

Imperial County Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan



FINAL PLAN

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Chapter 1. Project Overview

Introduction

This Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Imperial County is sponsored by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). It is part of a larger planning effort overseen by Caltrans on behalf of 23 counties in non-urbanized areas within the State of California.

As described further in this report, federal planning requirements specify that designated recipients of certain sources of funds administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must certify that projects funded with those federal dollars are derived from a coordinated plan. Caltrans serves as the designated recipient in non-urbanized areas of California for funds subject to this plan.¹

These projects are intended to improve the mobility of individuals who are disabled, elderly, or of low-income status. This plan focuses on identifying needs specific to those population groups as well as identifying strategies to meet their needs.

Caltrans is sponsoring a statewide planning effort on behalf of the 23 rural counties for whom the funds are intended so that potential sponsors of transportation improvements may access the funds.² Imperial is one of these 23 counties, which are highlighted in the map in Figure 1-1.

¹ The term “ non-urbanized area” includes rural areas and urban areas under 50,000 in population not included in an urbanized area.

² Some plans in rural areas have been completed independently of this effort. Caltrans’ website lists the status of the plans at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/Coord-Plan-Res.html>.

Figure 1-1 Caltrans Coordinated Planning for California Counties



Report Outline

This report is organized in seven chapters, as described below:

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the project, its sponsorship by Caltrans, and federal planning requirements established by the passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, commonly referred to as SAFETEA-LU. This chapter also provides a summary of other key documents related to transportation planning in Imperial County that have helped inform this effort. In addition, it discusses federal and state roles in promoting coordination among public transit operators human service transportation providers. It also describes the funding environment for transportation in rural California.

Chapter 2 summarizes the steps taken and the methodologies used to prepare the Coordinated Plan. It provides a description of the process, from initial contact through final plan. This chapter also provides a summary of key documents related to transportation planning in Imperial County that have helped inform the effort.

Chapter 3 includes a demographic profile of Imperial County, which was prepared using US Census data, projections from the California Department of Finance, and information provided by the Imperial Valley Association of Governments (IVAG). This information establishes the framework for better understanding the local characteristics of the study area, with a focus on the three population groups subject to this plan: people with disabilities, older adults, and those of low-income status.

Chapter 4 documents the array of public transportation services that already exist in the area. These services include publicly and privately operated fixed-route services as well as transportation services provided or sponsored by other social services agencies. These were identified through review of existing documents, and through local stakeholder interviews.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of key findings, because an important step in completing this plan includes the identification of service needs. The chapter identifies major destinations, temporal and geographic gaps, and areas where service duplication exists. Much of the information incorporated into this chapter was identified through a series of stakeholder interviews conducted with representatives of human service agencies and transportation providers throughout Imperial County. The key findings were also developed through a review of existing documents and plans that also provide information on existing services and the need to improve them.

Chapter 6 presents strategies and solutions to address service gaps and unmet transportation needs. It also presents results of the three workshops with the public and stakeholders to develop strategies and evaluation criteria.

Chapter 7 presents an implementation plan for the most highly-ranked strategies. A potential project sponsor is identified, along with projected costs, potential sources of funds, and an overall assessment of how implementation of these strategies could address service gaps identified in Chapter 5.

SAFETEA-LU Planning Requirements

On August 10, 2005, President Bush signed SAFETEA-LU into law, authorizing the provision of \$286.4 billion in guaranteed funding for federal surface transportation programs over six years through Fiscal Year 2009, including \$52.6 billion for federal transit programs.

Starting in Fiscal Year 2007, projects funded through three programs in SAFETEA-LU, including the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC, Section 5316), New Freedom (Section 5317) and the Formula Program for Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310), are required to be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. SAFETEA-LU guidance issued by the FTA indicates that the plan should be a “unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited income, laying out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizing services.”³

The FTA issued program circulars, effective May 1, 2007, to provide guidance on the administration of the three programs subject to this planning requirement.

These circulars can be accessed through the following websites:

http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6622.html	Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310)
http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6623.html	Job Access and Reverse Commute (Section 5316)
http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6624.html	New Freedom Program (Section 5317)

This federal guidance specifies four required elements of the plan, as follows:

- An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and nonprofit).
- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service.
- Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery.
- Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities.

³ Federal Register: March 15, 2006 (Volume 71, Number 50, page 13458)

Federal Coordination Efforts

Coordination can enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate cost-effective solutions with available resources. Enhanced coordination also results in joint ownership and oversight of service delivery by both human services and transportation service agencies. The requirements of SAFETEA-LU build upon previous federal initiatives intended to enhance social service transportation coordination. Among these are:

- **Presidential Executive Order:** In February 2004, President Bush signed an Executive Order establishing an Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility to focus 10 federal agencies on the coordination agenda. It may be found at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/02/20040224-9.html
- **A Framework for Action:** The Framework for Action is a self-assessment tool that states and communities can use to identify areas of success and highlight the actions still needed to improve the coordination of human service transportation. This tool has been developed through the United We Ride initiative sponsored by FTA, and can be found on FTA's website: http://www.unitedweride.gov/1_81_ENG_HTML.htm
- **Previous research:** Numerous studies and reports have documented the benefits of enhanced coordination efforts among federal programs that fund or sponsor transportation for their clients.⁴

State of California Coordination Efforts

Assembly Bill 120 (1979)

Initiatives to coordinate human service transportation programs in the State of California have been largely guided by the passage of state legislation, the Social Services Transportation Improvement Act (Assembly Bill No. 120, Chapter 1120), often referred to as AB 120, in 1979. This law under California Government code 15975 required transportation planning agencies and county transportation commissions to:

- Develop an Action Plan for the coordination and improvement of social service transportation services.
- Designate a Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) to implement the Action Plan within the geographic area of jurisdiction of the transportation planning agency or county transportation commission. CTSA's are considered eligible applicants of TDA Article 4.5 funds.
- Identify the social service recipients to be served and funds available for use by the consolidated or coordinated services.
- Establish measures to coordinate the services with fixed-route service provided by public and private transportation providers.
- Establish measures to insure that the objectives of the action plan are consistent with the legislative intent declared in Section 15951.

⁴ Examples include United States General Accounting Office (GAO) reports to Congress entitled *Transportation Disadvantaged Populations, Some Coordination Efforts Among Programs Providing Transportation, but Obstacles Persist*, (June 2003) and *Transportation Disadvantaged Seniors—Efforts to Enhance Senior Mobility Could Benefit From Additional Guidance and Information*, (August 2004).

Senate Bill 826 (1988)

In 1988, Senate Bill 826 was introduced amending the Assembly Bill 120. It required the establishment of

- Measures for the effective coordination of specialized transportation service from one provider service area to another.

And required that

- Transportation planning agencies and county transportation commissions shall every four years update the social services transportation inventory pursuant to Section 15973 and every two years shall update the action plan prepared pursuant to Section 15975 and submit these reports to the California Department of Transportation.

Assembly Bill 2647 (2002)

In 2002, Section 15975.1 was repealed, which no longer required the transportation planning agencies to submit an Action plan or inventory to the California Department of Transportation. The Department no longer has a role in the development of the Social Service Transportation Action Plan and will not be receiving information or reporting to the Legislature.

Role of Consolidated Transportation Service Agencies (CTSAs)

AB 120 authorized the establishment of CTSAs and recognizes them as direct claimants of TDA Article 4.5 funds. CTSAs are designated by Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) or, where RTPAs do not exist, by the Local Transportation Commission. Very little guidance exists, however, as to expectations or the roles of the CTSAs. As discussed below, TDA law requires that any rural county intending to use some of its TDA funds for streets and roads purposes establish a Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC); representatives from the CTSA are required to participate on the SSTAC. The SSTAC plays an active role and meets monthly to discuss transportation issues and to advise IVAG.

In Imperial County, IVAG has designated itself as the CTSA. In 1997, IVAG adopted a mission statement, a series of ten goals and related objectives for the CTSA. The CTSA's mission is:

“The effective planning and use of transportation services and resources through coordination, education and cooperation.”

The CTSA Goals and Objectives include a number of elements, include those to focus on providing information and referral services, and also to take an active role in coordination. Many of the objectives remain valid today and, although others could be updated to reflect the current regulatory and operating environment, the goals provide a good starting point for ramping up the role of the CTSA in facilitating coordination within the County. Some of the goals that are most relevant for the successful implementation of this Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan include the following:

- To assist public and private health and human service agencies in providing or obtaining effective and efficient transportation. This includes providing ongoing technical assistance in the areas of brokerage assistance, scheduling and routing, and driver training and safety. This also includes an objective to find potential sources of revenue for transportation providers.

- To provide information and referral services, responding to transportation-related telephone calls and letters, and working with groups and agencies to assist seniors and people with disabilities to use fixed route transit.
- To resolve transportation problems by documenting recurring problems, gaps and barriers to transportation coordination, and attempt to find solutions.
- To increase the visibility of the CTSA and increase the acceptance of transportation coordination concepts and activities, through information distribution and active involvement with committees and organizations dedicated to transportation issues.

To provide the level of technical assistance and information and referral services, the CTSA will require additional staff resources.

Funding Public Transportation in Rural California

Transportation funding in California is complex. Federal and state formula and discretionary programs provide funds for transit and paratransit services; sales tax revenues are also used for public transit purposes. Transportation funding programs are subject to rules and regulations that dictate how they can be used and applied for (or claimed) through federal, state and regional levels of government. Additionally, some funds for social service transportation come from a variety of non-traditional transportation funding programs including both public and private sector sources.

Another complexity with federal funding programs is the local match requirements. Each federal program requires that a share of total program costs be derived from local sources, and may not be matched with other federal Department of Transportation funds. Examples of local match which may be used for the local share include: state or local appropriations; non-DOT federal funds; dedicated tax revenues; private donations; revenue from human service contracts; toll revenue credits; private donations; revenue from advertising and concessions. Non-cash funds such as donations, volunteer services, or in-kind contributions are eligible to be counted toward the local match as long as the value of each is documented and supported.

A review of federal, state and local funding programs for public transit agencies and social service providers is presented in Figure 1-3 at the conclusion of this chapter. The figure highlights the funding programs and their purpose, how funds can be used, who is eligible to apply and other relevant information. More detailed information on funding sources commonly used by public transit agencies in rural counties are described the following section.

Funding for public transportation in rural California counties is dependent primarily on two sources of funds: TDA funds generated through State of California sales tax revenues, and Federal Section 5311 funds intended for rural areas. These two funding programs are described in this chapter. A brief overview is provided of other funding sources that are available for public transit and social service transportation. Because the funding arena is complex and varied, this section on funding is not intended to identify all potential funding sources, but rather to identify the major sources of funding for public transit and human service transportation in rural California.

The three sources of federal funds subject to this plan (FTA Section 5316, 5317 and 5310), are described below. Caltrans serves as the designated recipient for these funds intended to be used in rural and small urbanized areas of the state. As designated recipient, Caltrans is

required to select projects for use of SAFETEA-LU funds through a competitive process, and to certify that projects funded are derived from the coordinated plan.

FTA Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program

The purpose of the JARC program is to fund local programs that offer job access services for low-income individuals. JARC funds are distributed to states on a formula basis, depending on that state’s rate of low-income population, and then are awarded within California following a competitive process. This approach differs from previous funding cycles, when grants were awarded purely on an “earmark” basis. JARC funds will pay for up to 50% of operating costs and 80% for capital costs. The remaining funds are required to be provided through local match sources.

Examples of eligible JARC projects include:

- Late-night and weekend service
- Guaranteed ride home programs
- Vanpools or shuttle services to improve access to employment or training sites
- Car-share or other projects to improve access to autos
- Access to child care and training

Eligible applicants for JARC funds may include state or local governmental bodies, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), RTPAs, Local Transportation Commissions (LTCs), social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations.

FTA Section 5317 New Freedom Program

The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the workforce and full participation in society. The New Freedom Program seeks to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Persons benefiting from these funds are not required to be ADA-certified.

New Freedom funds are awarded following a competitive process, and are available for capital and operating expenses that support new public transportation services and alternatives, beyond those required by the ADA, that are designed to assist individuals with disabilities with accessing transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services. The same match requirements for JARC apply for the New Freedom Program.

Examples of eligible New Freedom Program projects include:

- Expansion of paratransit service hours or service area beyond minimal requirements
- Purchase of accessible taxi or other vehicles
- Promotion of accessible ride sharing or vanpool programs
- Administration of volunteer programs
- Building curb-cuts, providing accessible bus stops

- Travel training programs

Eligible applicants may include state or local governmental bodies, MPOs, RTPAs, LTCs, social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations.

FTA Section 5310 Elderly and Disabled Specialized Transportation Program

Funds for this program are allocated by a population-based formula to each state for the capital costs of providing services to elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Typically, vans or small buses are available to support nonprofit transportation providers; however, Section 5310 funding can also be used for operations if the service is contracted out. In California, a local match of 11.47% is required.

The following chart provides an estimate on the levels of JARC and New Freedom funding available for non-urbanized portions of the state from 2007 to 2009, as well as Elderly and Disabled (Section 5310) funds for the entire state. As the designated recipient of these funds, Caltrans is responsible to define guidelines, develop application forms and establish selection criteria for a competitive selection process in consultation with its regional partners.

Figure 1-2 Projected State of California Funding Sources/Amounts

Designated Recipient	Fund Source	2007 \$ estimate	2008 \$ estimate	2009 \$ estimate
Caltrans	Small Urbanized and Rural JARC	4,467,218	4,791,210	5,052,269
Caltrans	Small Urbanized and Rural New Freedom	2,339,499	2,658,396	2,810,304
Caltrans	Elderly and Disabled Section 5310 Statewide (includes urban areas)	12,394,851	13,496,069	14,218,737

FTA Section 5311

Federal Section 5311 funds are distributed on a formula basis to rural counties throughout the country. The goals of the non-urbanized formula program are as follows:

- To enhance the access of people in non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services, and recreation;
- To assist in the maintenance, development, improvement, and use of public transportation systems in rural and small urban areas;
- To encourage and facilitate the most efficient use of all Federal funds used to provide passenger transportation in non-urbanized areas through the coordination of programs and services;
- To assist in the development and support of intercity bus transportation; and
- To provide for the participation of private transportation providers in non-urbanized transportation to the maximum extent feasible.

A portion of 5311 funds is set aside for a Tribal Transit Program (TTP), which provides direct federal grants to Indian tribes to support public transportation on Indian reservations. For the period 2006 through 2009 the amount is \$45 million nationally. Awards are made directly to tribes by FTA through a competitive process. TTP was not intended to replace or reduce funds tribes receive from states under the Section 5311 program.

Fifteen percent of the Section 5311 apportionment is for the Intercity Bus Program, Section 5311(f). The Intercity Bus Program funds public transit projects that serve intercity travel needs in non-urbanized areas. Projects are awarded on a statewide competitive basis. This program funds operating and capital costs, as well as planning for service. As with most federal capital funds, the Section 5311 grant funding program provides 80% of capital costs with a 20% matching requirement. Section 5311 funds provide up to 50% of operating costs to support transit operations.

Transportation Development Act (TDA)

The California Transportation Development Act has two funding sources for each county or regional entity that are locally derived and locally administered: 1) Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and 2) State Transit Assistance Fund (STAF).

- **LTF** revenues are recurring revenues derived from ¼ cent of the retail sales tax collected statewide. The ¼ cent is distributed to each county according to the amount of tax collected in that county. In counties with a population of less than 500,000 as of the 1970 US Census, TDA funds may be allocated under Article 8 for transit services or for local streets and roads, pedestrian or bicycle projects.

Prior to approving TDA funds for purposes other than public transportation, specialized transportation, or facilities for bicycles and pedestrians, the local transportation planning agency is expected to consult with its local SSTAC and conduct an assessment of transit and determine whether there are unmet transit needs, and whether or not those needs are “reasonable to meet.” Each RTPA is required to adopt definitions of “unmet transit need” and “reasonable to meet.” Any unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet must be funded before funds can be allocated for streets and roads.

- **STAF** are revenues derived from sales taxes on gasoline and diesel fuels. STAF is allocated annually by the local transportation commissions based on each region’s apportionment. Unlike LTF which may be allocated to other purposes, STAF revenues may be used **only** for public transit or transportation services.

State Transportation Improvement Program

To receive state funding for capital improvement projects, such as new vehicles or other capital equipment, projects must be included in the State Transportation Improvement Program, or STIP. The STIP is a multi-year capital improvement program that includes projects programmed with state funds. Local agencies should work through IVAG to nominate projects for inclusion in the STIP.

Other Funding Sources

Older Americans Act (OAA)

The Older Americans Act was signed into law in 1965 amidst growing concern over seniors’ access to health care and their general well-being. The Act established the federal

Administration on Aging (AoA), and charged the agency with advocating on behalf of an estimated 46 million Americans 60 or older, and implementing a range of assistance programs aimed at seniors, especially those at risk of losing their independence. Transportation is a permitted use of funds under the Act, providing needed access to nutrition and other services offered by the AoA, as well as to medical and other essential services required by an aging population. No funding is specifically designated for transportation. However, funding can be used for transportation under several sections of the OAA, including Title III (Support and Access Services), Title VI (Grants to American Indian Tribes), and the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) program.

Regional Centers

While Regional Centers are nonprofit private corporations, they were established by state legislation. They receive public funds under contract to the California Department of Developmental Services to provide or coordinate services and support for individuals with developmental disabilities. There are 21 regional centers with more than 40 offices located throughout the state. Transportation is a critical component of Regional Centers because clients need specialized transportation services for traveling to and from sheltered workshops. It is the responsibility of each Regional Center to arrange their client's transportation. Regional Centers are primarily funded with a combination of state General Fund tax dollars and Federal Medicaid funds. The primary contractual relationship is with the State Department of Developmental Services.

Agricultural Worker Transportation Program (AWTP)

The Legislature appropriated \$20 million from the Public Transportation Account in FY06-07 for grants to public agencies statewide, seeking to provide transit services specifically for farm workers. The intent of the AWTP is to provide safe, efficient, reliable and affordable transportation services, utilizing vans and buses, to agricultural workers commuting to/from worksites in rural areas statewide. The emphasis of the AWTP will be to implement vanpool operations similar to the successful Agricultural Industries Transportation Services (AITS) program ongoing in Southern San Joaquin Valley, transporting agricultural workers to regional employment sites. The California Department of Transportation administers the AWTP. It is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2010.

Private Foundations

Many small agencies that target low-income populations are eligible for foundation grants. Typically, foundation grants are highly competitive and require significant research to identify foundations appropriate for transportation of the targeted populations.

Tribal Casino Transportation Programs

Tribes with casinos in some counties have indicated an interest in coordinated transportation efforts. They may have funds available to assist with the purchase of a new vehicle or to subsidize plans to transport employees to and from the worksite.

Service Clubs and Fraternal Organizations

Organizations such as the Rotary Club, Soroptomists, Kiwanis, and Lions often pay for special projects. For transportation, they might pay for or help contribute toward the cost of a new vehicle or a bus bench or shelter near senior citizen housing. These organizations might also pay for trip reimbursement for after school or child care.

Employers

Employers who are in need of workers are sometimes willing to underwrite transportation in order to fill their labor needs. Employers sometimes contribute to a flex route night bus, a subsidized car-sharing program or a shuttle or vanpool to their employment site.

Planning Documents and Relevant Research

To learn more about existing studies or reports relevant to this plan, the consultant team conducted a literature review, with key findings highlighted below.

Public Transit Services Fare Analysis (2007)

Public outreach efforts revealed that most riders consider Imperial Valley Transit fares to be fair and reasonable and many users commented that they like the system's 20-ride punch cards. Although riders were not eager for a fare increase, many said they would be willing to pay a higher fare if certain service extensions were made, such as more frequent express service, all day express service, earlier morning service or Sunday service. At Imperial Valley College (IVC), several students thought a transit pass valid for an entire semester would be a good idea because it would commit students to ride the bus on a regular basis and suggested the pass be priced low, ranging between \$25 and \$30. Other riders thought a monthly pass would be convenient, provided it was priced "right." Some riders mentioned a day pass offering unlimited use for a 24 hour period would be useful for those needing to travel to several places in one day.

In addition to riders, several stakeholders were also interviewed. Many stakeholders expressed a desire for improved transit information. They made it clear that the public needs more information about transit services including a greater distribution network for sales of punch cards and tickets. Specific suggestions for disseminating transit information included notices on bulletin boards at local markets, information at IVC posted on its electronic message signs and advertisements in newspapers, on the radio, and on TV.

IVAG Short Range Transit Plan (2004)

The plan provides three main goals for the development of transit in the Imperial Valley:

- Ensure basic mobility for the residents of Imperial County
- Provide effective public transit services to meet the area's transportation needs
- Provide efficient service

Service is allocated according to demand and resources are allocated following a predefined order, in which accessing medical and social services have the highest priority.

Transit providers in the county were evaluated, and Imperial Valley Transit (IVT) was found to have low service efficiency when compared to its peers, and poor on-time performance. Opportunities suggested for IVT include: extension of evening service hours, promoting connections between inter- and intra-city services, improving service frequency, reducing operating cost by renegotiating contract, and increasing marketing and community outreach. The plan also suggests expanding fixed-route service to the city of Seeley and to Brawley Meat LLC, one of the largest employers in the county, and in addition, establishing a Brawley circulator shuttle to meet the growing public transportation demand in the city.

