guide*. However, given the increase in the number of carriers, it is debatable whether *Russell’s Guide* is a complete reference anymore. In addition, there is currently general discussion in California over whether S.5311(f) feeder services should be designed to connect with Amtrak services (see Subsection 1.4) in light of the national intercity bus network requirement. The following paragraphs describe the S.5311(f) operators in California and the feeder services they provide. These services are represented in Figure 2-11. The figure includes all intercity bus stops in the state, but the matter of discussion here is the service area for the local S.5311(f) operators.

- **Redwood Coast Transit Authority (RCT)** provides twice-daily (except Sunday) service between Smith River, Crescent City, and Arcata along the North Coast of California. This service is intended to provide a connection to Greyhound and Amtrak Thruway service in Arcata.
- **Lake Transit** provides service four times a day from several towns along the southern shore of Clear Lake to Ukiah. It connects with Greyhound and Amtrak Thruway service in Ukiah.
- **Los Angeles County Department of Public Works** has S.5311(f) funded service between Acton (Vincent Grade/Acton Metrolink) and Santa Clarita/Newhall Metrolink. The service is operated Monday, Wednesday and Saturday offering two round trips per day.
- **Napa County Transportation Planning Agency** provides two S.5311(f) funded routes. Route 10 provides daily and limited weekend service between Calistoga and the Vallejo Transit Center and Ferry station. Route 11 provides two daily round trips, between Santa Rosa and Calistoga/St. Helena



- **Sage Stage** (Modoc Transportation Agency) has three intercity routes. These routes connect points in Modoc, Siskiyou, Lassen, and Shasta Counties in northeast California with Redding, Reno, and Klamath Falls (OR) on different days of the week. Sage Stage connects with Greyhound and Amtrak Thruway service in Redding as well as Reno, and connects with The Shuttle in Klamath Falls.
- **SamTrans** Route 294 operates on weekdays between Half-Moon Bay, Pacifica, and San Mateo. It connects with CalTrain at the Hillsdale Shopping Center, but does not connect to any national intercity bus services.
- **Monterey Salinas Transit (MST)** operates two S.5311(f) funded routes. MST Route 23 runs between Salinas and King City five to seven times a day, and connects with Greyhound service in Salinas. Connections to Amtrak Thruway services in Salinas and King City are slightly more difficult. MST Route 53 operates once a day between King City and Monterey. It does not provide a viable connection to the national intercity network, although it does comprise a relatively long route providing access from rural communities to urban areas. Route 53's schedule suggests that it is a long-distance commuter service.
- **San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority** receives S.5311(f) operating assistance for its Route 10, which operates between Santa Maria and San Luis Obispo. It connects with Greyhound, Amtrak Thruway, and Amtrak Rail services at multiple points along its itinerary. This route operates nine times a day on weekdays and three times on Saturdays.
- **Kern Regional Transit** has two S.5311(f) funded routes. The Mojave Ridgecrest Express runs between Mojave and Ridgecrest three times a day, three days a week, and arguably provides a link for passengers arriving in Mojave to take the Carson Ridgecrest Eastern Sierra Transit (C.R.E.S.T.) Route through the Sierras (see Inyo Mono Transit). The East Kern Express connects Bakersfield to Lancaster via Mojave, Tehachapi and Rosamond six days a week (7 runs on weekdays, 3 runs on Saturday).
- **Inyo Mono Transit** operates the C.R.E.S.T. Route, which runs from Ridgecrest to Reno, NV through the Eastern Sierras in Inyo and Mono Counties. The C.R.E.S.T. Route consists of a northern and southern leg, that run on alternate days. In other words, a passenger traveling the entire length of the route will spend one night in either Bishop or Mammoth Lakes. Connectivity to national intercity bus services at either end of the C.R.E.S.T. route is questionable.
- **Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)** receives S.5311(f) funding for both of its routes. The main SR-140 Route runs six times a day between Merced, Mariposa, and Yosemite National Park. YARTS has interline agreements with both Amtrak and Greyhound for operation of this route. Thus, the SR-140 Route is theoretically part of both the Greyhound and Amtrak Thruway networks. YARTS' other route runs along SR-120 to Lee Vining and Mammoth Lakes from

June to September, and does not connect with any national intercity bus services, though it does link to the C.R.E.S.T. Route.

- **Yurok Tribal Government** will contract for two daily round trips between the community of Pecwan, in the Yurok Reservation, and Willow Creek, junction of SR 96 and SR 299. In Willow Creek, the service can connect with Humboldt Transit Authority service along SR-299, for access to Arcata.
- **San Diego Metropolitan Transit System** operates three rural routes with S.5311(f) funding assistance. Routes 888, 891/892, and 894 connect rural communities in eastern San Diego County to Metro San Diego area and the Greyhound bus network at the El Cajon Transit Center. Route 888 runs once a day on Mondays and Fridays. Routes 891 and 892, respectively run once a day on Thursdays and Fridays. Route 894 runs three times a day on weekdays.