The county's ADA Paratransit service, Areawide Independent Mobility (AIM), was also evaluated. The system was found to have poor on-time performance, an aging fleet, and high no-show and cancellation rates, which can decrease effectiveness. Opportunities highlighted for AIM include extension of evening service hours, increasing marketing and community outreach, and improving on-time performance.

The county's five dial-a-ride services were also evaluated. Opportunities for the Brawley Dial-a-Ride include increasing marketing and community outreach, improving on-time performance, purchasing new vehicles equipped with vehicle lifts and improving no-show policies. Opportunities for Calexico Dial-a-Ride include increasing marketing and community outreach, extension of evening hours, improving on-time performance, and implementing a no-show/cancellation policy. Opportunities identified for El Centro Dial-a-Ride include increasing marketing and community outreach, extension of evening service, and implementing a no-show policy. Opportunities for Imperial Dial-a-Ride include increasing marketing and community outreach, and extension of morning and evening service. Opportunities for West Shores Dial-a-Ride also include increasing marketing and community outreach, and extension of morning and evening service.

IVAG Unmet Transit Needs Hearing (2008)

The recommendations from the unmet transit needs hearing that were found to be reasonable to meet include the following:

- Extend express routes during the new winter and existing summer IVC sessions
- Extend the route at 5:00 PM from Brawley through to Westmorland and Niland
- Add a bus stop on Dogwood Rd. near the residential development in Heber

The financial impact of these improvements is an additional \$19,888 subsidy to Imperial Valley Transit's annual budget.

Services that were not found to be reasonable to meet at this time include implementing a new roundtrip service on Saturdays between Seeley and El Centro, and increasing the frequency of the IVC express routes to earlier and later times in the day.

Figure 1-3 Funding Sources for Human Service and Public Transportation Programs

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Federal Sources						
Transportation Funding						
Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5309 Funds (Congressional Earmark)	Capital Projects for bus and bus-related facilities.	Capital projects only	Discretionary, varies annually	Public transit operators	20% for capital projects	Obtaining a Congressional earmark is in part dependent upon the "clout" of the local delegation and the funding amount can vary tremendously.
FTA Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program	Local programs that offer job access services for low-income individuals.	Capital projects and operations	Maximum of \$200,000 per project per year	MPOs, RTPAs, Local Transportation Commissions (LTCs), social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs. Can match with other federal funds.	Annual grant cycle. Applications are available at Caltrans website http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/
FTA Section 5317 New Freedom Program	Supports <i>new</i> services and alternatives, beyond ADA that are designed to assist individuals with disabilities access transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services.	Capital projects and operations	Maximum of \$125,000 per project per year.	MPOs, RTPAs, LTCs, social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs. Can match with other federal funds.	Annual grant cycle. Applications are available at Caltrans website http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/
FTA Section 5310 Elderly and Disabled Specialized Transportation Program	Providing services to elderly persons and persons with disabilities.	Capital projects only	\$12 million in FY 2008	Nonprofit agencies, public agencies	11.47% match	Typically vans or small buses are available to support nonprofit transportation providers. Annual grant cycle. Applications are available at Caltrans website http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
FTA Section 5311	Enhance access for those living in non-urbanized areas and improve public transportation systems in rural and small urban areas.	Capital projects and operations	Formula based funding - Apportionment by area	Public agencies, local governments, tribal governments, nonprofit agencies	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs	Funds are distributed on a formula basis to rural counties throughout the country. A portion of 5311 funds (\$45 million nationally from 2006-2009) is set aside for a Tribal Transit Program, which provides direct federal grants to Indian tribes to support public transportation on Indian reservations.
FTA Section 5311(f)	Funds public transit projects that serve intercity travel needs in non-urbanized areas.	Capital projects and operations		Public agencies, local governments, tribal governments, nonprofit agencies	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs	Projects are awarded on a statewide competitive basis
Health and Human Services Funding ⁽¹⁾						
Title XX Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) (Department of Social Services)	Goals: 1. Reduce dependency, 2. Achieve self sufficiency, 3. Protect children and families, 4. Reduce institutional care by providing home/community based care, 5. Provide institutional care when other forms of care are not appropriate.			Child Welfare Services, Foster Care, Deaf Access, Community Care Licensing, CDE Child Care, and Department of Developmental Services programs.	Unknown	Grant must be used for one of the goals of SSBG and cannot be used for certain purposes such as the purchase or improvement of land or payment of wages to any individual in social services. These funds are not allocated separately but are used in lieu of state general fund.
Healthy Communities Access Program (HCAP) (Department of Social Services)	Develop/strengthen integrated community health systems that coordinate health care services for individuals who are uninsured or underinsured, such as transportation coordination to improve access to care.		\$83 million	Public and private health care providers as well as social services, local government and other community based organizations.	Unknown	Build upon Federal programs that support entities serving low-income populations in an effort to expand and improve the quality of services for more individuals at a lower cost.

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) (Department of Community Services & Development)	Assist low income people in attaining the skills, knowledge, and motivation necessary to achieve self-sufficiency.			Community action agencies, low income individuals in CA (100% of Federal poverty level).	Unknown	None
Aging & Disability Resource Center Grant Program - Part of the President's New Freedom Initiative (Dept. of Aging)	Support state efforts to create "one stop" centers to help consumers learn about and access long-term supports ranging from in-home services to nursing facility care.		\$800,000 awarded to California in 2004	State of California	Unknown	None
HIV Care Formula Grants (Dept. of Health and Human Services)	Support programs designed to increase access to care and treatment for underserved populations, reduce need for costly inpatient care, reduce prenatal transmission, improve health status of people with HIV. A portion of the funds can be used for transportation.		\$2,073,296,000	State, local governments, public and nonprofit private agencies.	Unknown	None
Consolidated Health Center Program (Bureau of Primary Health Care)	Fund health centers that provide primary and preventative health care to diverse underserved populations. Health centers can use funds for center-owned vans, transit vouchers, taxi fare.			Community based organizations including faith based organizations.	Unknown	None

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Older Americans Act Title III B - Grants for Supportive Services & Senior Centers (Administration on Aging)	Funds are awarded by formula to State units on aging for providing supportive services to older persons, including operation of senior centers. May be used to purchase and/or operate vehicles and funding for mobility management services.	Capital projects and operations.	\$357 million	States and territories, recognized Native American tribes and Hawaiian Americans as well as non-profit organizations.	Unknown	None
Program for American Indian, Alaskan Native, & Native Hawaiian Elders (Administration on Aging)	This program supports nutrition, information and referral, multipurpose senior centers and other supportive services for American Indian, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian elders. Transportation is among the supportive services, including purchase and/or operation of vehicles and for mobility management.	Capital projects and operation	\$26 million	Recognized Native American tribes and Hawaiian Americans as well as non-profit organizations.	Unknown	None
Community Mental Health Services Block Grant (Center for Mental Health Services State Planning Branch)	Improve access to community-based health-care delivery systems for people with serious mental illnesses. Grants also allot for supportive services, including funding to operate vehicles, reimbursement of transportation costs and mobility management.	Capital projects and operations.	\$430,000		Unknown	None

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment Block Grant (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration)	Block grants provide funds for substance abuse prevention and treatment programs. Transportation-related services supported by these grants may be broadly provided through reimbursement of transportation costs and mobility management to recipients of prevention and treatment services.		\$1.78 billion	State of California	Unknown	States are required to expend their primary prevention services funds using six specific strategies: community-based processes, information dissemination, education, alternative activities, problem identification and referral, and environmental strategies. A seventh category, "other" strategies, can be approved on a limited basis.
Child Care & Development Fund (Administration for Children & Human Services)	Provide subsidized child care services to low income families. Not a source of direct transportation funds, but if child care providers include transportation as part of their usual services, covered by their fee, these services may be covered by voucher payments.		\$4.8 billion	States and recognized Native American Tribes	Unknown	None
Developmental Disabilities Projects of National Significance (Administration for Children and Families)	Promote and increase independence, productivity, inclusion and integration into the community of persons with developmental disabilities, and support national and state policy that enhances these goals. Funding provides special projects, reimbursement of transportation costs and training on transportation related issues.		\$11.5 million		Unknown	None

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Head Start (Administration for Children & Families)	Head Start provides grants to local public and private agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to children and families. Local Head Start programs provide transportation services for children who attend the program either directly or through contracts with transportation providers.		\$7 billion	Local public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies	Unknown	The Head Start regulation requires that programs make reasonable efforts to coordinate transportation resources with other human service agencies in their communities.
TANF / CalWORKs (California work opportunity & responsibility to kids) (Department of Social Services)	Provide temporary assistance to needy families. Recipients are required to participate in activities that assist them in obtaining employment. Supportive services, such as transportation and childcare are provided to enable recipients to participate in these activities.			States and Federally recognized Native American tribes. Eligible families as defined in the TANF state plan	Unknown	TANF funds cannot be used for construction or to subsidize current operating costs. State and county funds in the CalWORKs program are used to meet the TANF maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement and cannot be used to match other federal funds.
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) (Department of Housing & Community Development)	Create or preserve jobs for low income and very low income persons.			Counties with less than 200,000 residents and cities of less than 50,000 residents	Unknown	Applicants cannot be participants on the US Department of HUD CDBG entitlement program.

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
State Sources						
Agricultural Worker Transportation Program (AWTP)	Provide safe, efficient, reliable and affordable transportation services, utilizing vans and buses, to agricultural workers commuting to/from worksites in rural areas statewide.	Capital projects and operations	\$20 million in FY2006/07	Public agencies	No mandatory matching requirements	Administered by the Caltrans. Scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2010.
Transit System Safety, Security and Disaster Response Account	Develop disaster response transportation systems that can move people, goods, and emergency personnel and equipment in the aftermath of a disaster.	Capital projects	Varies by county	Agencies, transit operators, regional public waterborne transit agencies, intercity passenger rail systems, commuter rail systems	None	Part of Proposition 1B approved November 7, 2006.
State Transit Assistance Fund (STAF)	Public transit and paratransit services	Capital projects and operations	Varies from year to year depending on appropriation to Public Transportation Account of which 75% goes to STA.	Allocated by formula to public transit operators	None	Revenues derived from sales taxes on gasoline and diesel fuels.
State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)	Major capital projects of all types, including transit.	Transit capital projects	Varies from year to year depending on appropriation to Public Transportation Account of which 25% goes to STIP.			Determined once every two years by California Transportation Commission.
Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA)	Advance the State's policy goals of providing mobility choices for all residents, reducing congestion, and protecting the environment	Transit capital projects	\$600 million statewide in FY2007-08. \$350 million proposed for 2008-09.	Transit operators and local agencies who are eligible to receive STAF funds pursuant to California Public Utility Code Section 99313	None	Bond act approved by voters as Proposition 1B on November 7, 2006

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Regional/Local Sources						
Transportation Development Act (TDA) Articles 4 and 8 (1/4 cent sales tax)	Transit operating assistance and capital projects, local street and road maintenance and rehabilitation projects, pedestrian/bicycle projects	Capital projects and operations	Varies by county	Cities and counties. Allocated by population formula within each county.		Revenues are derived from 1/4 cent of the retail sales tax collected statewide, distributed according to the amount of tax collected in each county to a Local Transportation Fund in each county.
Transportation Development Act (TDA) Articles 4.5	Paratransit operating assistance and capital projects	Capital projects and operations	Up to 5% of the Local Transportation Fund revenue	Cities and counties and CTSA's		
Private Sources						
Tribal Casino Transportation Programs	Coordinating transportation efforts on Indian reservations	Capital projects and operations	Unknown	Wide variety of agencies and organizations	None	Some tribes have funds available to assist with the purchase of a new vehicle or to subsidize plans to transport employees to and from the worksite.
Service Clubs and Fraternal Organizations	Variety of transportation services, especially capital improvements	Capital projects and operations	Unknown	wide variety of agencies and organizations	None	May be interested in paying for bus benches or shelters
Employers	Variety of transportation services, especially capital improvements	Capital projects and operations	Unknown	wide variety of agencies and organizations	None	Employers sometimes are willing to underwrite transportation to support their workers getting to/from worksite.

(1) Source: Caltrans, Division of Mass Transportation

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Chapter 2. Project Methodology

The four required elements of a coordinated plan, as outlined by FTA in the May 15, 2007 guidance for the JARC, New Freedom and Section 5310 programs are as follows:

- An assessment of current transportation services
- An assessment of transportation needs
- Strategies, activities and/or projects to address the identified transportation needs (as well as ways to improve efficiencies)
- Implementation priorities based on funding, feasibility, time, etc.

This chapter describes the steps that were undertaken to develop these elements of Imperial County's Coordinated Plan.

Demographic Profile

A demographic profile of Imperial County was prepared using US Census data and data from IVAG. This step establishes the framework for better understanding the local characteristics of the study area, with a focus on the three population groups subject to this plan: persons with disabilities, older adults, and those of low-income status.

The demographic profile is incorporated in Chapter 3 of this report.

Literature Review

The consulting team conducted a literature review of recently completed—or currently underway—planning efforts relevant to this Coordinated Plan. The purpose of this literature review is to learn about other planning activities in the County and to identify major transportation issues and concerns to ensure issues of importance are incorporated in the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. Elements of the literature review are included in Chapter 1.

Stakeholder Involvement and Public Outreach

Stakeholder involvement is an important element of this plan, and is required by SAFETEA-LU. As a first step, staff from the California Department of Transportation's Division of Mass Transportation (Caltrans) identified IVAG as the primary point of contact. The consulting team then collaborated with IVAG staff to identify key stakeholders to be included during the development of this plan. Stakeholder involvement was solicited primarily through a series of in-person and telephone interviews. The results of the interviews are described in Chapters 4 and 5. In addition, consulting team staff convened a kick-off meeting with the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) in December 2007 with the goals of introducing SSTAC members to the project, and obtaining their feedback on project activities. In particular, the SSTAC and stakeholder involvement was critical in identifying unmet transportation needs, and In particular, the SSTAC and stakeholder involvement was critical in identifying unmet transportation needs, and obtaining feedback on project activities.

Stakeholders convened again in May 2008 to define strategies. Three public workshops were conducted that included the development of strategies and opportunities for enhanced coordination.

Existing Transportation Services

This step involves documenting the range of public transit and human service transportation services that already exist in the area. This process was initiated in July 2007 by Caltrans staff. To ensure all existing services have been identified and accurately described, the consulting team reviewed the inventory with key stakeholders and updated it in June 2008. The services in the inventory include publicly and privately operated fixed-route and dial-a-ride (paratransit) services, and transportation services provided or sponsored by other social service agencies. The description and corresponding maps of existing services are presented in Chapter 4.

Key Findings/Needs Assessment

An important step in completing this plan is to identify service needs or gaps. The needs assessment provides the basis for recognizing where—and how—service for the three population groups (individuals who are disabled, elderly, or of low-income status) needs to be improved.

The needs assessment for this plan was derived through direct consultation with stakeholders identified by the project sponsors, and through a review of existing documents and plans that also provide analysis of existing services and opportunities to improve them.

Identification and Evaluation of Strategies

On May 6 and 7, 2008, the consultant facilitated three public workshops: one in Brawley, one in El Centro and one in Calexico. The goal of the workshops was to confirm previously identified unmet transportation needs, confirm criteria to evaluate potential strategies, and identify and prioritize strategies for addressing the needs.

The consultant drafted proposed evaluation criteria to use when ranking the strategies and facilitated a discussion with workshop participants to develop a list of strategies. An interactive process directly involving workshop participants resulted in refining the list of strategies, and in prioritizing them. Chapter 6 presents the findings of that exercise.

Implementation Plan for Recommended Strategies

As a final step in this planning process, an implementation plan was developed for each of the highly ranked strategies. The implementation plan identifies a potential lead agency with the institutional, operational and fiscal capacity to implement the proposed strategy; a timeframe for implementation; estimated costs; and potential funding sources, including potential use of SAFETEA-LU funds. This is presented in Chapter 7.

Chapter 3. Demographic Profile

Study Area Description and Demographic Summary

Imperial County is located in the far southeast corner of California. The county borders San Diego County to the west, Riverside County to the north, Arizona to the east and Mexico to the south. The county seat is located in El Centro.

The county is the newest and one of the poorest counties in California. Imperial County encompasses approximately 4,482 square miles. Seventy-five percent of the county area is desert sand and rugged mountains, however the Imperial Valley area contains fertile agricultural land. In addition to the county seat, the county’s other cities include Calexico, Brawley, Imperial, Calipatria, Holtville, Westmorland, Heber, Seeley, Niland, Salton City, Desert Shores, Winterhaven, Salton Sea Beach, Bombay Beach, Ocotillo and Palo Verde.

Population Characteristics

Based on 2007 California Department of Finance estimates, the population of Imperial County is 172,600, nearly 21% higher than the 2000 Census figure of 142,361. Imperial County’s daytime workforce expands with a number of Mexican residents who hold jobs in the county. It is also presumed that the County’s population may, in fact, be even higher than estimated due to undocumented residents.

According to Census data, the population of El Centro comprises 27% of this total population. Calexico, the county’s second-largest city represents 19% of the county total, followed by Brawley, with 16%. The population of Imperial represents five percent of the total population in the county. A population comparison between the state of California, Imperial County and its four largest cities is shown in Figure 3-1.

Figure 3-1 Basic Population Characteristics (2000)

Area	Total Population	Percent of County Population	Percent Aged 65+	Percent with Disability	Percent Below Poverty Level
California	33,871,648		11%	19%	14%
Imperial County	142,361		10%	20%	23%
El Centro	37,801	27%	10%	21%	23%
Calexico	27,042	19%	11%	19%	26%
Brawley	22,096	16%	9%	20%	27%
Imperial	7,418	5%	6%	19%	12%

Source: 2000 Census

Seniors, People with Disabilities and Low-Income Residents

Although 2000 Census data may not accurately reflect the current conditions in the county, very little publicly available data provides information about specific population groups that are the focus of this plan: seniors, people with disabilities and the population below the poverty level. Information on the senior population was updated as of the 2006 American Community Survey, but the percentage figure is consistent with 2000 data. Thus, this summary relies on 2000 data, supplementing some of the data from other sources where available.

As of the 2000 Census, 10% of Imperial County residents were seniors over the age of 65, which is very similar to the statewide average of 11%, also shown in Figure 3-1. The percentage of residents with a disability is also similar to the statewide average (20% vs. 19%). However, 23% of the county population is living below the federal poverty level, which is significantly higher than the statewide average of 14%. In particular, Brawley has the highest percentage of residents living below the federal poverty level (27%). Nevertheless, in many of Imperial County's smallest communities, very high proportions of the population live in poverty.

The definition of "disability" varies. For this project, information cited is consistent with definitions reported in the Census 2000. It included two questions with a total of six subparts with which to identify people with disabilities.⁵ It should be noted that this definition differs from that used to determine eligibility for paratransit services required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To qualify for ADA paratransit services, an individual's disability must prevent him or her from independently being able to use the fixed-route transit service, even if the vehicle itself is accessible to persons with disabilities (i.e., lift or ramp equipped).

The Census Bureau has determined that the 2000 Census overstated the number of people with disabilities. This overstatement occurred because of a confusing instruction in the Census questionnaire. In particular, the number of people with a "go outside the home disability" was substantially overstated as a result of a confusing skip pattern in the mail-back version of the Census long form.⁶

The Census's 2006 American Community Survey incorporated an improved questionnaire that eliminated the source of the overstatement. For California as a whole, the 2000 Census estimated that 19% of non-institutionalized people age five and older had a disability. The corrected estimate, based on the 2006 American Community survey, was 12%. Corrected results are not yet available for Imperial County. Therefore, disability tables in this section use the 2000 Census disability data.

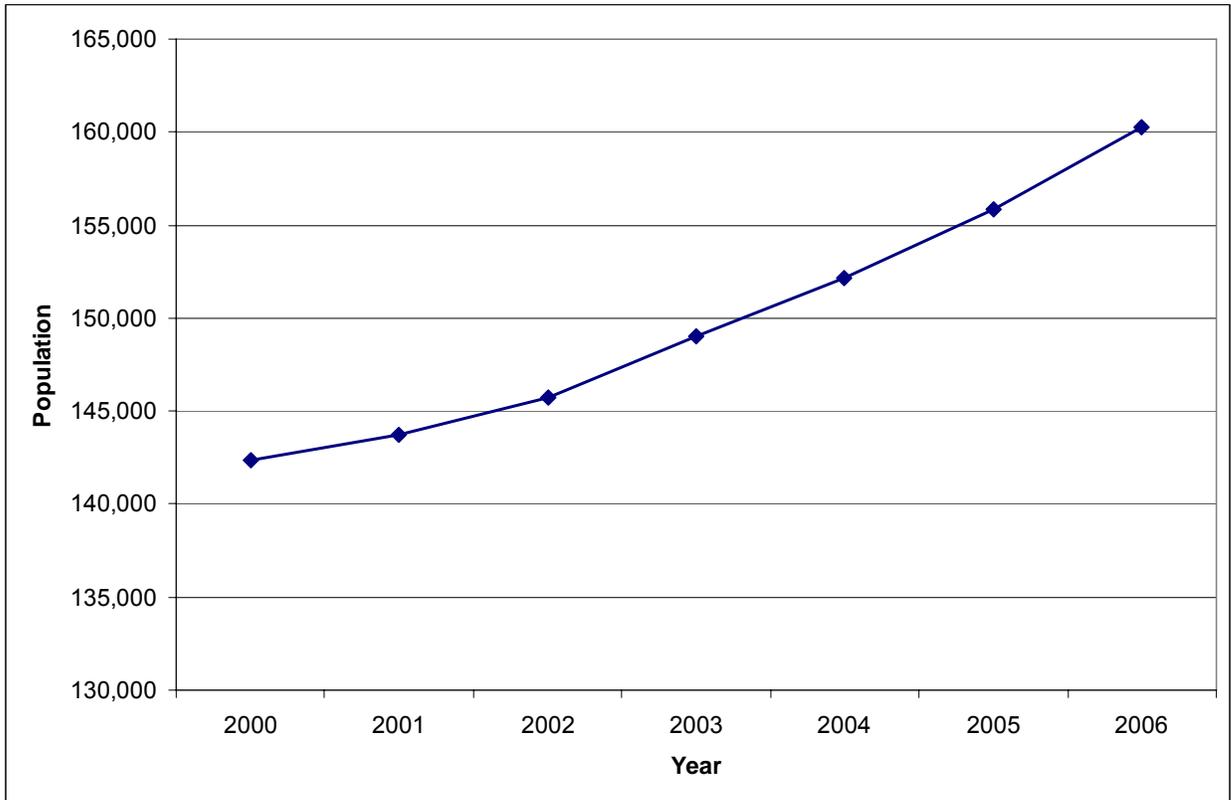
⁵ These questions were: 18. Does this person have a physical, mental, or other health condition that has lasted for 6 or more months and which (a) limits the kind or amount of work this person can do at a job? (b) prevents this person from working at a job? 19. Because of a health condition that has lasted for 6 or more months, does this person have any difficulty—(a) going outside the home alone, for example, to shop or visit a doctor's office? (b) taking care of his or her own personal needs, such as bathing, dressing, or getting around inside the home?

⁶ Sharon Stern and Matthew Brault, "Disability Data from the American Community Survey: A Brief Examination of the Effects of a Question Redesign in 2003," Feb. 2005. At www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/ACS_disability.pdf.

Population Growth

The county population grew by more than 12% from 2000 to 2006, increasing from 142,361 residents in 2000 to 160,301 residents in 2006, according to the US Census Annual Population Estimates. Figure 3-2 shows the population growth in Imperial County between 2000 and 2006.

Figure 3-2 Population Growth for Imperial County 2000-2006



Source: Census Annual Population Estimates

Projected Future Growth

The population of Imperial County is expected to grow steadily through 2030. Along with other parts of the country, the senior population of the county is growing at an even faster rate. In 2000, approximately 10% of the county population was over 65 years of age; by 2030 this proportion is expected to increase to 16%. Figure 3-3 below depicts the projected growth for Imperial County as a whole and for its senior population.

Figure 3-3 Projected Senior Population Growth for Imperial County

	2000	% Change 2000-2010	2010	% Change 2010-2020	2020	% Change 2020-2030	2030
Imperial County	143,763	32%	189,675	26%	239,149	19%	283,693
Population Over 65	14,520	37%	19,841	50%	29,819	53%	45,622

Source: California Department of Finance

Prison Population in Imperial County

Two prisons are located in Imperial County: Calipatria State Prison, and Centinela State Prison. Both are major employers within the county, each employing approximately 1,200 persons.⁷ The inmate populations within these facilities are significant, and can affect demographic analysis. The 2000 Census reports an institutionalized population of 10,398, which represents 7% of the total population of Imperial County.

The US Census counts prison populations as “group quarters.” Group quarters also include nursing homes, college dormitories, convents and similar places. Data for this population is included in some statistics but not others. The group quarters population is counted in the general population numbers, which affects the population figure, percentage of county population per city, and population over 65. However, disability data do not include the group quarters population. Some statistics for people over 65 years of age do not include the group quarters population. In addition, the group quarters population is not included in household income, family income, or non-family income statistics, but is included in estimates of per capita income.

Income Status

The median household income in Imperial County in 1999 was \$31,870, 33% lower than the median household income for California, which was \$47,493. The median household income for the City of Imperial, however, is even higher than the state average at \$49,451. The percentage of residents living below the federal poverty line was significantly higher for Imperial County than for California as a whole (23% vs. 14%). However, the proportion of residents in the City of Imperial living below the federal poverty line is actually lower than for the state of California

⁷ California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

(12% vs. 14%). Figure 3-4 compares the income status of the State of California, Imperial County and its four largest cities.

Figure 3-4 Income Status for Imperial County (1999)

Area	Median Household Income	% of Individuals Below Poverty Level
California	\$47,493	14%
Imperial County	\$31,870	23%
El Centro	\$33,161	23%
Calexico	\$28,929	26%
Brawley	\$31,277	27%
Imperial	\$49,451	12%

Source: 2000 Census

One useful tool to better pinpoint low-income pockets in the county is to review data from the State Department of Education, which shows the percentage of the enrolled public school students in each district that receive a free or reduced-price lunch. Based on 2007 data, it is noteworthy that many of Imperial County’s communities have at least 75% of the student population enrolled in these meal programs: in Calipatria, Calexico, Heber, Holtville, and in the San Pascual and Seeley School Districts. In most other cities and communities, at least one-half of the student population is enrolled in a free or reduced-price lunch program, substantiating the very high levels of poverty and low-income households noted in the 2000 Census data.

Employment

Figure 3-5 below lists the nine largest employers in Imperial County. The major employers consist of governmental, educational and agricultural entities. Imperial County is home to two state prisons. In addition, the county is one of California’s major agricultural producers, with a large amount of agricultural land located in the Imperial Valley. According to the California Employment Development Department, as of December 2007 the unemployment rate in the county was 18%, which is quite high.

Figure 3-5 Largest Employers in Imperial County

Company	Category	City
Central Union High School	Elementary and Secondary Schools	El Centro
Department of Corrections	Public Administration (Government)	Multiple
El Centro Regional Medical Center	Hospitals	El Centro
E-Z Labor	Personnel Supply Services	Brawley
Imperial County	Public Administration (Government)	Multiple
Imperial County Office of Education	Elementary and Secondary Schools	Multiple
Imperial Irrigation District	Irrigation System	Multiple
Imperial Valley College	Colleges & Universities	Imperial
U.S. Gypsum	Concrete Gypsum & Plaster Products	Plaster City

Sources: California Employment Development Department and California Center for Border and Regional Economic Studies

Access to a Vehicle

Eleven percent of households in Imperial County do not have access to a vehicle, which is slightly higher than the statewide average of 9%. In Calexico as much as 15% of the population do not have access to a vehicle, and in Imperial only 5% do not have a vehicle available to them. A significantly greater number of households where the head of household is over 65 years of age do not have access to a vehicle in both Imperial County as a whole and its three largest towns. However, in Imperial, only 6% of households where the head of household is over 65 do not have access to a vehicle. Figure 3-6 summarizes the percent of households with no vehicle available for both the overall population and the population where the head of household is over 65.

Figure 3-6 Households with No Vehicle Available

Area	All Households	Head of Household Over 65
California	9%	17%
Imperial County	11%	20%
El Centro	12%	25%
Calexico	15%	31%
Brawley	14%	25%
Imperial	5%	6%

Source: 2000 Census

Population/Employment Density

A Population/Employment Matrix was created to present existing demographic components of the study area. The Population/Employment Matrix presents concentrations of population and employment at the census block-group level. The matrix is based on 2000 Census data for population and 2000 CTPP (Census Transportation Planning Package) data for employment numbers. In order to generate the matrix, density of population and employment were calculated for each block-group. Then the population and employment density values were categorized into three classes each, both using the quantile method which places an equal number of values into each class. This identified a 1, 2 or 3 value (lowest, middle, and highest) for each. Once combined, the Population/Employment Matrix contains nine values, from a low population, low employment density (1,1 = 1) to a high population, high employment density (3,3 = 9).

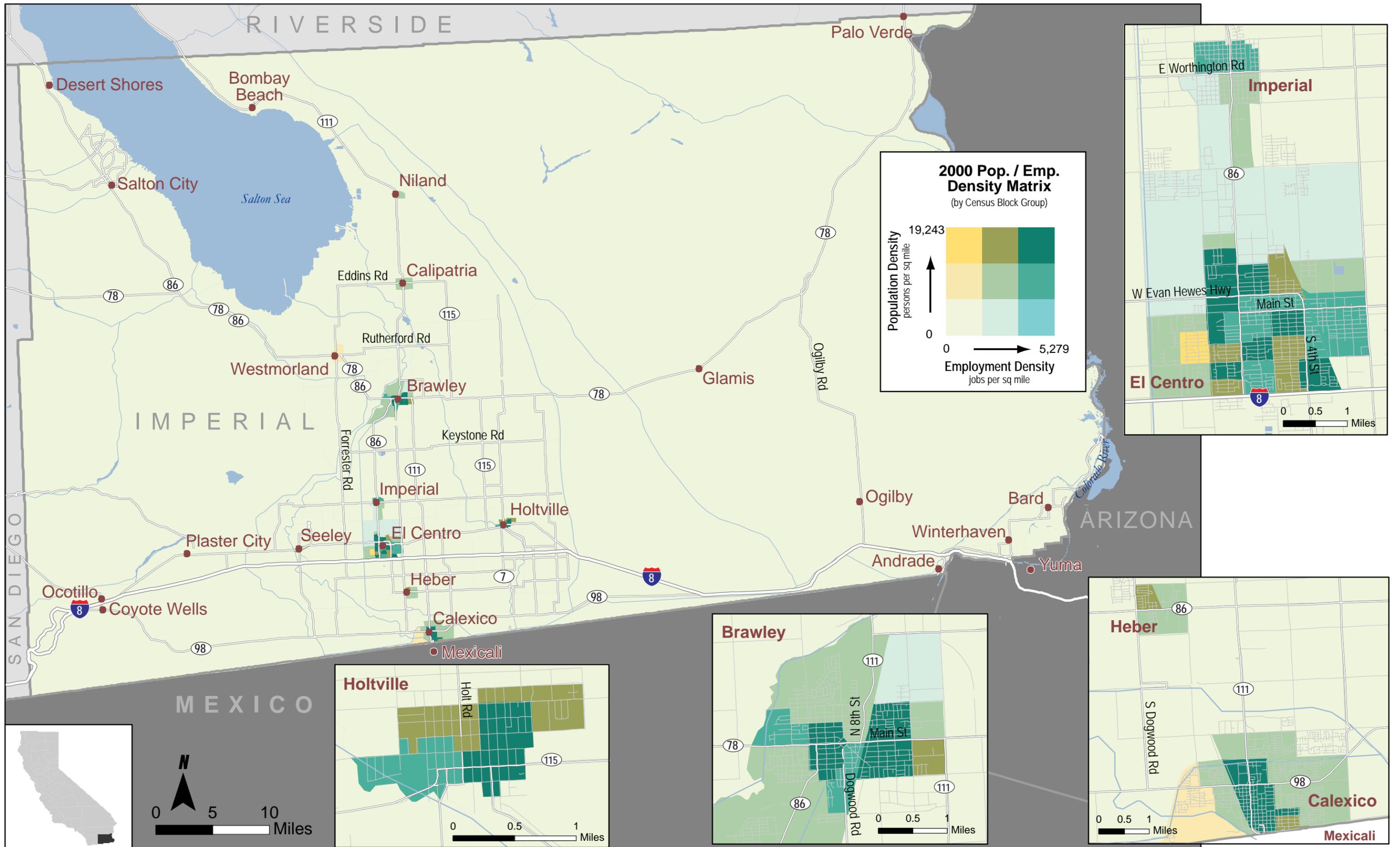
Resultant Matrix Values

Population, values 1-3	7	8	9
	4	5	6
	1	2	3
Employment, values 1-3			

The matrix values were color coded and applied to a map of Imperial County, as seen in Figure 3-7. Most of Imperial County has a fairly low population and employment density. However, there are certain concentrations of population and employment densities that are extremely high in many of the county’s largest cities, including Imperial, El Centro, Holtville, Brawley, and Calexico. In these concentrated areas, the population density can reach as high as 19,000 persons per square mile and 5,000 jobs per square mile.

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Figure 3-7: Imperial County 2000 Population/Employment Density



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Transit Dependency

A Transit Dependency Index was created (Figure 3-8) to present existing demographic components and transportation needs of the study area. The Transit Dependency Index presents concentrations of populations with higher public transportation needs: seniors 65 year or older, people with disabilities, and low-income (150% of poverty level) population. The index value is based on 2000 Census data. To generate the index values, density of seniors, people with disabilities and low-income population were calculated individually for each block group. Then the density values were categorized into five groups, from one to five, using the quantile method. The Transit Dependency Index value equals the sum of the three category values, resulting in a number between three and 15. Block-groups with higher index values have greater concentrations of seniors, people with disabilities and/or low-income population.

Portions of the Imperial County, especially within the cities of Imperial, El Centro, Holtville, Brawley and Calexico, have a very high level of transit dependency. These are the same areas that have high population and employment densities. Being located in these cities will give transportation dependent persons easier access to services within those cities and could make it easier to coordinate transportation services to serve these populations.

Projected Demand for Public Transportation

Imperial County's most recent SRTP was completed in 2004, and no more current projections have been developed to predict demand for public transportation services that serve older people, people with disabilities, and people with limited incomes. As a result, population projections provide the best available evidence of projected ridership. Useful projections of the population with limited incomes are not available, and the best evidence about the future of the disabled population is that it will grow in proportion to total population and the population in older age groups.

For purposes of this plan, the projected growth of the total population in Imperial County is used as a low-end projection for transit demand, and the projected growth of the population over the age of 65 is used as a high-end projection for transit demand. Based on the California Department of Finance figures shown in Figure 3-3, a low-end projection for transit demand is that it will grow by 26% between 2010 and 2020 and by 50% between 2010 and 2030. A high-end projection is that transit demand will grow by 50% between 2010 and 2020 and by 130% between 2010 and 2030.

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Chapter 4. Existing Public Transit Service and Social Service Transportation Providers

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of existing public transit service and transportation provided or funded by social service agencies in Imperial County. It also includes a brief discussion of key private transportation operators that contract with agencies serving low-income individuals, older adults, or people with disabilities, in addition to serving as a transportation resource for the community as a whole. A map illustrating existing transportation services and a matrix summarizing existing services can be found at the end of this chapter (Figures 4-7 and 4-8, respectively).

Imperial County Public Fixed-Route Transit

Imperial Valley Transit

IVT operates local, express, direct and deviated fixed-route service as well as lifeline services throughout the service area. Service is operated from 6:00 AM until approximately 10:30 PM weekdays, and 6:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturdays. There is no Sunday service. Lifeline service in the outlying areas is operated on a once-a-week basis. The service is operated by First Transit and is administered by the County of Imperial. In July 2006, service frequency was improved in the primary corridors, reducing headways from two hours to 70 minutes. The Blue Line was also introduced at this time providing local circulation in El Centro.

IVT service began in 1989 and has significantly grown from a three-bus system carrying about 36,000 riders a year to an 18-bus system serving about 320,000 passengers per year. The system operates 12 peak vehicles at a cost per passenger of about \$7.50. IVT has an annual operating cost of \$2,383,000 (FY 2007) and operates about 25,000 annual revenue hours.

Figure 4-1 summarizes the level of service provided on the fixed-routes.

Figure 4-1 Summary of Imperial Valley Transit Service

Communities Served	Route Number(s)	Daily Round Trips
Niland, Calipatria, Westmorland, Brawley, Imperial and El Centro	50/200	7-11 trips weekdays, 6 trips Saturday, depending on communities served
Calexico, El Centro, Heber	100/150	14 weekday, 6 Saturday
Winterhaven, El Centro, Imperial, and Holtville	300/350	1 weekly Wednesday trip from Winterhaven to El Centro; 5 weekday round trips to other communities on route; 2 on Saturday to all communities except Winterhaven
El Centro, Seeley and Ocotillo	400/450	1 weekly Tuesday trip from Ocotillo to El Centro, upon request. 5 trips Monday through Friday between El Centro and Seeley (excludes Ocotillo).
Bombay Beach, Bashford Spa, Imperial Spa, Fountain of Youth Spa, Lark Spa, Niland, Calipatria, and Brawley	500/550	1 weekly Thursday trip between Bombay Beach, Bashford Spa, Imperial Spa, Fountain of Youth Spa, Lark Spa, Niland, Calipatria and Brawley. Service is provided upon request only.
Calexico and Brawley	600/650	4 round trips per day (2 in each direction AM and PM), weekdays only, providing direct service via State Route 111
Niland, Calipatria, Westmorland, Brawley, Imperial	IVC Express	2 round trips per day, weekdays only, during the IVC school year
Calexico and Imperial	IVC Express	2 round trips per day, weekdays only, during the IVC school year
El Centro Circulator	Blue Line	11 round trips, weekdays only

The fare a passenger pays is based on two factors:

- **Fare Media.** IVT accepts three forms of payment. IVT passengers can pay for service with cash, a multi-ride punch card, or single use tickets. Transfers are free between routes except for transfers to and from the Blue Line which cost \$0.25. Transfers are issued with payment of the initial fare and they are valid for a one-hour period and can be used for the next bus traveling in the same direction. Exact change is required.

The punch cards are good for 20 rides, for use either within one zone of travel or travel between two or more zones. Single use tickets are bundled in a book of 50 at a cost of \$50 and are primarily sold to social service agencies for their clients as well as to schools.

- **Passenger Type.** IVT has four passenger fare categories: Adult (through age 59), senior (age 60 or older), Disabled, and Children (under age five). Senior and disabled

passengers are considered discounted classes and receive discounted fares. There are no ID cards issued to seniors and disabled passengers. Passengers self-identify if they are eligible for the discounted fare.

Figure 4-2 shows the current fare structure by fare type and passenger categories. The fare structure is based on a zone system that is comprised of five zones. There are two tiers of fares: the lower cost fare is for travel within only one zone and the higher cost fare is for travel in more than one zone (multi-zone).

Figure 4-2 Existing Fixed-Route Fare Structure

Passenger Category	Cash One Zone	Cash Multi-Zone	Cash Direct Routes	20-Ride Punch Card One Zone	20-Ride Punch Card Multi-Zone
Adult (through age 59)	\$0.60	\$1.00	\$1.50	\$10.00	\$16.00
Senior (age 60 or older)/Disabled	\$0.50	\$0.80	\$1.50	\$10.00	\$16.00
Children (under age five)	Free	Free	Free	NA	NA

Punch cards are available for purchase at the city halls in Calipatria, El Centro, Holtville, Imperial and Westmorland, as well as at the Parking Control Office of Imperial Valley College and Imperial Valley Transit in El Centro.

The single ticket books are sold only by Imperial Valley College (IVC) and the IVT office. Many human service agencies purchase tickets and punch cards from IVT for their clients. IVT completed a fare study with recommended fare adjustments. IVT will likely implement a new fare structure in FY 2008/09.

IVT maintains a website. Much of the current schedule information is outdated, but IVT is in the process of updating the website.

Private Fixed-Route Transit Services

Número Uno Shuttle and Calexico Transit do not receive public funds. Therefore, vehicles are not necessarily ADA-compliant as is required for a publicly funded service, like IVT. Nevertheless, both services offer a transportation option for the region’s residents.

Número Uno Shuttle

Número Uno is a privately owned bus service that operates between Calexico and El Centro, with plans to expand services. The service is funded exclusively by passenger fares, and Número Uno receives no public funds.

The shuttle operates Monday through Thursday between 6:00 AM and 11:00 PM every 30 minutes. Service operates Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays hourly from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM. The shuttle leaves on the hour or half hour from Calexico, making five stops along the way to El Centro. The one-way fare for adults is \$2.00, round-trip fare is \$3.00, and discounted fares are

offered to children (2 to 11 years of age) and seniors 62 years or older (\$1.00 and \$1.50 respectively).

Numero Uno operates four vehicles along the route, using two 55-passenger motor coaches, one 49-passenger motor coach and one 33-passenger minibus.

According to staff, Numero Uno is planning to add a route from San Luis, Arizona (a border town to the east) via Yuma and Winterhaven to El Centro daily. In addition, in April 2008, Numero Uno is planning to add a route that continues north from El Centro, serving Brawley, Bombay Beach, Mecca and Indio, following Highway 111.

Calexico Transit System (CTS)

Calexico Transit System provides general public fixed-route transit service every day of the week, including all holidays except Christmas and New Years day. At least two of the routes operate from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. The system is unusual for a local transit system in the United States: it is a private operation, and 100 percent of its revenues are derived from passenger fares. The system receives no public funds.

The for-profit service has four routes, operating at 30-minute headways throughout Calexico (See Figure 4-3 below). The service operates seven buses, none of which are wheelchair-accessible: five 28-passenger buses and two 38-passenger buses. People who are unable to ride the fixed-route system are served by Calexico Dial-a-Ride, the public paratransit service, the operation of which is contracted to CTS.