### **Amtrak Thruway Network**

Nearly all Amtrak Rail and Thruway Motorcoach services in California are run through Amtrak California, which is a partnership between the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) Division of Rail and Amtrak. Amtrak California manages three rail lines: the San Joaquins in the Central Valley, the Capitol Corridor from Auburn to Sacramento to Oakland and San Jose, and the Pacific Surfliner from San Luis Obispo to Los Angeles and San Diego. These rail lines are complemented by a feeder network of Thruway Motorcoach bus routes that reaches throughout the state, see Figure 2-12. The figure includes all intercity bus stops in the state, but the point of discussion here is the service area for Thruway Motorcoach. Amtrak California contracts the operation of Thruway Routes to private carriers, but retains control over scheduling. This enables Amtrak to guarantee connections between its rail and bus networks on most routes.

There are three types of contracts issued to operators for Amtrak Thruway bus service: interline, mixed mode, and dedicated. Interline and mixed mode operators run their own bus routes, and agree to accept Amtrak passengers and tickets on board their buses. Mixed mode operators receive financial support from Amtrak in exchange for accepting Amtrak riders. Currently, there are four mixed mode routes and one interline route on the Amtrak network, with the rest served by dedicated Thruway service. Dedicated Amtrak Thruway services accept only passengers holding Amtrak tickets. By state law, passengers on dedicated Thruway bus connections are required to make at least part of their trip by rail. This law exists to prevent direct competition between a subsidized service (Amtrak) and unsubsidized private operators (mostly Greyhound) within the same transportation mode and service area. Because of this, dedicated Amtrak Thruway routes are, in principle at least, part of the state's rail network and not part of the intercity bus network.

It should be noted that state law concerning dedicated Thruway service could easily be bypassed by Amtrak passengers. A passenger could purchase a Thruway bus ticket along with a train ticket to the first stop beyond the Thruway terminus, and choose not to use the train ticket.



For example, a customer wishing to travel from Los Angeles to Bakersfield via Amtrak Thruway Bus could potentially buy an Amtrak ticket to Wasco, which would include a bus ticket to Bakersfield and a rail ticket from Bakersfield to Wasco, but not ride to Wasco. In this kind of transaction it is difficult to enforce the rule requiring the passenger to continue to Wasco, because the customer has the right to end their trip and get off at any stop. This possibility renders the contracted (subsidized) service in direct competition with private carrier (unsubsidized) services in the area. This study does not contain any data on the frequency of such occurrences. However, Greyhound has expressed concern about the phenomenon on multiple occasions.

## **Summary**

The regional maps at the beginning of this chapter (Figure 2-2, 2-3, and 2-4) present the overall California intercity bus and rail network for Southern, Central, and Northern California, respectively. A summary of intercity bus carriers operating in California's major cities was presented in Table 2-2. The information presented in this section shows that nearly all parts of California appear to receive some intercity bus service, and that there is a wide degree of overlap between the three largest providers (Greyhound, Amtrak, and Intercalifornias). Nevertheless, it is clear from Table 2-2 and the maps that the highest levels of service are to be found in Greater Los Angeles, the Central Valley along SR-99, the Central Coast from Paso Robles to Santa Maria, and in an area that spans the Monterey and San Francisco Bays up to Sacramento and Stockton. Potential bus travelers in the rest of the state must rely on either less-frequent Greyhound and Amtrak service (as between Arcata and San Francisco), or less-than-daily service (as in the Eastern Sierras and in Northwestern California).

Table 2-2: MAJOR CITIES WITH INTERCITY BUS SERVICE

City	Greyhound / Cruceiros	Orange Belt Lines	Mt. Lassen Motor Transit	Transportes Inter- Californias	Autobuses Americanos	LuxBus America	MegaBus	S.5311(f) Rural Feeders	Amtrak Thruway Motorcoach
Arcata	X							X	X
Bakersfield	X	X		X				X	X
Barstow	X	X							X
Calexico	X			X					X
Chico	X								X
Fresno	X			X				X	X
Lancaster	X								X
Las Vegas, NV	X	X				X	X		X
Los Angeles	X			X	X	X	X		X
Merced	X			X				X	X
Modesto	X			X					
Monterey								X	X
Oakland	X						X		X
Palm Springs	X								X
Phoenix, AZ	X				X				
Portland, OR	X								
Red Bluff	X		X						X
Redding	X							X	X
Reno, NV	X							X	X
Sacramento	X								X
Salinas	X			X				X	X
San Bernardino	X			X					X
San Diego	X			X		X	X	X	X
San Francisco	X						X		X
San Jose	X			X			X		X
San Luis Obispo	X	X						X	X
Santa Barbara	X			X					X
Santa Maria	X	X						X	X
Santa Rosa	X							X	X
Stockton	X			X					X
Tijuana, BCN	X			X					
Visalia	X	X						X	X
Yuma, AZ	X								