Figure 4-3 Calexico Transit Routes

Service	Route Name	Service Hours
Encinas Avenue and Grant Street	Route A	Departs First Street and Heffernan Ave. every 30 minutes, beginning 7:00 AM
Andrade Avenue and Cole Road	Route B	Operates every 30 minutes from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Blair Avenue, Kennedy Gardens and Grant Street	Route C	Departs First Street and Heffernan Ave. every 30 minutes, from 7:00 AM to 6:30 PM
Las Palmas and Food 4 Less	Express	Operates Wednesdays only from 5:30 AM to 12:00 PM, serving the Calexico Las Palmas Swap Meet on Ollie Avenue

Fares for the CTS routes are \$1.25 for the general public and 75¢ for senior riders (this is the same fare as the publicly funded Calexico Dial-a-Ride). Children age eight and younger ride free of charge. Monthly passes are also available for purchase.

Dial-a-Ride/Paratransit Services

AIM Transit

AIM Transit is the countywide intercity curb to curb service for seniors and persons with disabilities. It serves as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary service to

IVT. The coverage area is within a ¾-mile corridor of the fixed routes operated by IVT. The service operates from 6:00 AM to 10:30 PM on weekdays and from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Saturday. There is no Sunday service. AIM Transit is operated for Imperial County through a contract with Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC), a private nonprofit social service agency with a 501(c)(3) designation. ARC owns and operates the five vehicles used for this service. The service is funded with TDA Article 8C funds, fares and LTF.

AIM Transit is available to ADA-eligible passengers. The County of Imperial oversees the certification process. Personal care attendants may accompany riders in need of extra assistance.

The fare AIM Transit charges ADA-eligible riders is two times the regular fixed-route fare. For travel within one zone, the fare is \$1.20; for travel between zones the fare is \$2.00. Personal care attendants for ADA-eligible riders ride free of charge.

Non-ADA passengers, including people with disabilities and seniors age 60 or older, are welcome to ride AIM Transit on a space-available basis only. The non-ADA fare for travel within one zone is \$1.80; for travel in multiple zones, the fare is \$3.00. Personal care attendants accompanying non-ADA riders pay the non-ADA fare. Figure 4-4 lists the fare structure for AIM Transit.

Figure 4-4 AIM Transit Fares

Passenger Category	Cash One Zone	Cash Multi Zone
Regular Fare: ADA-eligible Riders	\$1.20	\$2.00
Non-ADA Riders	\$1.80	\$3.00

Brawley Dial-A-Ride

Brawley Dial-A-Ride provides demand responsive transit service within the City of Brawley. The coverage area is exclusively within the Brawley city limits. The service is available to the general public Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM and Saturday from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. There is no Sunday service. Brawley Dial-a-Ride is operated through a contract with Sunrise Transportation Services using two wheelchair-equipped vans. The service is funded primarily with TDA Article 8C funds, fares and LTF.

The cash fare is \$1.00. Children under the age of five ride free of charge.

West Shores Dial-a-Ride

The West Shores Dial-a-Ride provides demand-response paratransit services throughout the communities on the west side of the Salton Sea. The service is available to the general public and operates from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The West Shores Dial-a-Ride provides a special lifeline service to Westmorland on Wednesday only. Service is operated by ARC under contract to Imperial County, and is provided using two 2006 Ford E350 vans. The service is funded with TDA Article 8C funds, fares and LTF.

The one-way fare is \$1.00 for a trip within the West Shores service area between Desert Shores and Salton City.

Calexico Dial-A-Ride

Calexico Dial-A-Ride provides paratransit service within Calexico. The service is available to seniors 60 years or older and persons with disabilities, and operates seven days a week from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Overseen by the City of Calexico Utility Services Department, Calexico Dial-a-Ride is provided under contract with CTS, the private operator of local fixed-route services in Calexico. Calexico Dial-A-Ride operates three Ford 350 vans and one Ford 450 van. The service is funded with TDA Article 8C funds, fares and LTF

The one-way fare is \$0.75, and personal care attendants may accompany passengers and ride for free.

El Centro Dial-A-Ride

El Centro Dial-A-Ride provides demand-response service exclusively within the City of El Centro. Service is available to the general public and operates from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Saturday. No service is provided on Sunday. ARC operates the service under contract to the City of El Centro using three Ford E450 vans. The service is funded with TDA Article 8C funds, fares and LTF.

The cash fare is \$1.25.

Imperial Dial-A-Ride

Imperial Dial-A-Ride provides demand-response service within the City of Imperial and between Imperial and the City of El Centro. The service is open to the general public and runs six days a week, from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM weekdays and 8:00 AM to 4:00 Saturdays. ARC operates the service under contract to the City of Imperial using two Ford E450 vans. The service is funded with TDA Article 8C funds, fares and LTF.

For trips within the City of Imperial the cash fare is \$.50. For trips between Imperial and El Centro, the cash fare is \$1.50.

Specialized Medical Public Transportation Service

Med Express Service

Med Express service offers non-emergency medical transportation from Imperial County to San Diego to access medical facilities, including hospitals, clinics and doctor appointments. The service is primarily designed for older adults and people with disabilities, but is also open to the general public on a space-available basis. Med Express service is available four days each week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, plus alternating Mondays and Fridays every other week), with a van departing Imperial County at 5:30 AM and returning from San Diego around 6:30 PM. ARC operates the service under contract to Imperial County. Service is provided in a wheelchair-accessible Ford E450 van. The service is funded with TDA Article 8C funds, fares and LTF.

The fare for Med Express is \$15.00 for a round-trip for the patient (or person going to the medical appointment) and \$7.00 round-trip for an attendant that accompanies that rider. If space

is available, members of the general public may take a round-trip ride on the service for \$30.00. Med Express is used by a number of social service agencies to get their clients to medical appointments in San Diego.

Social Service Transportation Providers

Transportation is also provided by a range of social service agencies serving clients or consumers in Imperial County. While some agencies provide transportation directly, others arrange for it on behalf of their clients or consumers by contracting with others, or subsidizing transit fares. Most of the agencies listed below have a particular focus on the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, or low-income individuals; however, some agencies may serve a broader group.

ARC (Association for Retarded Citizens-Imperial Valley)

ARC is a not-for-profit social services agency that provides a variety of programs and services including vocational and residential services and paratransit programs. ARC is Imperial Valley's leading combined paratransit provider offering a wide array of paratransit services. It provides contracted service for the County of Imperial and the cities of El Centro and Imperial, as well as service for the San Diego Regional Center and ARC's own clients.

Alegria Adult Day Health Care Program

Alegria Adult Day Health Care Program (ADHC) is the largest adult day health care program in Imperial County, established for disabled seniors. Based in Calexico, and a service of Sun Valley Behavioral Medical Center, the program accommodates up to 100 adults per day. Alegria ADHC transports clients from home to the center weekday mornings and provides a return ride in the evening. One 15-passenger paratransit vehicle is dedicated to this service, which is contracted to ARC, which provides about 160 one-way rides each day.

Alegria ADHC receives money from Medi-Cal to pay for the service. The FY 2007 operating costs were about \$65,000.

Center for Employment Training

The Center for Employment Training (CET) is a nonprofit educational and employment training program. The El Centro CET office offers training programs for a variety of skills to help clients find employment. CET students train five days each week, attending skills and job training programs until they pass competency levels.

CET provides transportation to low-income clients (farm workers, Pell grant beneficiaries, etc.), as well as some seniors and people with disabilities, to trainings, job interviews, testing, and other educational activities. Primary funding comes from the Workforce Investment Act. CET clients are based in Imperial County and typically travel to San Diego County, within Imperial County, or to Yuma. CET makes at least one trip to San Diego each day. CET uses two seven-passenger vans that travel about 1,000 miles per month. CET employs one full-time driver and three part-time staff to drive the vehicles.

Disabled American Veterans Transportation

The Disabled American Veterans Transportation Network (DAV) provides a service for veterans to access Veterans Administration (VA) hospitals. DAV and Auxiliary volunteers drive Imperial County veterans to and from the VA hospitals in San Diego (La Jolla and Mission Valley).

DAV Hospital Service Coordinators at both of the VA facilities oversee the program and schedule rides and volunteers. They operate one 10-passenger van for Imperial County veterans who must schedule a ride to San Diego.

Imperial County Department of Behavioral Health Services

The Imperial County Department of Behavioral Health Services oversees certain mental health services and addiction services in Imperial County. The primary function is crisis intervention and referral to hospitals when psychiatric hospitalization is required. The County provides some Outpatient Services (primarily medication support) and operates a Day Treatment Program and a Partial Hospitalization Program to serve the persistently and chronically mentally ill population. The Department is divided into Adult services and Children's services and includes case managers that can assist in linking patients with other services available in the community.

Behavioral Health provides transportation to medical appointments and treatment, and other programs for individuals without transportation access. With 48 vehicles including sedans, minivans, and larger 15-passenger vans, Behavioral Health provides connections throughout the county with a series of internal routes. For example, they have one route that serves Brawley, Imperial and El Centro. Another route serves Calexico, Holtville, El Centro, Seeley and Ocotillo. They also have a bus that serves Winterhaven. All vehicles are owned by the county and operated by Behavior Health.

Current operating expenses for Behavioral Health's transportation services range from about \$17,000 to \$25,000 per month. All transportation services are funded with Behavioral Health funds.

Imperial County Work Training Center, Inc.

The Imperial County Work Training Center is a private nonprofit agency that focuses on assisting people with disabilities, and seniors, and individuals with low incomes to develop skills and capabilities so they can be employed. The agency assists people with disabilities in finding jobs or in conducting or establishing their own business.

The Imperial County Work Training Center also provides a Multipurpose Senior Services Program, working with Medi-Cal-eligible seniors who are at risk of being institutionalized to maintain their independence. The Work Training Center has two five-passenger sedans that are used to provide transportation for these senior clients, taking them from home to medical appointments. Operating costs for the transportation provided as part of this program are paid through the California Department of Aging.

IVROP/Project PROMOTE

The Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program (IVROP) owns four vans. Two vans are dedicated to Project PROMOTE and two are available for rental by various projects falling under the IVROP umbrella. All IVROP vehicles are used to transport program participants only.

PROMOTE vans are used primarily to transport students to English Immersion and GED classes in Calexico, El Centro, Holtville, and Brawley. Classes run over a six-month period during which time routes are established with stops that are relatively central to participants’ homes. If participants live too far out to be transported on PROMOTE vans, CalWORKs social workers will often transport them to connect with PROMOTE transportation. For example, social workers may transport participants from Bombay Beach and Niland to Brawley to connect with the van to El Centro. Other areas where connections are lacking are Ocotillo and Winterhaven.

IVROP coordinates extensively with CalWORKs. For participants who can use public transit, CalWORKs provides a transit subsidy.

Neighborhood House

Neighborhood House in Calexico is a community center and social services agency founded in the 1930s. The agency provides a diversity of services, from daycare for working parents, emergency shelter for women and children, emergency food assistance, literacy programs, adult employment training, business development, English classes, juvenile delinquency prevention and community advocacy.

The agency operates one van to pick up local children and take them to their on-site daycare program. They also transport children, as needed, who are enrolled in the Neighborhood House daycare program using one eight-passenger van. They spend about \$12,000 per year in transportation services, and get all of their funding from individual and corporate donations. According to staff, they had unsuccessfully applied through the Caltrans FTA 5310 grant cycle for a van in the past. They also had a bus voucher program which they managed with a \$9,000 grant from United Way of Imperial County, selling bus ride vouchers at a reduced price (\$1.00). Staff reports the program was successful, but funding ran out.

Quechan Indian Tribe Transportation

A total of 31 vans are in use by tribal programs sponsored by the Quechan Indian Tribe. These vans are not shared among the various programs, but provide clients with transportation to and from specific programs, or to appointments in Winterhaven, El Centro and elsewhere in Southern California. Figure 4-5 lists the various Quechan Tribe programs and identifies the number of vans assigned to each of the programs.

Figure 4-5 Quechan Indian Tribe Vehicles

Tribal Programs	Number of Passenger Vans
Health	13
Senior Nutrition	4
CHR (Community Health Representatives)	4
ADAPP (Alcohol & Drug Abuse Prevention Program)	5
Family and Social Services	7
Family Services	1
Quechan Parenting Program	3
Family Preservation	2

Tribal Programs	Number of Passenger Vans
ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act)	1
Education	8
Head Start	1
Child Care	1
IEC (Indian Education Center)	5
Language Preservation	1
Administration	3
Tribal Administration/Tribe	3
Total VANS	31

The Quechan Parenting Program provides parenting skill classes to Tribal members and their families, counseling on family issues, household budgeting, etc. The three vans as part of that program are used to transport parents to various appointments. Quechan CHR (Community Health Representatives) provides home-bound patient services and offers senior, disabled and home-bound patients transportation to local medical appointments or to coordinate for bus transfers to medical facilities in El Centro and San Diego. CHR has four vans.

Several Quechan Social Services providers address transportation issues with their clients, working in coordination with agencies located in El Centro, San Diego, and other California locations. Many of these clients are dependent on transportation services to distant locations, including court-ordered appointments. Some of these programs include the Social Services General Assistance Program, the Indian Child Welfare Act Program, and the Family Preservation Program.

San Pascual Family Resource Center

The San Pascual Family Resource Center (FRC) provides assistance to the community members — families of students — in the areas of medical services, social services, mental health services, and nutrition. The FRC provides transportation to therapists in the community, collects food from the food bank, and delivers families to medical appointments as needed. The San Pascual FRC has one 7-passenger Toyota van that is driven by staff. Staff attends a weekly meeting in El Centro, and FRC will drive community members to a medical or dental appointment there to maximize the use of the vehicle. They also use the van to pick up food at the food bank and deliver it to the people in the community. The van is funded using Office of Education funds.

Other Transportation Services

The following providers offer other transportation options within Imperial County and beyond.

Golden Acorn Casino

Golden Acorn Casino in Campo spends \$84,000 to operate transportation services to transport employees to the casino, using a subsidy from SANDAG. The vans are essentially used for the vanpool program, to pick up in both San Diego and Imperial Counties. The vans transport employees between their homes and the casino. According to casino staff, this includes a

number of low-income and senior passengers. Golden Acorn Casino operates 11 vans, including eight seven-passenger vans, two 12-passenger vans and one 5-passenger van.

Taxi Services

A number of taxi services operate in Imperial County. The following figure provides a brief overview of the taxi services available in the Cities of Imperial, El Centro, Calexico and Brawley. All of the taxi services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The taxi services reported that they can transport people with disabilities by providing passenger assistance, placing wheelchairs in the truck and offering other assistance as needed.

Figure 4-6 Taxi Services

Taxi Service	Service Area	Fare
Blue Cab	Imperial Valley	\$5 within El Centro, outside El Centro flat rate based on distance traveled
Holtville Cab	Imperial Valley	Fare based on distance traveled
Imperial Valley Taxi	Imperial Valley	\$5 within Imperial, outside Imperial flat rate based on distance traveled
California Cab	Imperial Valley	Flat fare based on area of travel
Calexico Taxi Company/ Border Cab	Imperial Valley	Flat fare based on area of travel
Brawley Taxi Co	Imperial Valley	\$4 within Brawley, outside Brawley flat rate based on area of travel

Some of the services offer flat rates for travel within a single city and flat rates for travel outside of city boundaries. Holtville Cab charges different rates depending on the distance, even within El Centro.

Connecting Transportation Services beyond the County

Greyhound

Greyhound bus service is available to San Diego, Indio and north, and Yuma, onward to Phoenix. To San Diego, the bus departs three times each day, at 9:55 AM, 12:55 PM, and 10:35 PM, arriving in San Diego 2.5 hours later. Inbound trips from San Diego arrive in El Centro at 9:45 AM, 3:30 PM and 1:15 AM. All routes also serve Calexico. The standard non-refundable fare for one-way travel between San Diego and El Centro or Calexico is \$26.00.

Greyhound buses also depart to Yuma and provide continuing service to Phoenix at 1:20 AM and 9:50 AM from El Centro, serving Calexico en route. The standard refundable fare for a one-way trip is \$18.00. Connecting trips are also available to Phoenix via Indio.

Greyhound buses depart El Centro for Indio at 7:30 AM, 11:10 AM, 12:40 PM, 3:10 PM, 6:25 PM, and 10:15 PM (the buses depart Calexico 30 minutes earlier), with an equal number of inbound return trips throughout the day, allowing for same-day round-trip travel between

Calexico/El Centro and Indio on a journey that takes 90 minutes each way from El Centro. The non-refundable one-way fare is \$21.00 for travel from either Calexico or El Centro to Indio.

The Calexico Greyhound Station is located at 123 1st Street in Calexico, and is open from 5:30 AM to 11:30 PM. The El Centro Greyhound Station is located at 460 State Street in El Centro, and is open from 8:00 AM to 8:10 PM.

Amtrak

Amtrak Thruway bus service is available in El Centro, Brawley and Calexico. The bus serves Bakersfield where connections to rail can be made. The bus journey to Bakersfield from Brawley takes 7 hours and 30 minutes, and requires the purchase of a rail ticket onward from Bakersfield.

The Brawley Amtrak bus stop is located at the Brawley Police Department, North Plaza between Main and E Streets. The Calexico stop is located at 3rd and Paulin. The El Centro stop is located at the site of the planned transit center on W. State Street and S. 7th Street.

The bus departs Calexico at 7:15 AM, El Centro at 7:35 AM and Brawley at 8:00 AM. The bus arrives in Brawley from Bakersfield at 9:00 PM, El Centro at 9:25 PM, and Calexico at 9:45 PM.

Imperial Airport

Scheduled commercial airline service is available from Imperial Airport to Los Angeles and Yuma aboard Sky West Airlines' United Express Service. Flights depart El Centro for Yuma at 12:33 PM and 10:52 PM for a 30-minute trip. Flights arrive in El Centro from Yuma at 5:53 AM and 4:42 PM. Flights depart El Centro for Los Angeles at 6:15 AM and 4:50 PM (or passengers may travel to Los Angeles via Yuma on the 12:33 PM flight). Flights from Los Angeles arrive in El Centro at 12:18 PM and 10:31 PM.

Figure 4-7: Imperial County Transit Services and Major Activity Centers

- Imperial Valley Transit**
- Blue Line
 - Express Routes
 - Direct Routes 600 & 650
 - Routes 50 & 200
 - Routes 100 & 150
 - Routes 300 & 350
 - Routes 400 & 450
 - Routes 500 & 550
- AIM Transit Service Area**
(3/4 mile around routes)
- Calexico Transit**
- Numero Uno Shuttle**

- Activity Centers**
- + Medical
 - + School
 - ▲ Shopping
 - Social Service
 - ◆ Senior Center
 - Major Employer

- Other Transportation Services:**
- Calexico Dial-a-Ride (Calexico Transit): ADA and senior paratransit in Calexico
 - AIM Transit (ARC): ADA paratransit throughout Imperial Co
 - Veteran's Association/DAV Patient Transport: Door-to-door service to VA hospitals in San Diego Co
 - Neighborhood House Daycare Transport: Door-to-door service in Calexico
 - Imperial Co Work Training Center Senior Medical Transport: Door-to-door service
 - Area Agency on Aging/Catholic Charities Senior Transport: Door-to-door service to nutrition program
 - Alegria ADHC/ARC Client Transport: Door-to-door service to program
 - IVROP Client Transport: Door-to-door service to program
 - El Centro Dial-a-Ride (ARC): General public DAR in El Centro
 - Imperial Dial-a-Ride (ARC): General public DAR in Imperial
 - Brawley Dial-a-Ride: General public DAR in Brawley
 - West Shores Dial-a-Ride (ARC): General public DAR along west shore of Salton Sea
 - Med Express (ARC): Non-emergency medical transport in Imperial and San Diego Counties
 - Golden Acorn Casino Employee Vanpool: Vanpool in Imperial and San Diego Counties
 - San Pascual Family Resource Center: Transportation for multiple purposes
 - Quechan Tribe: Van service to reservation programs
 - CalWorks: Transportation to training for clients

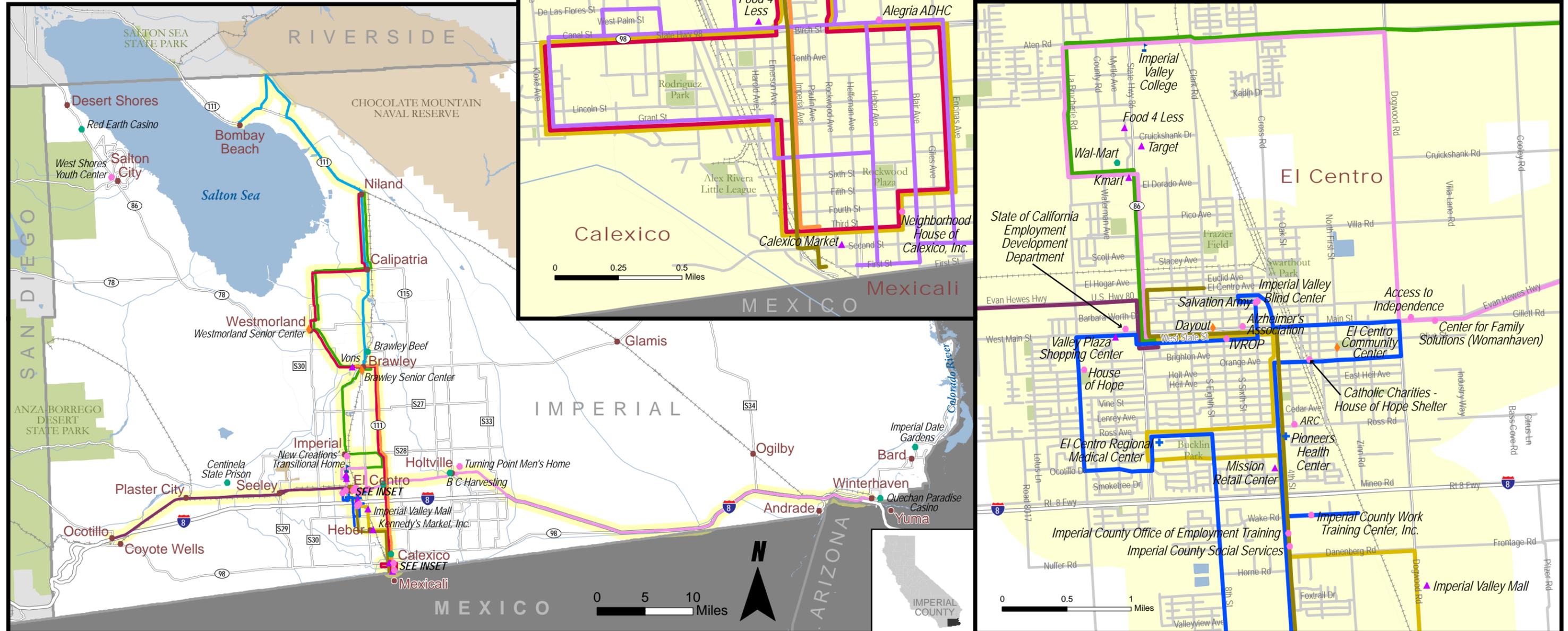


Figure 4-8 Transportation Provider Inventory

Agency Name	Agency Type	Transportation Role(s)					Program Name	Program Purpose and Description	Funding Source(s)	Annual Operating Cost	Area Served	Service Type	Clients	Vehicles Quantity / Type	Average Monthly Miles	Driver Training Program	Vehicle Maintenance Provider	Technologies	Miscellaneous Comments
		Public Transit	Operates transportation	Funds or subsidizes transportation	Volunteer / staff drivers	Provides I&R													
ARC-Imperial Valley	Nonprofit	X				AIM Transit	Provide ADA Complimentary Paratransit Services to persons with disabilities	TDA Article 8C funds, fares and STA	\$ 728,473	County of Imperial Intercity Service	Demand Response	Disabled, Elderly	One 2005 Chevrolet 5500 (26 psgr), Three 2001 Ford E450 (26 psgr), Three 1999 Ford E450 (20 psgr) (All Diesel cutaway shuttle buses)	20,500				2005 Chevrolet 5500 arrived Jan 2007, 3 x 2007 Chevrolet 5500, ETA FALL 2007 (Diesel)	
	Nonprofit	X				Med Express	Provide non emergency transportation from Imperial County to San Diego to access medical facilities, clinics and doctors offices only	TDA Article 8C funds, fares and LTF	\$ 154,116	Counties of Imperial and San Diego Intercity Service	Demand Response	Disabled, Elderly, and General Public	One 2003 Ford E450 (15 psgr) and One 2002 Ford E450 (15 psgr) (backup cutaway shuttle bus) both gas	5,166	Yes, all in-house, 2 drivers (certified by TSI) train the rest	Contracted to the maker of the vehicle (Ford, Chevrolet)	Easylift Schedule pro (received from the 5310 grant from Caltrans), used for scheduling, routing, and dispatching	1 x 2007 Ford E450 Gas ETA Spring2008	
	Nonprofit	X				West Shores Dial-A-Ride	Provide paratransit services to include general public, community wide along the West Shores of The Salton Sea		\$ 141,894	Community wide along the West Shores of The Salton Sea	Demand Response	Disabled, Elderly, and General Public	Two 2006 Ford Van E350 (10 psgr vans) (Gas)	5,556				Next FTA 5310 Grant Cycle will submit grant request for 2 Type 1	
	Nonprofit	X				El Centro Dial-A-Ride	Provide paratransit services to include general public		\$ 202,024	Intracity El Centro	Demand Response	Disabled, Elderly, and General Public	Three 2002 Ford E450 (16 psgr cutaway shuttle bus) (Gas)	4,849				1 x 2007 Ford E450 Gas ETA Spring2008, Next FTA 5310 Grant Cycle will submit grant request for 1 Type II	
	Nonprofit	X				Imperial Dial-A-Ride	Provide paratransit services to include general public		\$ 117,629	Imperial and El Centro Intercity Service	Demand Response	Disabled, Elderly, and General Public	Two 2002 Ford E450 (16 psgr cutaway shuttle bus) (Gas)	3,459				1 x 2007 Ford E450 Gas ETA Spring2008	
Brawley DAR	Public	X				Brawley Dial-A-Ride	Public transportation for the city of Brawley	TDA Article 8C funds, fares and LTF	\$ 189,000	Brawley	Dial-A-Ride	Anyone is eligible (includes low income, elderly, and disabled clients)	Two wheelchair-equipped vans	452				Not Available	Not Available
Calxico Dial-a-Ride	Public	X				Calxico Dial-A-Ride	Provide paratransit services to include general public	TDA Article 8C funds, fares and LTF	\$ 310,000	Calxico	Demand Response	Disabled, Elderly	Three Ford 350, One Ford 450	6,360	Not Available	Not Available	None used	Program is overseen by the City of Calxico Utility Services Department	

Agency Name	Agency Type	Transportation Role(s)					Program Name	Program Purpose and Description	Funding Source(s)	Annual Operating Cost	Area Served	Service Type	Clients	Vehicles Quantity / Type	Average Monthly Miles	Driver Training Program	Vehicle Maintenance Provider	Technologies	Miscellaneous Comments
		Public Transit	Operates transportation	Funds or subsidizes transportation	Volunteer / staff drivers	Provides I&R													
Alegria ADHC (Calexico), contracted by ARC	Private		X				ARC (Association for Retarded Citizens)	Alegria provides adult day healthcare. ARC transports patients from their home to center M-F mornings and evenings.	Medi-Cal (contracts to Alegria, AAA, Dayout etc)	\$65,000 per year	City of Calexico and Imperial County	Fixed schedule, transports 160 clients daily	Disabled seniors	One 16 psgr cutaway shuttle bus (gas)	1,271	Yes, all in-house, 2 drivers (certified by TSI) train the rest	Contracted to the maker of the vehicle (Ford, Chevrolet)	Easylift Schedule pro (received from the 5310 grant from Caltrans), used for scheduling, routing, and dispatching	Contracts with ARC. For further information contact KC Kennedy at ARC at 760-337-8002
Area Agency on Aging Title IIIB Funds - Subcontracting with Catholic Charities, Diocese of San Diego	AAA - Government; Catholic Charities - Nonprofit			X		X	Area Agency on Aging, Title IIIB Transportation Program with Catholic Charities	Program provides transportation to seniors to and from congregate meal sites, to allow them the opportunity to socialize with other seniors, sharing a mid-day meal.	Administration on Aging, Title IIIB funds and California Dept of Aging Title IIIB funds	\$ 21,970	Imperial County	Demand Response	Seniors, 60 years of age and older	Sunrise driving services/Brawley Dial-a-ride, Calexico Transit, ARC (Salton Sea and El Centro area)	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Catholic Charities purchases transportation services from the 3 vendors (1- Sunrise Driving Service/Brawley Dial-a-ride; 2- Calexico Transit for Calexico area; and 3- ARC Transit Dial-a-ride services for the El Centro Area and Salton Sea Area). Catholic
Behavioral Health	Nonprofit			X			Behavioral Health	Provides transportation to medical appointments and other programs to those who do not have transportation in their family	Behavior Health, Imperial County (service is free for passengers)	\$17,000-\$25,000 per month, \$204,000-\$300,000 per year	Imperial County	Fixed Route Transit	Those who do not have transportation in their family, includes low income, elderly, disabled	48 vehicles including sedans, minivans, etc. Seven 15-passenger vans. Vehicles are owned by county and operated by Behavior Health.	10,000-15,000 miles/month	Yes, basic vehicle inspection random checks, testing for the licenses	In house - provided by County Garage	MS Access and Excel for scheduling, budgeting etc	
Calexico Transit System	Private		X				Calexico Transit System	Operate local transit services in Calexico	Fares	Not Available	Calexico	Fixed route	General public (low income)	7 buses; 5 Bluebird 1995-1999 28-passenger buses; 2 1985 Gillig Phantom 38-passenger buses	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	None of their vehicles are accessible. Are in discussion with the City of Calexico to operate local "public" service under contract to the city to be eligible for public funding sources

Agency Name	Agency Type	Transportation Role(s)					Program Name	Program Purpose and Description	Funding Source(s)	Annual Operating Cost	Area Served	Service Type	Clients	Vehicles Quantity / Type	Average Monthly Miles	Driver Training Program	Vehicle Maintenance Provider	Technologies	Miscellaneous Comments
		Public Transit	Operates transportation	Funds or subsidizes transportation	Volunteer / staff drivers	Provides I&R													
CalWORKs	Public		X		X	X	CalWORKS	Provide job training and skills-building.	CalWORKS; Contracts some transportation through IVROP	Not known	Imperial County	Scheduled and as-needed for agency purposes	Low income	3 cars, 1 SUV (7-passenger) and 4 vans (Ford 7-passenger). CalWORKS also has access to child protective services and other social services vans.	7,000	None available	In-house through County Garage	None used	
Center for Employment Training -CET	Nonprofit		X					Provide transportation to low income clients (farm workers, pell grant beneficiaries, etc) to trainings, job interviews, ATB testing, etc.	WIA - workforce investment act		Clients are based in Imperial County, travel to San Diego County, within Imperial County and to Yuma, AZ area.	On demand. They make at least one trip to San Diego per day.	Farm workers, low income, pell grant beneficiaries, many seniors, a few disabled persons.	Two 7-passenger vans- Ford and Dodge	About 1,000 miles/month	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	
Day Out	Nonprofit					X	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Elderly	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Do not provide services. Pay cash fares to put clients on AIM. Some clients come on ARC and DAR
Easter Seals, contracted by ARC	Nonprofit			X			Not Available	Easter Seals does volunteer work and public transportation training.	California Department of Developmental Services (contracts to the Regional Center which contracts to ARC)	Confidential?	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	2,467	See ARC Info			ARC provides about 10,000 annual rides for Easter Seals Clients, under contract with Easter Seals, contact KC Kennedy at 760-332-8002
Golden Acorn Casino (employee transportation)	Private		X			X	Golden Acorn Casino employee transportation	Vanpool taking employees from the casino to their homes	Subsidy from San Diego County (SANDAG)	\$ 84,000	Imperial County and San Diego County	Vanpool	Employees, includes some low income and senior passengers	11 vans, Eight 7-passenger vans, Two 12-passenger vans and One 15-passenger van	120mi for one round trip, about 3600-4000 miles per day	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	
Imperial County Work Training Center, Inc.	Nonprofit		X			X	Multi Purpose Senior Services Program	Deliver seniors from their home to medical appointments	California Department of Aging	\$ 140,000	Imperial County	Demand response	Seniors 65+, Medi-Cal eligible, at risk of being institutionalized (only serves seniors in the program)	One 5-seater car	Not Available	20 hrs a year road training requirement and 10 hrs of In-house video training on Road and Safety	Contracted to local garage	None used	

Agency Name	Agency Type	Transportation Role(s)					Program Name	Program Purpose and Description	Funding Source(s)	Annual Operating Cost	Area Served	Service Type	Clients	Vehicles Quantity / Type	Average Monthly Miles	Driver Training Program	Vehicle Maintenance Provider	Technologies	Miscellaneous Comments
		Public Transit	Operates transportation	Funds or subsidizes transportation	Volunteer / staff drivers	Provides I&R													
Imperial Valley Blind Center	Nonprofit			X		X	Imperial Valley Blind Center	Clients use AIM Transit and is billed on a monthly basis	Not Available	Not Available	Imperial County	Dial-A-Ride	Disabled	Not Available	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Available	Pay for the transportation - AIM Dial-A-ride. We get bill from AIM - DirectBilling. About 25 use every day; Complaints from clients about the service - even he has complaints about service. They don't have a van available for his college schedule. ARC
Imperial Valley College	Nonprofit					X	Imperial Valley College	Some programs housed on campus purchase passes from IVT and AIM	Not Available	Not Available	Imperial County	Pay for other services	Students	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	IVC has three external campuses (El Centro Location will move from Imperial Ave.; Brawley and Calexico classes are in high schools. Parking passes – faculty and staff have free parking; students pay \$20 per semester (less for shorter winter semester)
Imperial Valley Independent Living Center	Nonprofit			X		X	Not Available	Bus vouchers for clients	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	The center provides bus vouchers in books of 15-20 to clients.
Imperial Valley Transit	Public	X					Imperial Valley Transit	IVT and Blue Line Service	TDA, fares, FTA Section 5311	\$2,383,000	Major cities and communities in Imperial County	Fixed-Route and Deviated Route service	General Public	18 Buses	49,303	Not Available	Private Contractor	Not Available	320,000 passengers per year, about 25,000 annual revenue hours.
IVROP	Public		X				Project PROMOTE and other programs	Project PROMOTE focuses on job training and academic enhancement for the CalWORKS population. Participants are referred by CalWORKS	IVROP vans are grant-funded for participants in approved activities. Funded by the Imperial County Department of Social Services.	Not Available	Countywide	As-needed	Low-income	4 vans, with two dedicated to Project PROMOTE and two available for rental by various projects falling under the IVROP umbrella	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	

Agency Name	Agency Type	Transportation Role(s)					Program Name	Program Purpose and Description	Funding Source(s)	Annual Operating Cost	Area Served	Service Type	Clients	Vehicles Quantity / Type	Average Monthly Miles	Driver Training Program	Vehicle Maintenance Provider	Technologies	Miscellaneous Comments
		Public Transit	Operates transportation	Funds or subsidizes transportation	Volunteer / staff drivers	Provides I&R													
Neighborhood House (Calexico)	Nonprofit		X				Van to bring children to daycare. Brings children from home or school to daycare and back.	Private donations	\$ 12,000	Calexico	Demand response	Children in the Neighborhood House daycare program	One 8-passenger van	500 miles	None available	N/A - either maintain the vehicle themselves, or take it out if needed	None used	Tried to get a van through Caltrans but it didn't work. 1 year ago they had a bus voucher program, sold vouchers for \$1 each, funded by United Way of Imperial County, \$9000 grant, very successful program, one time only, the money ran out and was not renewed.	
Numero Uno Shuttle	Private		X			Numero Uno Shuttle	Fixed route bus service. (they also provide charter bus service for groups)	fares, \$2 one way \$3 rt, charter revenue for the buses	Not Available	Calexico, Heber, El Centro, CA	Fixed route	Low income, seniors, disabled	4 vehicles: Two 55-passenger motor coaches, One 49-passenger motor coach, One 33-passenger minibus, most are wheelchair accessible. Have ordered 2 new vehicles	182,000/yr, about 15,000 per month	Yes, Contracted - 10 hrs training every yr till 4 yrs, drivers licensing requires a school bus certificate	Contracted	None used	Expanding routes. Planning to add a route from San Luisa, AZ to El Centro daily. In April adding a route from Calexico-El Centro-Brawley-Bombey Beach-Mecca-Indio, along hwy 111. Lawrence would like to be contacted for the meeting.	
Quechan Indian Tribe	Public-Tribal		X		X	Various tribal programs	To provide transportation for tribe members enrolled in these programs	Funds dedicated to Native American programs	Not Available	Primarily Winterhaven area	Fixed and demand, as-needed	Low income, elderly, disabled	31 vans	Not Available	No	Contracted	None used	Have program-by-program inventory	
Salvation Army	Nonprofit			X		Bus/gas vouchers	Persons proving a need for a trip are given a bus ticket or gas voucher for the trip.	United Way	Not Available	Imperial County	Not Available	Low income, elderly, disabled	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Only provide program when money is available from United Way. Rosa would like to be contacted for the meeting.	

Agency Name	Agency Type	Transportation Role(s)					Program Name	Program Purpose and Description	Funding Source(s)	Annual Operating Cost	Area Served	Service Type	Clients	Vehicles Quantity / Type	Average Monthly Miles	Driver Training Program	Vehicle Maintenance Provider	Technologies	Miscellaneous Comments
		Public Transit	Operates transportation	Funds or subsidizes transportation	Volunteer / staff drivers	Provides I&R													
San Diego Regional Center	Nonprofit			X		X	Not Available	Pays for contract service transportation for developmentally disabled. Transportation service provided by ARC. Also provides transit passes and mileage reimbursement for families.	Funded through the state of California	Not Available	Contracts transportation in both San Diego and Imperial Counties. In Imperial County uses ARC	Do not provide service. Pay for clients to use ARC fixed route or paratransit service. Also subsidize the fares for clients for the Med Express service to San Diego.	Developmentally disabled	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Anthony would like to be contacted for the meeting.
San Pasqual Family Resource Center	Public		X			X		Provide nutrition, medical assistance, and other social services to families	Office of Education	Not Available	Winterhaven/San Pascual Area	As-needed service	Low-income families and students	One 7-passenger Toyota van	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	
Veteran's Association	Public		X				DAV Transportation	Demand response service for disabled veterans to veteran's hospital	Not known	Not Available	From Imperial County to the VA Hospitals in La Jolla and Mission Valley	Demand Response	Disabled veterans	One 10-passenger van	Over 4000 miles	Not Applicable	Veteran's Administration	Vista used for listing the data of the veterans, scheduled by Carolyn.	
Volunteers of America	Nonprofit					X	Volunteers of America - Southwest Corporation	Drug rehabilitation and treatment facility	Not known	Not Available	Imperial County	None offered	Low-income, senior, disabled	One 8-passenger van	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	VOA does not provide transportation to low income senior citizens

Chapter 5. Key Findings: Service Gaps and Mobility Needs

This chapter provides an overview of background data, observations, and stakeholder perceptions for the development of this Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. Findings in this chapter illustrate key activity centers and travel destinations, service gaps, and areas where there is a perceived duplication of services.

Public and private operators, as well as human service agencies in Imperial County, offer a broad array of transportation services. Careful planning and enhancements to transportation services over the past decade, much of it led by IVAG and its many partners, have resulted in a good overall transportation network in Imperial County, with a diversity of services and staff who are very committed to improving mobility.

The consulting team contacted stakeholders representing public agencies, institutions and nonprofit organizations to provide input. Through telephone interviews and face-to-face meetings, individuals commented on a number of issues regarding transportation needs and opportunities for older adults, people with disabilities and low-income residents of Imperial County. A list of organizations represented in the stakeholder process is included in Appendix A.

Existing Coordination of Services

A number of successful coordination efforts are already underway in Imperial County, with many agencies focusing on coordinating services around specific issues like job training, crime prevention, disability programs and youth services. Some examples of existing coordination and collaboration are identified. New opportunities specific to transportation coordination may be found that can build upon some of these existing activities.

CalWORKs and IVROP

CalWORKs and IVROP coordinate formally and informally on a number of programs, including the provision of transportation services for clients. For example, CalWORKs contracts with IVROP to provide training classes and English classes. Some of these classes are in Holtville and Brawley, and IVROP provides transportation service to these locations for CalWORKs. In addition, CalWORKs social workers provide transportation for clients from very small communities without public transportation services (or limited services) to IVROP van routes, where clients transfer to complete their trip to their program or activity. Both CalWORKs and IVROP have indicated they have capacity to coordinate services further.

Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC)

SSTAC is an advisory group to IVAG comprised of representatives of social service agencies, transportation providers, cities and Imperial County representatives, and transit users. The California Public Utilities Code (CPUC) requires the existence of SSTAC, which meets monthly to share information about transportation funding and program activities, coordinate services,

receive updates from local transportation providers, and define strategies for service evaluations, and provide feedback on ongoing studies.

Interagency Steering Committee (ISC) and Local Coordinating Committee (LCC)

The Interagency Steering Committee (ISC) focuses on the coordination of services for predominantly low-income families and youth in Imperial County. Through joint planning, the goal is to create, improve, and expand an array of social services. According to the ISC, the focus is “an integrated holistic system without barriers; sharing personnel and facilities; maximizing service delivery; providing services close to where people live; ensuring oversight for resource management; and providing a forum for countywide public sector policymakers to address issues of mutual concern.”

Housed in the Imperial County Office of Education, the ISC and LCC have a dedicated coordinator whose position is funded by general funds from each of the participating agencies, with some grants from the Office of Education. Membership in the ISC includes the following organizations:

- Office of Education
- Department of Social Services
- Probation Department
- Police Chiefs Rep.
- Office of Education, Student Well-Being & Family Resources
- Behavioral Health, Drug and Alcohol Programs
- Office of Employment Training
- Sheriff's Office
- Local Coordinating Committee Co-Chairs
- Imperial Valley College
- San Diego State University-IV Campus
- Behavioral Health
- Employment Development Department
- Health Department
- County Executive Office
- County Courts
- District Attorney

The ISC, which has been around for at least 13 years, meets monthly, with participation from department heads, managers, and appointed and elected officials. One of the ISC's primary accomplishments was the establishment of the Family Resource Centers, primarily at school sites in Imperial County, where multidisciplinary services can be provided including mental health, nutrition, youth services and substance abuse programs.

The Local Coordinating Committee (LCC) meets at least quarterly, and includes “frontline” staff representatives from each of the organizations listed above, including representatives from the Family Resource Centers and a number of human service agencies in the county.

The mission statement for the LCC is “to be a catalyst by unifying and encouraging all stakeholders in the community to collaborate and bring all available resources to bear. In order to positively impact our community.” One of the LCC’s objectives is also to conduct needs assessments and plans, and provide technical assistance for existing programs, identifying new funding sources for agencies providing services to the community. The LCC advises the ISC, which effectively serves as the policy committee for coordinated programming in Imperial County around these issues. Transportation was identified as a critical issue for many participating organizations. The ISC and LCC indicated they have the capacity to be involved further in transportation coordination activities and expressed an interest in working with the SSTAC. Further discussions with the ISC and LCC will be required to explore their level of interest and areas of expertise to maximize their contributions in the most appropriate coordination endeavors.

CTSA

Although the CTSA has not been especially active in recent years, the goals of the organization focus on taking an active role in coordination, especially in the areas of identifying gaps and barriers to transportation coordination and working to increase the acceptance of transportation coordination concepts and activities. Staff have identified their interest in assuming a greater role in the coordination of transportation services in Imperial County and have also expressed a willingness to work with other organizations in carrying out some of the principal strategies identified in this Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. With additional staff, as planned by IVAG, the CTSA can undertake additional coordination efforts in Imperial County.

Imperial Valley College

A number of organizations work with Imperial Valley College to provide job training and skills training programs at the campus. As a result, the college is an important destination for residents from throughout Imperial County. For example, Imperial Valley College, in collaboration with the EDD One-Stop Career Centers, IVROP and CalWORKs, created a new training program at the campus for disabled veterans, securing nearly \$450,000 in Workforce Investment Act funds under the Veterans’ Employment Assistance Program.

The IVC Disabled Students Programs and Services division provides support services and special classes to students with disabilities. Many students also participate in programs offered through the San Diego Regional Center and ARC. The college sponsors events for the community such as its annual Disability Awareness Day, typically bringing together more than fifty agencies to provide information about their services.

AIM Transit

A number of agencies effectively are coordinating their services by contracting with AIM Transit to provide service for their clients. By using AIM Transit, agencies do not need to purchase their own vehicles and can arrange a direct-billing contract whereby agency clients can ride without paying a fare or using tickets/vouchers. AIM Transit sends an invoice directly to the agency, making the service easy to use for clients and providing records on the number of passengers

served. Also the fact that the dial-a-ride services in Imperial and El Centro, and AIM Transit all use one operator means that services can be scheduled and coordinated internally, keeping operating costs for the services relatively low.

An agreement is also in place that AIM Transit will provide assistance to Brawley Dial-a-Ride in the event of a lift breakdown on their transit vehicle. AIM has additional capacity to coordinate services and provide transportation under contract to more organizations.

Winterhaven Health Consortium

The Winterhaven Health Consortium draws together the providers in the Bard and Winterhaven areas to share information and discuss issues relevant to the mostly low-income populations, seniors and people with disabilities they serve.

Informal Coordination

A lot of informal coordination takes place in Imperial County. Agencies contact one another for assistance or to share information about their programs or events. For example, for the annual Project Homeless Connect services fair, AIM Transit, Numero Uno and IVT volunteered to provide free transportation service to participants. Representatives of several agencies expressed interest in coordinating further.

Barriers to Coordination

A number of barriers to coordination exist. These are either existing or perceived challenges that have resulted in the various agencies in Imperial County not coordinating as extensively as they otherwise could.

Many of the individuals who provided input and shared their perceptions in the development of this plan said that transportation is one of the greatest challenges faced by people in Imperial County. Most stakeholders said they would support some type of mechanism to pool vehicles and better share information about where vehicles are traveling. Only a few agency representatives said they were aware of specific restrictions that would limit their ability to carry non-agency clients on their vehicles. Nevertheless, some agencies also cautioned about poor experiences they had trying to comingle different populations. For example, Mental Health and Behavioral Health clients with senior citizens on AIM Transit, or veterans and disabled children on Med Express may not necessarily travel well together on the same vehicle.

Some stakeholders said funding is confusing, and several talked about unsuccessful past attempts to secure JARC or 5310 funds. Clarifying funding requirements and providing clear information and instruction on how to apply for various funding sources for which agencies may be eligible would provide a useful benefit for many agencies. With insufficient funding, there is competition for the limited funds that are available, and agencies do not perceive that they will necessarily benefit by sharing their knowledge of different funding sources with the other agencies that are also seeking funds. Several agencies talked about funding limitations and their impact on the services they can provide.

Another significant challenge is competing requirements from funding agencies for local agencies providing programs. For example, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program requirements recently changed. Individuals who are enrolled in CalWORKs

programs previously met most of TANF’s requirements by participating in the CalWORKs programs. However, the implementation of stricter TANF requirements mean individuals may be required to travel longer distances for certain types of programs, even if transportation is not available. CalWORKs can use more flexible guidelines for non-TANF clients.

A lack of centralized information was also noted as a barrier. There are not central resources listing available transportation services. The lack of centralized information means there is no single source for individuals seeking to find transportation options, eligibility requirements, fares and service hours. As an initial task to fulfill some of its responsibilities, the CTSA would be an appropriate entity to assume a lead role in developing and implementing strategies to establish a centralized information resource.

Several stakeholders talked about spatial limitations and temporal limitations in Imperial County, which can also be identified as barriers to coordination. Long distances and limited services make it difficult to coordinate with major employers or seek private funding for services.

Program eligibility and trip purpose restrictions also inhibit coordination. Many of the existing services are available to only subsets of the three target populations. As a result, some populations, especially individuals with low incomes, have limited access to the transportation resources. Other transportation programs are limited to taking people to/from medical appointments, or only to specific programs. Organizations have specific missions, vehicle requirements and insurance requirements, which makes it difficult to coordinate with other agencies.

Key Origins and Destinations

Services in Imperial County are concentrated in the county seat, El Centro. Thus, it is common for people seeking medical and social services to travel to El Centro. Nevertheless, services are also available in Calexico and Brawley, with more limited services in Imperial, Winterhaven and the northern portion of the county. In discussions with stakeholders throughout the county, many of them said they travel regularly to El Centro for meetings, training sessions or services. A general list of key destinations in Imperial County, developed based on input from transit operators and stakeholders, is included in Figure 5-1, and many of these are shown in the map in Figure 4-7.

Figure 5-1 Key Travel Destinations

Major Employers <i>(see other categories below: many key travel destinations are also major employers)</i>	
Brawley Beef	Brawley
Golden Acorn Casino	Campo
Imperial County Offices	El Centro
Imperial County Office of Education	El Centro
Quechan Paradise Casino	Winterhaven
Target	El Centro
Wal-Mart	Calexico, El Centro
Medical Facilities	

El Centro Regional Medical Center	El Centro
Pioneers Health Center	Brawley
Schools	
Imperial Valley College	Imperial
San Diego State University, Imperial Valley	Calexico
Senior Centers	
Brawley Senior Center	Brawley
Day Out	El Centro
El Centro Community Center	El Centro
Westmorland Senior Center	Westmorland
Shopping Locations	
Calexico Market	Calexico
Food 4 Less	Calexico, El Centro
Imperial Valley Mall	El Centro
Kennedy's Market, Inc.	Heber
Kmart	El Centro
Mission Retail Center	El Centro
Target	El Centro
Valley Plaza Shopping Center	El Centro
Vons	Brawley, El Centro
Wal-Mart	Calexico, El Centro
Social Services	
Access to Independence	El Centro
Alegria ADHC	Calexico
Alzheimer's Association	El Centro
ARC	El Centro
Catholic Charities - House of Hope Shelter	El Centro
Center for Family Solutions (Womanhaven)	El Centro
House of Hope	El Centro
Imperial County Office of Employment Training	El Centro
Imperial County Social Services	El Centro
Imperial County Work Training Center, Inc.	El Centro
Imperial Valley Blind Center	El Centro
IVROP	El Centro
Neighborhood House of Calexico, Inc.	Calexico
New Creations' Transitional Home	Imperial

Salvation Army	El Centro
State of California Employment Development Department	El Centro
Turning Point Men's Home	Holtville
West Shores Youth Center	Salton City

Source: California Employment Development Department, Stakeholders, 2004 SRTP, Transit Operators

Essentially, the county is divided geographically in terms of where people go for certain types of activities and services. A description of each of the three geographic regions is presented in the following paragraphs.

Northern Imperial County

In northwestern Imperial County, around the Salton Sea, many residents head to Riverside County for shopping and medical services. A drive from Bombay Beach to Indio, a city larger than El Centro, is about 40 miles, compared with a trip to El Centro, which is more than 50 miles. The Coachella Valley Unified School District, which is based in Riverside County, is the public school district for students in Salton City in northwestern Imperial County (about 200 Imperial County students attend school in the district). For residents of the Niland and Calipatria areas, Brawley is the largest nearby city.

Central/Southern Imperial County

Distances between Calexico, El Centro, Imperial, Brawley, Heber and Holtville are minor compared to the vast distances across Imperial County. People in these cities, particularly in the smaller cities, tend to travel beyond city boundaries for medical and social services, as well as shopping.

The 2004 IVAG SRTP identifies major transit destinations for paratransit users in El Centro, Calexico and Imperial. Some of these key destinations listed in the SRTP are as follows:

- El Centro
 - Catholic Charities Nutrition Group (senior meal program)
 - Wal-Mart
 - Washington School
 - Vons
 - Desert Medical Center
- Calexico
 - Alegria Adult Day Health Care
 - Catholic Charities Nutrition Group (senior meal program)
 - Mexico/U.S. Border
 - Schools
 - Wal-Mart
 - Local discount stores
- Imperial

- K-Mart
- Wal-Mart
- Salvation Army Thrift Store
- Post Office.

With regard to intercity transit use, Calexico-El Centro was identified in the SRTP as the most predominant origin-destination combination.

Stakeholders report that the Imperial County Office of Employment Training and Imperial County Social Services (which includes the CalWORKs office), along with Pioneers Health Center are also important destinations, particularly for the population groups that are the focus of this Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. Imperial Valley College is identified as one of the most important destinations in this portion of Imperial County.

Major discount retailers are also identified as key destinations. Wal-Mart stores in El Centro and Calexico, along with K-Mart and Target in El Centro were noted as important shopping locations. And although many people go to major supermarkets and discount stores like Wal-Mart, Von's and Food 4 Less, it should be noted that some of the smaller markets, particularly those that specialize in Latino grocery products, are heavily used by residents. Imperial Valley Mall is the region's major retail shopping and entertainment destination.

The Mexican border is one of the most important origins and destinations in Calexico, but San Diego State University's Imperial Valley branch, the Las Palmas swap meet, and downtown Calexico are also key destinations.

Brawley Beef and Vons, along with the Imperial County Services offices on Main Street, were identified as among the most important destinations in Brawley.

Eastern Imperial County

Medical, retail and social services are limited in Eastern Imperial County. Very small communities like Glamis and Palo Verde have few local services. Major employment locations are near Winterhaven, at the Quechan Paradise Casino, which has a significant expansion planned, at Imperial Date Gardens in Bard, and across the Arizona state line at numerous service sector and military jobs in Yuma.

Although some local employment opportunities exist, for certain types of medical and social services, Eastern Imperial County residents must travel to El Centro, almost 60 miles to the east. For grocery shopping and other needs, services are found in Yuma, a few miles south of Winterhaven.

Most residents of Eastern Imperial County live in low density locations and very small communities adjacent to farmland and desert areas, as well as around the Quechan reservation. The area along Highway 186, north of the Mexican city of Algodones is largely unpopulated in Imperial County.

Gaps and Unmet Needs

The vast distances traveled between some of the origins and destinations, as described above, the lack of transportation options to connect origins and destinations, and limited resources are

the factors that lead to most of the gaps or unmet needs in Imperial County. Prior to the implementation of IVT, many agencies provided their own transportation services. Although regular fixed-route and general public paratransit service coverage has expanded over the years, some areas of Imperial County are not accessible by transit and some have only lifeline services.

Limited Service Frequencies

Very limited scheduled transit service is available between El Centro and Winterhaven (one day per week), and service between Calipatria, Bombay Beach and other Salton Sea communities is only offered via one round-trip each day to Brawley. Imperial County is looking at reducing the service on the West Shores Dial-a-Ride. In large rural areas like Imperial County, it is rare to have high-frequency service, but it is worth noting that services with very limited frequencies present an obstacle for some residents.

Reliability Problems on Some Transit Operations

Unreliable transportation is a significant barrier for someone to hold a job or attend classes. Although stakeholders had positive things to say about existing transit services, some stakeholders talked about quality of service problems on AIM Transit and the Brawley Dial-a-Ride. Some stakeholders who work with disabled clients said they are unable to count on AIM Transit to get their clients to their scheduled appointments on time because vehicles are frequently late. These comments are anecdotal and could not be confirmed through documented records.

Stakeholders also commented about trip denials on AIM Transit, suggesting there may be some capacity problems or scheduling problems that AIM Transit may not be able to address with its current fleet. Peak demand for service occurs in the early morning when several social service agencies need their clients to arrive at a set time. This places significant demand on AIM Transit to both accommodate these subscription trips as well as serve passengers unaffiliated with a social service agency. While peak demand for service is difficult to accommodate, the consultant could not confirm or refute comments about scheduling problems because AIM Transit does not keep a log of service denials or have procedures for negotiating ride times.

This issue was discussed at a SSTAC meeting in May 2008, with staff from AIM acknowledging some peak capacity limitations. SSTAC members expressed their support for AIM, and suggested negotiation of program start times with different agencies and securing additional vehicles.

One of the strategies identified in Chapter 6 includes the replacement and expansion of vehicle fleets so that AIM and other providers can maintain a high quality of service, even as demand for service increases.

Lack of Services or Connections to Services

With route deviation available, someone living in central Winterhaven could be picked up at their home and travel to El Centro Wednesday morning, boarding the IVT bus that departs Winterhaven at 6:08 AM. However, riders living outside of Winterhaven will need a ride to the bus stop. Connecting service to the intercity route from the small communities in eastern Imperial County is not available. To address the need to get its clients from Winterhaven to El

Centro, CalWORKs picks up a group of Winterhaven residents each day and drives them to El Centro.

No scheduled service exists between Winterhaven and nearby Yuma. The Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization (YMPO) is the region's MPO and includes the Winterhaven urbanized area as a non-voting participant. The Quechan Tribe is working with YMPO to develop strategies to provide service between Winterhaven and Yuma, but currently this lack of service is identified as a barrier to regional mobility.

Transit service does not exist in many very remote communities: places like Bard, Ripley and Palo Verde with very small populations. In Heber, residents without a car often travel on foot if they wish to go to a location not served by the intercity route that runs between El Centro and Calexico. Outside of the irrigated area, the smallest communities in Imperial County do not have local medical and social services, so people must travel out of town to access these services.

Many stakeholders noted that certain jobs and educational programs begin early, and that people who must make a connection on transit were unable to reach their destination in time for work or a class. For example, a Niland resident was not able to reach a program in El Centro before 9:00 AM. To address this challenge, IVT introduced new service effective July 1, 2008 that allows travel from northern communities to Brawley where passengers can transfer to an express route to El Centro.

Lack of Services/Concentration of Services

The concentration of services in El Centro means that residents of some of Imperial County's outlying cities must travel long distances to get basic services. Providing on-site services in outlying communities, like the Family Resource Centers are doing, is one way to reduce the need for people to travel out of town for services.

Imperial County's Boundaries and Borders

A significant proportion of Imperial County's residents cross the County line for goods or services. Many Imperial County employees live outside the county. Examples are:

- Many people requiring certain types of medical care must travel to the San Diego area for treatments that are unavailable in Imperial County.
- People in eastern Imperial County go to Yuma for groceries and some services, but only limited Medi-Cal services are available in Arizona and some Winterhaven residents pay out-of-pocket for medical services in Arizona rather than traveling to El Centro. To take a taxi between Winterhaven and Yuma costs about \$15.00 each way.
- The International Border with Mexico means that a number of individuals travel back and forth between Calexico and Mexicali, typically on foot. The existence of inexpensive private transit operators like Calexico Transit and Numero Uno is in response to the high number of pedestrians crossing the border.

Availability/Quality of Information

IVAG invests heavily in the production of public informational tools about the transit programs its staff oversees. Some examples of promotional efforts include bilingual television commercials, radio advertisements and print ads in the Imperial Valley Press and Adelante. IVAG also has

prepared public service announcements to get the word out about the services offered by AIM Transit, Imperial Valley Transit, the Blue Line, and the West Shores Dial-a-Ride.

Even with the effort undertaken to promote services, much of the information about transportation services in Imperial County is provided by word-of-mouth. Human service agencies often sponsor information fairs and programs to provide outreach to the communities that might use their services. In the past, IVT has been a regular participant in these programs and plans to continue participating in future outreach activities.

Many Imperial County residents, particularly Spanish-speaking residents, do not have access to information about the services that are available: they are unable to go on-line or find a dial-a-ride brochure available in their language. Distribution of up-to-date printed information has also been a challenge for transit operators in the county, with problems like vandalism at bus stops or information brochure supplies exhausted quickly at libraries and not replenished. Many Imperial County residents have a low level of computer literacy and some are unable to read printed materials.

Much of the available information on the internet and in printed dial-a-ride information needs to be updated. IVT's website is not up-to-date, and the information available in the brochure and on-line is confusing for many people to understand. Very little printed information is available about many of the small dial-a-rides in Imperial County, and some of what is circulating is out-of-date. There are plans underway to create a bilingual web page about the availability of the services operated by ARC.

Many bus stops have little or no information. Some stakeholders noted that courtesy flag-down bus stops are good, but marked stops would be preferable so information can be included and people will know which bus serves the location. Nevertheless, keeping schedules posted at stops can require high maintenance costs.

Transit Service Hours

One of the most significant gaps is the lack of transit service in the evening, and on weekends in some areas. Although some of the core IVT services run as late as 11:00 PM, for people with job shifts that end very late (12:00 AM) or for people traveling locally in Imperial, Brawley, Calexico, or El Centro during evening hours, no late service is available. Many low-income employees work nontraditional hours, and many job training programs schedule classes in the evening. Public transit service is not always available to serve a portion of their transportation needs.

The lack of weekend service is also a challenge in many portions of Imperial County. CalWORKs, for example, has been able to help people find a new job, and will often drive them to their job for a short while, assuming they will make other transportation plans for the long-term. Ultimately, due to a lack of transit service, many people are unable to hold certain types of jobs. For those who are employed, the morning trip to work can also be a problem (e.g., the early shift at Brawley Beef), as well as the need for service to accommodate a 24-hour operation at employers like Wal-Mart.

Travel Times

Long travel times not only make for uncomfortable travel on buses and vans, but also discourage people from making trips for medical care, educational or social/recreational

purposes. For example, a trip to Imperial Valley College from Niland on IVT takes one-and-a-half hours, and from Winterhaven to 14th and State Street in El Centro is one hour and 40 minutes. Same-day round-trip travel beyond Imperial County to San Diego can be done, but is challenging. IVT has developed a number of express routes to try to reduce some travel times, but limited funds make it impossible to provide quick, direct connections between all of Imperial County's key origins and destinations.

Infrastructure

Based on data reviewed and stakeholder input, Imperial County residents walk quite a bit to get where they need to go. In some areas, transit service does not permeate the residential communities, and it is common for people to walk several miles. Even with many pedestrians, some communities have minimal sidewalk networks, particularly in many of Imperial County's colonias, which have a high proportion of very low-income pedestrians. For people with disabilities, especially those who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices, poor curb access in portions of Calexico and El Centro mean that it is not only difficult to get around town, but also difficult to access and board buses. In addition, not all bus stop locations have benches and shelters, meaning that a number of bus riders must stand outside, often in Imperial County's extreme weather, waiting for the bus.

Duplication of Services

Duplication of services refers to the overlap of various transportation services offered not only by general public transit providers, but also by human service agencies. Service duplication often exists because multiple human service agencies operate their own vehicles for their own clients, traveling within the same vicinity. Some of the objectives of coordinating transportation include identifying opportunities to reduce this duplication of services by comingling clients from various agencies, allowing agencies to share vans, and providing information about where all of the existing services are operating and when they operate so agencies can schedule different types of clients on vehicles that are serving the same destinations.

In Imperial County, the inventory of providers illustrates that an extensive overlapping of services exists. Although there is duplication in terms of where different services operate, many serve a unique clientele, with different types of vehicles and levels of accessibility. Although reducing duplication may be a challenge and would not necessarily be appropriate in all circumstances, it is worth noting the three primary types of service duplication to see if there might be opportunities for agencies to piggyback on existing services or coordinate schedules.

The first is that multiple providers are operating different services within the same geographic area. For example, IVROP, Neighborhood House, Alegria ADHC, CalWORKs, Calexico Dial-a-Ride and Calexico Transit all operate services within Calexico. Except for Calexico Transit, each service is limited to a specific client group or segment of the population. Figuring out a way to coordinate all of these services would be challenging, but some opportunities may exist to allow agencies to share vehicles when they are not in use, or to pick up certain types of passengers for non-agency activities.

The second type of service duplication is that a single entity is restricted from maximizing vehicle utilization due to a variety of different funding sources and restrictions on how funds are used. For example, this type of service duplication exists in Winterhaven, where the Quechan tribe's various tribal programs have a significant fleet of at least 31 vans. Nevertheless, there is

no coordination among the various vans on the reservation. Each van is dedicated to a specific program. According to Quechan staff, the tribe receives specific grants for specific programs, so they are unable to coordinate, even internally, for tribal programs.

The third type of service duplication in Imperial County is where public and private operators essentially provide similar services along the same route. IVT and Numero Uno both offer routes between Calexico and El Centro (Amtrak buses also provide service along this route, but a passenger would be required to purchase a rail ticket from Bakersfield in order to use the service). Numero Uno's buses are not wheelchair accessible and are non-stop between Calexico and El Centro while IVT's are not, but still many individuals view them as interchangeable. Numero Uno operates an express type service, and generally its passengers are seeking to travel from the border to El Centro as fast as possible whereas IVT attracts passengers seeking to make stops along the way or to travel onward from the downtown El Centro.

Conclusion

Understanding key destinations, service gaps and service duplication allows for the development of coordinated solutions to address transportation needs in Imperial County. Nevertheless, the limited availability of funds to address these needs, challenges with mixing different rider groups (liability, funding restrictions, vehicle needs, and passenger behavior), and an agency's sense of pride and flexibility in operating its own service — and perhaps unwillingness to give up oversight of the service — represent obstacles to enhanced coordination.

Chapter 6. Identification of Strategies and Evaluation

The focus of the coordinated plan is to identify strategies and solutions to address the service gaps and unmet needs presented in Chapter 5. This chapter identifies these strategies and presents a set of criteria used to evaluate them. It also describes results of a public workshops held in Imperial County in May 2008 to develop and prioritize strategies.

Public Workshop

As a community-based plan, a key focus for the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan is to ensure that agency representatives, transit providers and members of the public have an opportunity to provide input about local needs and identify possible solutions to address these needs. For this reason, public workshops were held in Brawley and El Centro on May 6, 2008 and in Calexico on May 7, 2008. Individuals who were unable to attend the workshops were encouraged to submit their comments to the consultant.

Methodology

Significant effort was put into encouraging attendance at the public workshops. Steps taken include the following:

- The consultant sent an email invitation and flyer to stakeholders including those who had attended the Plan kick-off meeting in December 2007
- The consultant made follow-up phone calls to all stakeholders on the project contact list, reminding them about the meeting and asking them to inform colleagues about the workshop
- A press release was prepared and submitted to local newspapers (El Lechugon, El Sol Del Valle Imperial, IV Press and Adelante) and radio stations (KSIQ, KXO, and KMXX).

A copy of the flyer, press release, and a list of meeting attendees is included in Appendix B.

Approach

The workshops were facilitated meetings where participants sat around conference tables to allow for face-to-face interaction. The meetings began with introductions and a review of the meeting agenda. All workshop participants were asked to introduce themselves and describe any transportation services they operate or fund.

The consultant provided an overview of the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan process and purpose, explaining Caltrans' role in the completion of these plans in rural counties across the state. The consultant also provided information about FTA 5310, FTA 5316, and FTA 5317 funds and noted that applications for these grants were available at the workshop.

The focus of the next item on the agenda was to provide a brief overview of the Existing Conditions report, with an overview of existing transportation services in Imperial County and a

brief review of demographic data. Finally, the consultant presented the transportation needs, challenges, and gaps identified by stakeholders during this process and presented in Chapter 5 of this Plan. Participants were asked to supplement the list of needs and gaps, and confirm that they accurately represent the primary needs for Imperial County residents. A summary list of the needs presented is shown in Figure 6-1.

Figure 6-1 Summary List of Needs Presented at Workshop

Limited Service Frequencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service between Winterhaven and El Centro only runs one day per week • Service between Bombay Beach and Brawley runs only one day per week • Need longer hours for West Shores dial-a-ride service
Reliability of Dial-a-Ride
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late service or lack of capacity on AIM • Brawley dial-a-ride is unreliable
Lack of Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need scheduled service run between Winterhaven and Yuma • Need service in the communities of Bard, Ripley, and Palo Verde
Limited Transit Service Hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some local services do not operate before or after intercity services are available • Need for late night service to jobs • Need for early morning service to job training
Availability and Quality of Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for wider dissemination of current transit information throughout the County • Lack of awareness of available services by human service agency staff • Need for bilingual printed information about transportation options • Need for maps and transit information at stops and transfer points • Need for all bus stops to be marked • Need updated information on the internet
Pedestrian Environment and Accessibility for People with Disabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to improve sidewalk access to the bus stop for persons with mobility impairments • Need for bus shelters and benches • Need for wheelchair accessible vehicles on Calexico Transit System and Numero Uno
Lack of Coordination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for a formal entity that focuses on transportation coordination in Imperial County • Some insurance, program, and funding policies restrict coordinated use of vehicles • CTSA exists, but has yet to assume all of its roles and responsibilities

Workshop participants confirmed the items listed in Figure 6-1 are the primary issues in Imperial County. Workshop participants were then asked to focus on the outcomes of the workshop. They were asked to review a set of preliminary evaluation criteria – goals that shape the development of strategies in the workshop and in the Plan – and identify strategies. A list of strategies was compiled and individuals spoke about the merits of various strategies and the potential roles their organizations could play in implementing the strategies. They also discussed some of the challenges in implementing certain strategies.

Following the development of strategies, workshop participants ranked them. These rankings form the basis for the prioritization of strategies defined in this chapter.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants shared information about their programs and asked questions. Some participants picked up copies of the federal grant fund applications.

Evaluation Criteria

Workshop participants reviewed the following criteria and provided comments. These criteria were used to evaluate the various strategies and serve as the basis for implementation of key strategies in Chapter 7.

The evaluation criteria used are as follows:

- **Does the strategy meet the documented gap?** How well does the strategy address transportation gaps or barriers identified in the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan? Strategies are evaluated based on how successfully they accomplish each of the following:
 - Provide service where there are few transportation options
 - Serve locations where the greatest number of people will benefit
 - Improve the mobility of low-income, elderly, and persons with disabilities
 - Provide a higher level of service than currently provided with existing resources
 - Preserve and protect existing services
- **How feasible is the strategy to implement?** How likely is the strategy to be successfully implemented given available resources, funding opportunities, and the willingness of agencies or “local champions” to take the lead? The most successful strategies would rank highly for each of the following:
 - Possibly be eligible for SAFTEA-LU or other grant funding
 - Efficiently use available resources
 - Have a potential project sponsor with staff or vehicles (or equipment) to carry out the strategy
 - Be sustainable beyond a short-term grant period
- **How much does the strategy reflect a coordinated effort?** Is coordination an element of the solution? How would the strategy encourage agencies to work with one another? Strategies are evaluated based on how successfully they accomplish the following:
 - Avoid duplication of services
 - Encourages agencies to work together to find efficient, effective solutions
 - Promote coordination of transportation services and other programs

Identification of Strategies

A total of 15 strategies are identified in this plan. All of them were developed by workshop participants, and are listed based on how they were prioritized at the workshops. Each strategy

is also ranked based on how effectively it meets the evaluation criteria listed above (H=high; M=medium; L=low). A summary of the strategies and their ranking are shown in Figure 6-2.

Figure 6-2 Strategies

Strategies	Addresses Documented Gap/Need	Feasibility of Implementation	Coordination
High Priority			
Expansion of Imperial Valley Transit	H	M	M
Increase capacity on AIM	H	M	M
Creation of a local circulator shuttle in Brawley that connects to IVT	H	M	H
Development of consolidated countywide dial-a-ride services	H	L	H
Development and dissemination of transportation information, including Spanish language translation	H	H	H
Create a 211 line with transit and service information	H	H	H
Transportation summit for social service agencies and transportation providers	H	H	H
Transit/transfer coordination plan for Brawley	H	M	H
Replacement and expansion of vehicle fleet and capital equipment for transportation programs and transit agencies*	H	H	L-H
Medium Priority			
Vanpool program	M	M	H
Medical transportation service within Imperial County	H	M	M
Creation of a safe street crossing in Calexico at Highway 111 and Cole	M	M	L
Late night employer-operated shuttle for employees	M	L	L
Low Priority			
Subsidized taxi service	M	M	L
Transportation kiosk at mall or plazas	M	M	L

*Additional recommended strategy not identified by workshop participants

High Priority Strategies

High priority strategies shown in Figure 6-2 are defined below. These are strategies that are recommended for short-term or ongoing implementation and that may be eligible for grants using New Freedom (FTA 5317), JARC (FTA 5316) and Elderly and Disabled (FTA 5310) funds. In some cases, these high priority strategies will require a long lead time, but others can be implemented immediately. Implementation of these strategies is discussed in Chapter 7.

Expansion of Imperial Valley Transit

Needs addressed by strategy: Need for longer service days and more frequency in outlying communities

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves access to outlying communities • Provides lifeline service to residents in low density regions • Provides transit service to residents who work “swing shift” or night jobs • Provides transit service to residents seeking job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires additional operating funds to pay for extended service hours • May require additional vehicle to operate expanded service ; and new funds to pay for vehicle • May not be top priority of IVT given other needs and desires to expand service

Even though IVT operates local, express, direct and deviated fixed-route service as well as lifeline services throughout the service area, there are individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with limited incomes whose mobility issues are not being fully met. Service to Ocotillo on Route 400 is provided on-demand and passengers must call one day in advance. There is neither service to other outlying communities such as Bard, Ripley and Palo Verde, nor is there Sunday service. Providing additional transit service would improve these residents’ access to life-enhancing opportunities.

Many stakeholders indicated they thought there would be significant value to operating public transit service on Sunday. Although college classes are primarily weekdays and many people use IVT for social services that are provided on weekdays only, a key market for IVT is to address service sector commuters. The service sector (shopping, restaurants, etc.) runs seven days a week. For the system to be useful for these workers, it must be useful on all of the days when they may need to work. Many low-income people, in particular, have mobility issues that are not being addressed.

Service on Sunday could be more limited than weekday service, and hours and frequencies could be reduced if needed. Evening service has a more limited market. The service is most useful for people getting back from jobs or classes, but can also be used for recreational purposes.

This strategy proposes expanding Imperial Valley Transit service. Route 500 could operate two days per week and a new lifeline route could be introduced to the communities of Bard, Ripley, and Palo Verde on a demonstration basis (or extensions of existing routes could be offered). Sunday service could be offered on a limited schedule. Later service could be operated as needed, based on determinations in the Unmet Transit Needs process.

The proposed service enhancements would be similar to current lifeline service in that riders would still call in advance to schedule a ride to and from their home. Expanding coverage to new communities and offering service two days per week in some rural communities plus providing service seven days a week may help increase community members’ access to life-enhancing opportunities, such as job training, school and social services and religious services.

Increase Capacity on AIM Transit

Needs addressed by strategy: Need for increased capacity to reduce or eliminate service denials

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially reduces wait time and improves on-time performance • Benefits consumers by enhancing service capacity • Eliminates or reduces service denials • Benefits individual consumers and social service agency trips (i.e. subscription services) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires new vehicles and capital funds to pay for vehicle procurement • Requires additional operating funds to pay for enhanced services

AIM Transit operates with a fleet of five vehicles. Service is available to ADA passengers and to non-ADA passengers, including people with disabilities and seniors age 60 or older, on a space-available basis. According to some stakeholders, passengers experience trip denials on AIM Transit, suggesting there may be some capacity or scheduling problems that AIM Transit may not be able to address with its current fleet.

This strategy recommends that AIM Transit enhance its capacity by one vehicle to accommodate more passengers, especially during peak periods, between 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM when all vehicles are in demand. The service schedule would remain from 6:00 AM to 10:30 PM on weekdays and from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Saturday. If IVT introduces Sunday service, then AIM Transit would also need to offer Sunday service to complement the service hours. Introducing a new vehicle to increase capacity on weekdays would result in approximately 2,000 hours of additional service per year with another 250 annual hours for a limited Sunday service schedule. This strategy would require funds to purchase a new accessible vehicle and additional operating funds to support day-to-day operations.

Creation of a Local Circulator Shuttle in Brawley that Connects to IVT

Needs addressed by strategy: Need for reliable local circulation within Brawley

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves circulation within Brawley • Provides service linking major activity centers in Brawley including employers, retail stores, medical facilities and social service agencies • Provides local residents with higher level of service and more flexibility than Brawley Dial-a-Ride now offers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires dedicated vehicle in Brawley • May require new vehicle and capital funds to pay for vehicle procurement • Requires additional operating funds to pay for local circulator • Needs downtown transfer location

A local circulator in Brawley could replace or scale back the existing general public dial-a-ride service. The dial-a-ride service could be scaled back to serve seniors and persons with disabilities or be made available only to ADA-eligible riders. One option to eliminate the need for supplemental dial-a-ride service would be for the route to deviate to pick up ADA-eligible riders, as needed.

The route configuration and schedule of a local circulator would need to be developed. The goal would be to link major activity centers in Brawley and provide convenient connections to IVT. It would be structured to serve the major destinations of transit users, including older adults and persons with disabilities. The proposed local circulator would improve convenience and

spontaneity for residents wishing to travel within Brawley and make connections with IVT to travel to El Centro, IVC and other destinations beyond the city limits.

An analysis of current dial-a-ride trip patterns should be conducted to plan for an efficient and convenient route. Based on stakeholder preferences, such a service could have 30-minute headways and operate six days a week, but costs to operate this level of service could be prohibitive. Since the route would link residents with grocery stores, and other retail establishments, it is possible that partial funding for this service could come from private funds. An extension of existing IVT service is also an option and is currently being explored.

Develop a Consolidated Countywide Dial-A-Ride Service

Needs addressed by strategy: need for intercity travel in outlying communities and improved service coordination

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides service throughout county • Improves mobility for residents not served by IVT • Provides intercity door-to-door travel beyond city limits to destinations throughout county 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs lead agency to operate the service • Cities would need to cooperate and agree to transition from local dial-a-ride services to a countywide service • Requires funding formula for cities and county to share in the cost of the service • May require new vehicles and support equipment plus capital funds to pay for these investments • May require additional operating funds to pay for local circulator

This strategy is to develop a dial-a-ride service that provides coverage throughout Imperial County. The individual city dial-a-ride services would be folded into a countywide service. This service should be limited to seniors and persons with disabilities. Since intercity service is available in many communities throughout the county, the proposed dial-a-ride service should be priced higher, to encourage people who have access to IVT to use the fixed-route service.

Some communities are very rural in nature and demand for travel would be low. The service could be structured to operate in specific areas on specific days of the week or month and on a 24-hour call-ahead basis. This would eliminate the need for vehicles to travel long distances on a daily basis and would be a cost effective strategy. Service could be available in Ripley and Bard on Tuesdays and in the communities surrounding Bombay Beach service could be offered on Thursdays. In these communities, there may be some local trip requests, however the vast majority of trips would be to El Centro for medical, shopping or social service purposes. A centralized dispatch and scheduling system would be needed to schedule all trip requests.

A consolidated countywide dial-a-ride system has several potential benefits, including improved mobility for residents not served by IVT and easier access to services beyond one’s individual community. Elimination of the existing local dial-a-ride services, or consolidation of services, should be considered to allow a greater number of resources to be funneled into a more effective countywide dial-a-ride system.

Develop and Disseminate Updated Transportation Information, Including Spanish Language Translation

Needs addressed by strategy: Need for more information about transportation options including printed materials, internet information, regular updates and Spanish translation

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased availability of public transit information especially if all service options are included in one brochure • Public better informed about transit options • Increased awareness of social service agency staff about transit service options • Easier access to public transit information through a variety of venues • Benefits Spanish-speaking residents by providing information in their mother tongue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying a lead agency to develop a brochure or information guide listing all transit service options may be a challenge • Transit service schedules and other essential information is dynamic, making it difficult to ensure current information is updated and maintained • Establishing a comprehensive distribution network is labor intensive • Regular updates to the website are required

Information is important to support transit services. A thoughtful, coordinated, user-focused marketing and information program can help increase awareness of and access to the Imperial County Transit network. If the information is clearly and easily understood and is readily available, it could encourage greater transit usage.

To support a higher level of public information coordination, a comprehensive public information and marketing program should be considered. To understand whether the marketing and public information materials are reaching the target audiences, it is valuable to assess their effectiveness. Existing advertising efforts are robust but it is unknown whether current investments are merited, or whether marketing efforts should be focused on providing additional information about existing services. An evaluation of existing marketing efforts could include informal feedback from riders and non riders alike, surveys and formal focus groups.

Since new fares on IVT and AIM Transit will become effective in the fall of 2008, and fares on the local dial-a-rides may also be adjusted, it is timely for updating transit information. One key element in preparing transit information is to list all services in one source including text and accompanying maps. Bilingual printed information is essential and materials should also be in accessible formats to address the needs of some seniors and people with disabilities.

Some stakeholders commented that word-of-mouth information is often how people learn about transit services; others noted that information needs to be more widely distributed to get the word out. To help facilitate communication, local residents, social service agency staff, employers, and school personnel need to become familiar with the services and share this information with their family, friends, co-workers and neighbors. It is therefore important that transit information is distributed widely throughout the county at libraries, social service offices, schools, IVC, and grocery stores, and posted on bulletin boards. Maps and information should also be available at bus stops and transfer points. Updated information needs to be provided on the IVT website with links to other transportation options both within the county and to neighboring San Diego and Riverside Counties (and possibly services available in Mexicali). All written materials, including information on the website, should be in English and Spanish.

Creation of a 211 Line with Transit and Service Information

Needs addressed by strategy: Need for more information and training; Need services for out-of-county medical trips; Need for service connectivity and schedule coordination; Problems with public transit reliability

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves access to available services locally and regionally • Allows for coordination of non-transportation services in combination with transportation needs • Supports and facilitates regional coordination • Benefits clients and human service organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many different services means developing and updating information will be challenging • Requires lead organization to take responsibility for county-level and/or regional directory • Transportation will not be the only focus of the 211 program • Information requires ongoing updating and maintenance

The 211 California Partnership is a collaborative effort between the California Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (CAIRS) and United Ways of California (UWCA). The 211 Mission is to enhance the effectiveness of information and referral services through leadership, education, and support.

Telephone information should be provided via 211 telephone and internet service.⁸ The 211 phone service is a comprehensive place to start for people who need help but do not know where to begin. Operators are specially trained to give personalized assistance to callers, including helping them identify their problems, helping them find the right organizations and agencies to call for additional assistance, and even following up with the caller to make sure they are able to get the help they needed. 211 representatives in San Diego County have initiated discussions with Imperial County and United Way officials about expanding San Diego’s service to cover residents of Imperial County.

Even though 211 has not been implemented in Imperial County yet, there may be an opportunity, when it is introduced in the region, to develop a relationship between 211 and transportation providers so that high quality transportation service assistance can be available to 211 callers. For instance, if an elderly person called 211 wanting help getting to a medical appointment, rather than referring them to Imperial County, the 211 operator would be well-versed in the public transit and human service transportation providers for which the individual might be eligible. They would be familiar with Imperial Valley Transit and AIM Transit (e.g., eligibility requirements, service areas, hours of operation, fares), so the operator could help the caller tailor a transportation plan to suit their needs.

This is one strategy in which the CTSA could play a key role, in facilitating the provision of transportation information for 211 operators and ensuring informational materials are updated and accurate.

⁸ In 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) set aside the 3-digit telephone number 2-1-1 to be used solely for health and human service information and referral (I&R). Since then, states and counties — those who want to provide this service for their residents and are able to fund it — have begun to implement 211 service, but it has not yet been introduced nationwide. In California, 211 service has been implemented in several counties including Sacramento, Stanislaus, and Fresno, as well as most San Francisco Bay Area counties and throughout Southern California.

Transportation Summit for Transportation Providers And Agencies

Needs addressed by strategy: Need for more information and training; improved connectivity and schedule coordination and problems with public transit reliability

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates regional coordination • Allows agency representatives to meet face-to-face to share program information • Ensures program information is updated and ready to distribute and discuss • Benefits transit agencies and human service organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires commitment from agencies to attend and participate • Requires lead organization to take responsibility for developing program and hosting summit

Sharing of information about programs and transportation services is one of the benefits that was derived in the process of developing the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. Although representatives of agencies meet from time to time in different forums to share information about client needs, health care needs, educational opportunities and funding issues, outside of the SSTAC, few opportunities exist for agency staff to convene to discuss coordination of services based on transportation. Furthermore, many agency staff are unaware of the availability of public transit services or complementary human service agency transportation programs that might benefit their own clients.

Bringing together the array of transportation providers and agency staff at a transportation summit is a recommended strategy to provide information via word-of-mouth. The summit could include travel training information, materials from each of the transportation programs that serve the residents of Imperial County, a roundtable on transportation coordination issues (and opportunities to implement elements of this plan), and could even feature discussions on the development of a 211 program as well as development of a campaign to get the word about the transportation programs that exist.

Develop a Transit/Transfer Center for Brawley

Needs addressed by strategy: Problems with Brawley Dial-a-Ride reliability; Need for information at stops and transfer points; Need for shelters and benches

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves transit services for Brawley residents • Provides a convenient location for passengers transferring between local and intercity services • Increases transit ridership by upgrading transfer opportunities • Increases transit service visibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires new funding for capital improvements • Requires coordination between agencies

Local transit services in Brawley are provided by a general public dial-a-ride service. IVT provides intercity service with several routes serving Brawley and other communities. Some stakeholders noted that the Brawley Dial-a-Ride is not reliable and others have expressed a preference for a local circulator within Brawley (See above discussion). This proposed strategy is intended to develop a transfer center in downtown Brawley to facilitate transferring between local and intercity services. The intent is to provide a convenient, safe and attractive location for transferring passengers.

The main bus stop in Brawley is at “E” Street and Rio Vista. While this location is not a good location for a transit facility from an operational perspective, it may be necessary to identify and evaluate other locations to ensure adequate space is available for buses to wait for boarding passengers, a bus shelter with signage can be provided, and benches and other amenities are available. This strategy is closely tied to the strategy to develop a local circulator within Brawley with timed connections to IVT.

Replacement and Expansion of Vehicle Fleet and Capital Equipment for Transportation Programs and Transit Agencies

Needs addressed by strategy: Limited service hours and frequencies; Limited transit coverage; Need for wheelchair-accessible vehicles; Problems with public transit reliability

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced operating and maintenance costs when older vehicles are replaced by new vehicles • Improved service reliability • Increases mobility for people who require wheelchair-accessible vehicles • Allows agencies to address needs and gaps by increasing service capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited funding opportunities for securing grants for capital purchases • Competitive process for capital funds to replace vehicles • Requires agency staff time to purchase and integrate new vehicle(s) into fleet • Agencies must secure operating funds to operate new/expansion vehicles

Vehicle replacement is critical for the continued operation of public and agency transportation service. As vehicles age, they become less reliable and have higher operating costs because they are less efficient and require more maintenance. All transportation providers must replace vehicles, and some must expand their fleets to address higher levels of demand.

Organizations and agencies for which this would be an appropriate strategy include Imperial Valley Transit, AIM Transit, the cities of Brawley, Calexico, El Centro and Imperial (for their local dial-a-ride services), the West Shores Dial-A-Ride, Med Express, ARC, and other human service transportation providers that address the needs of older adults, low-income residents and people with disabilities. It should be noted that the public transit services currently operate with a fleet of accessible vehicles, whereas the vehicles operated by private carriers currently are not fully accessible. Only public and private nonprofit agencies are eligible for FTA 5310 funds.

Implementation of this strategy entails a collaborative approach among local human service transportation providers and/or sponsors to develop a county-based or regional program to replace or expand capital equipment. Components of a capital improvement program would include the following:

- Identification and prioritization of transit facilities needing improvement
- Identification and prioritization of bus stops or transit centers needing improvement to enhance their usability, such as installation of shelters, benches, curb cuts, etc.
- Modification of bus stops to ensure their accessibility for wheelchair users
- Schedule for replacement of vehicles operated by local nonprofit agencies funded with FTA Section 5310 funds
- Development of an expansion plan to increase operators' fleets; identification of applicable fund sources
- Identification and prioritization of other capital equipment such as computerized scheduling and dispatching program, enhanced telephone or communication systems, or vehicle modifications needed to meet air quality standards

Medium Priority Strategies

Medium priority strategies are opportunities worthy of further evaluation. In some cases, they may be easy to implement, but have less of an impact in terms of meeting the needs of the plan's target populations. Some of the strategies require extensive planning, and funding of the strategy may be a challenge.

Develop a Countywide Vanpool Program

Needs addressed by strategy: Limited service hours and frequency need for early morning service to employment and job training and employment

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers potential commute cost savings to individuals • Provides commute option to individuals without access to automobile or unable to ride transit • Reduces highway/road congestion • Assists individuals to find transportation solutions that meet their needs • Has applicability to serve agricultural workers, a difficult market to serve with public transit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low density communities can make it more difficult to find rideshare matches • Requires at least one participant to have drivers' license and insurance

Ridesharing is a form of public transportation in which when more than one person shares the use of the vehicle, such as a van or car, to make a trip. The most common types of ridesharing are "carpooling" and "vanpooling." Carpooling is when two or more people share a ride, usually taking turns driving their own vehicles. Vanpooling is more formalized than carpooling. Official vanpools typically have between seven and 15 passengers including the driver (who usually rides for free), and the vehicle may be owned by one of the vanpoolers or leased from a vanpool rental company.

A vanpool program could be effective for sharing rides to improve access to employment or training sites. They offer flexible transportation service and can provide late night service when IVT and other options are not available. Employer-sponsored vanpool services are effective in communities where job locations, shift times and employee residential distributions are not always conducive to cost-effective and marketable transit services. Employee-sponsored vanpools work best when implemented by moderate and large employers with centralized facilities. The Calipatria and Centinela State Prisons and the meatpacking plant in Brawley could be good candidates to sponsor vanpool programs for their employees. Typically, employers provide equipment and insurance for vanpool programs, making it unnecessary for any direct public subsidy or equipment for the program. Employers also provide preferential parking spaces for vanpoolers.

Vanpools have also been adapted to offer farm worker transportation that may have applicability in Imperial County. Vanpool programs for agricultural workers have been operating in Fresno and Kings County and more recently a pilot project is underway in Santa Barbara County. In Fresno County, individual farm workers rent vans from a car rental agency and the driver collects payment from the passengers and makes payments to the car rental company. The program in Kings County has been operating since 2001 and began under a demonstration grant with 12 vehicles and has grown to over 60 vans operating throughout the county. In all three cases, the counties played a major role in securing funds and administering the programs during the initial start-up period.⁹

Develop a Medical Transportation Service within Imperial County

Needs addressed by strategy: Limited service frequencies; Need for more medical transportation services; Problems with public transit reliability

⁹ More information is available at the following websites: <http://www.kartaits.com/aitsframeset.html> and <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/Awtp.html>.

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides additional transportation options to people needing service to medical appointments and facilities • Supplements Med Express and Behavioral Health service • Provide same-day service (if taxi subsidy program is implemented) • Provides medical transportation at reduced costs and increases flexibility • Volunteers can provide physical and emotional support to riders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting and retaining volunteers can be challenging and requires ongoing effort/attention • Requires good communication among all parties • Fuel costs and vehicle insurance can prohibit use of volunteers • Most volunteer drivers are limited to ambulatory passengers • Insurance and accessibility requirements for taxis can be difficult to monitor

The three targeted populations, especially seniors, are in particular need of transportation assistance to get to medical appointments. There are two medical-related transportation services in Imperial County. One is Med-Express which offers non-emergency medical transportation from Imperial County to San Diego four days a week. The other is Behavioral Health, which provides transportation to medical appointments and specific programs for eligible individuals without transportation access.

Even with these two services, many stakeholders said that there is a need for more medical transportation service within Imperial County. To supplement this service, additional services for people to travel to medical appointments and facilities could be provided in a number of ways described below:

- **AIM Transit**, as the ADA provider can serve people who have a short-term medical condition such as a broken hip or knee injury, but many people may be unaware of this service. Individuals in this situation can apply for and receive **temporary ADA eligibility** and are eligible for service for a set time period. Granting temporary ADA eligibility is common among ADA transportation providers and is for people with a health condition or disability that temporarily prevents them from using fixed route bus service.
- Volunteer transportation could provide a convenient and flexible option to existing services. **A volunteer driver program** could be established to provide non-emergency medical transportation on a limited basis. Volunteer transportation programs typically rely on volunteers to use their own vehicles to transport individuals to medical appointments and facilities. Volunteers are often reimbursed at the Federal mileage rate.

Running a volunteer service using all volunteers is difficult. It is challenging to recruit and retain a large number of volunteers. However, this type of service is suggested as a small scale supplement to other medical transportation services and options.

- A **subsidized taxi program** could be a practical supplement for medical transportation services. A subsidized taxi program could be offered on a limited basis to targeted populations for travel to medical appointments.

These programs typically sell discounted taxi vouchers or scrip at a reduced rate. The user is thus subsidized and receives services at less than full cost. The taxi provider receives full fare through the redemption of scrip at the total trip cost. While taxi vouchers are not currently used in Imperial County, they have proven to be a cost effective transportation method in other counties. One concern is that in the current taxi

operating environment in Imperial County, the quality of some services was noted by stakeholders as unreliable, so this option may not be feasible at this time. For additional information on subsidized taxi programs, see the discussion below under Low Priority Strategies.

Implement Sidewalk Improvement and Curb Cuts Program (Creation of a Safe Street Crossing in Calexico at Highway 111 and Cole Boulevard)

Needs addressed by strategy: Need for safe access to transit and accessible pedestrian infrastructure

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases safety at major transit access point in Calexico • Improves infrastructure for seniors and persons with disabilities • Improves access for people using wheelchairs, mobility devices and baby strollers • Facilitates safe access to IVT transfer point at Cole & Highway 111 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High capital costs • Requires coordination with major development project in vicinity • Requires new capital fund source

Sidewalks and crosswalks enable residents to walk or use mobility devices to travel safely within small towns, or from their home to a bus stop. In addition to newly paved pathways, good pedestrian access requires safe crossings at intersections and along busy roads, and curb cuts and ramps where there are significant grade variations. There is no safe crossing at the intersection of Cole Boulevard and Highway 111 in Calexico, which is adjacent to a major transfer point for IVT service. Several stakeholders expressed concern that this intersection is unsafe and places many IVT passengers at risk.

The City of Calexico has recently adopted a resolution to utilize Proposition 1B funds and other grants and fees for a capital improvement project for the Cole Boulevard West development area. The capital improvement project consists of roadway widening from two lanes to four lanes, resurfacing, striping, median and traffic signals installation. The City Council authorized City staff to proceed with preliminary engineering and preparation of plans, specifications and estimates. While the exact elements of this improvement project are not clearly defined, this strategy would piggyback on this project to include safe street crossings at the intersection of Highway 111 and Cole Boulevard to include an overpass, sidewalks, crosswalks and other amenities to improve safety at this heavily utilized intersection.

A major constraint to implementing sidewalks is funding. Installation of sidewalks is very expensive (\$500,000 per block) and requires coordination between departments and agencies for street design, walkways, curbs, gutters, etc. Funds for maintenance of sidewalks must also be secured.

Late Night Employer Operated Shuttle for Employees

Needs addressed by strategy: Limited transit service hours; Need for late night service to jobs

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides owl service for employees who work late evening work shifts • Provides opportunity for public/private partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with employers to secure funding commitments • Need to develop shuttle route, implementation and marketing plan

This strategy proposes late night shuttle services for employees who work swing shifts at employers in Imperial County such as the meat packing plant in Brawley or the two state prisons. For the service to be useful to employers, it must be tailored to shift times to accommodate work schedules. The service is intended to be privately funded by employers who could charge a small fee to employees for the service or offer it as an employee benefit. To plan the routes and routing structure, it would be necessary to identify the employers that want to participate in this service and then develop a basic route and operating plan. Ideally, a ZIP Code analysis of employee’s residential location would be conducted and used as valuable input to the routing structure.

Another option for a late night employer sponsored service is to organize a subscription service, similar to a vanpool. A subscription service typically uses small- or mid-sized vans with one employee serving as the driver and other employees as passengers. It typically guarantees a number of fellow workers a reserved-seat for an agreed-upon price. Riders pay a fee each month that subscribes them to the service and reserves a seat. Employers can coordinate the service or this could be administered by the County or IVT.

Subscription bus services typically work well for longer distance commutes whereas a shuttle service is effective as a local service for short commutes.

Low Priority Strategies

Develop a Subsidized Taxi Service Program

Needs addressed by strategy: Limited transit coverage; Limited transit service hours; capacity problems with AIM Transit, Problems with Brawley Dial-a-Ride reliability

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide same-day service • Effective for unanticipated travel evening and weekend hours • Effective for trips outside of service area • Offer way to set/control subsidy per trip • Effective in low-density areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires good communication among all parties • Need to establish fraud-protection mechanisms • No accessible taxicab vehicles • Need to identify a lead agency • Difficult to monitor taxi quality

There are six taxi companies operating throughout Imperial County. A taxi subsidy program typically involves an arrangement between a sponsoring organization and a participating taxi company or companies. Under the arrangement, the taxi company accepts and accommodates trip requests from registered customers, clients, or residents, and accepts vouchers provided by the sponsoring organization to riders as partial payment for the trip. Most taxi subsidy programs focus on seniors and/or persons with disabilities residing within specific service areas, but some

are available to general public residents. Human service agencies that employ this strategy generally limit taxi subsidies to agency clientele or program participants.

In some communities, taxis are also contracted to offer after-hours service for the general public, or to provide trips in areas where it would not be cost-effective for the transit agency to operate regular transit service.

A common concern about taxi companies is that they often have driver selection and training standards that are lower than those of public transit agencies. Background screening of drivers can help to improve overall standards. Similarly driver training standards for taxi operators can also be improved. This is an area that can be addressed either by the taxi providers themselves or in conjunction with IVT or ARC, both of which conduct driver trainings on a regular basis.

Transportation Kiosk at the Mall or Plazas

Needs addressed by strategy: Limited distribution of transit information and limited availability of maps and transit information at stops and transfer points

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases awareness of transit services • Provides highly visible transit information in centralized location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires coordination between agencies and organizations to install kiosk • Information requires minimal ongoing maintenance

An ongoing challenge for transit agencies is to widely distribute and maintain updated transit information. Rural service areas are geographically large and spread out requiring significant labor resources. This proposed strategy is to install a transportation kiosk at key locations in the service area such as at Imperial Valley Mall, 14th and State Streets in El Centro, or 3rd and Paulin in Calexico. These kiosks would provide written information and maps about IVT, AIM Transit and the local dial-a-ride services. They would only need to be updated when transit service schedules or fares change. The advantage of a kiosk located at a central location is that it is highly visible to passengers and provides easy access to information without the transit agency staff having to continuously restock materials.

Chapter 7. Implementation Plan for Recommended Strategies

Introduction

Imperial County transportation providers have a number of opportunities to implement strategies that improve coordination among agencies and enhance mobility for seniors, people with disabilities and low-income individuals and families. To implement the strategies, it is important to identify the specific issues to be addressed, who would be involved in implementation, what the costs would be, and where funds might be available. In some cases, implementation efforts may involve pilot projects, or experiments to test various approaches.

Implementing the Strategies

This section addresses implementation steps for the strategies identified in Chapter 6.

Program Administration

Implementation of the recommended program strategies is a responsibility of the various agencies in Imperial County, as well as IVAG. As the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), IVAG is the designated planning and administrative agency for transportation projects and programs in the county.

Although this Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan identifies an array of possible funding sources to aid in the implementation of the various strategies presented, the three key funding sources include the JARC program, the New Freedom program, and Section 5310 funds. All of these programs are administered by Caltrans with IVAG handling the Section 5310 process at the local level, including distributing information, prioritizing the grant applications and other logistical details. IVAG is also responsible for the disbursement of funds in Imperial County. IVAG recommends to Caltrans the programs that should be prioritized for Section 5310 based on funding requests from entities within the county, and Caltrans prioritizes applications that are consistent with strategies and needs identified in the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. The selection of projects for funding under the JARC and New Freedom programs is evaluated by Caltrans.

IVAG will also play a role in program administration, because the agency is responsible for allocating TDA funds and adopting the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. In addition, a redefined CTSA will also play a role in the success of implementing the strategies defined in this Plan.

Effective program administration is a crucial factor in ensuring the ongoing success of each new program implemented based on the strategies defined in this plan. As a first step, a sponsor or lead agency needs to be designated to manage each project. The lead agency would most likely be responsible for the following:

- Apply for grant funding and develop a program budget
- Develop program policies and guidelines

- Establish program goals and objectives, and define desired outcomes
- Provide ongoing supervision or program oversight
- Monitor actual performance as compared to program objectives
- Report on program outcomes and communicate to project stakeholders

Later in this chapter, for each of the highest ranked strategies, a lead agency is suggested; however, in some cases numerous entities could serve in this capacity. The lead agency should have the administrative, fiscal and staffing resources needed to carry out the program on an ongoing basis.

Through workshops and the development of the inventory, it was noted that various organizations in the county have skill or experience in scheduling and dispatching; maintenance; providing information and referral or marketing; volunteer recruitment; and planning and programming (see Figure 7-1) These agencies could be called upon to offer their skills or share resources with the appropriate lead agencies and organizations, facilitating the implementation the strategies defined in this plan.

Figure 7-1 Agency Functional Skills and Resources

Routing, Scheduling, and Dispatching	Maintenance Services	Customer Information, Referral, and Marketing	Volunteer Recruitment	Planning and Programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imperial Valley Transit • ARC – Imperial Valley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imperial Valley Transit (First Transit, private contractor) • ARC – Imperial Valley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imperial Valley Transit • CTSA • Imperial Valley College • Area Agency on Aging • Behavioral Health • United Way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers of America • San Diego Regional Center • ISC/LCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IVAG • SSTAC • CTSA • ISC/LCC • Area Agency on Aging • CalWORKs • IVROP

Decision-Making Process

In addition to the staff administering the service or program (derived from the strategies) policy oversight is essential for formal decision making. This function could rest with the IVAG Regional Council and/or the boards of any of the agencies taking a leadership role in the implementation of strategies.

IVAG or the CTSA could assume some responsibility in carrying forward some of the coordination activities that are encouraged in the various strategies. However, the agency has limited staff resources and would be unable to assume many more tasks without additional staff. The ISC and LCC indicated they have the capacity to be involved further in transportation coordination efforts, although their specific interests, skills and available resources would need to be further explored.

The SSTAC focuses on an array of transportation issues that arise in Imperial County with coordination being one of their three primary areas of focus. The SSTAC provides a forum for

sharing information and building consensus on strategies and tools. It may be beneficial for the SSTAC to conduct quarterly meetings that focus on coordination and invite other organizations, such as the LCC, to foster continuation and enhancement of coordination activities.

Service Standards

To ensure that programs developed from this Coordinated Plan are effective, it is recommended that agencies coordinating services or receiving any of the funding sources identified in this plan develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating services. While specific standards will vary depending on the service and operating environment (i.e., volunteers providing service versus transit service), standards are recommended to monitor (1) efficiency and (2) service quality and reliability. IVAG currently monitors and tracks several performance standards for IVT, AIM Transit and other providers, many of which are required as part of the TDA Triennial Audit process. For any new program service performance should be monitored by the lead agency and data should be reported to participating agencies, such as the SSTAC and IVAG.

Efficiency standards use operational performance data to measure the performance of a transportation program or transit system. Monitoring operational efficiency and productivity requires data such as operating cost, cost recovery (or farebox revenue recovery), vehicle revenue miles, vehicle revenue hours and information about boardings or the number of individuals served by the program.

Many small transportation programs do not have the staff resources to collect and analyze a broad range of performance data. Thus, a few key indicators provide agencies with a good picture of how well service is doing. As noted above, IVAG already collects data and monitors a number of standards. Some examples of these include the following:

- **Operating Cost per Rider/Program Participant:** Calculated by dividing all operating and administrative costs by total people using the transportation program.
- **Operating Cost per Revenue Hour:** Calculated by dividing all operating and administrative costs by the total number of revenue hours (with revenue hours defined as time when the vehicle is actually serving consumers).
- **Passengers per Revenue Hour:** Calculated by dividing the total number of people using the program by the total number of vehicle revenue hours. The number of passengers per hour is a good measure of service productivity so IVAG can compare different types of programs and evaluate which is the most efficient.
- **Cost Recovery or Farebox Recovery Ratio:** Calculated by dividing all revenue (farebox and donations) by total operating and administrative costs. This evaluates both system efficiency (through operating costs) and productivity (through total number of consumers served).

It is also possible to measure and monitor **service quality and reliability**. Recommended reliability standards include:

- **On-Time Performance:** For transit, this can be monitored by supervisors and trip logs. For volunteer programs or taxi services, users can report the information in surveys.

- **Complaints per Individual Served:** Requires the systematic recording of passenger complaints. **Compliments per Individual Served** can also be monitored to provide feedback on the personalized service provided by volunteers and drivers.
- **Road Calls per Revenue Mile Operated:** For transit services, a high number of road calls reflects poor bus reliability and may indicate the need for a more aggressive bus replacement program or changes to maintenance procedures and practices.
- **Percentage of Repeat Riders/Users:** To evaluate the effectiveness of a personalized transportation program, the total proportion of individuals using the service on a regular basis gives an indication of consumer loyalty, comfort and familiarity with the program.

Although IVAG already has standards for service quality and reliability, other standards can be developed by program lead agencies to evaluate the effectiveness of informational materials and outreach tools, and the general level of mobility in the community. Each program manager is encouraged to develop standards and monitor program progress in achieving the standards.

High Priority Strategies

Figure 7-2 illustrates each of the high priority strategies discussed in Chapter 6. Information presented includes the name of the strategy; an appropriate agency or organization to develop a more detailed plan and implement the strategy; basic guidelines for an implementation timeframe; approximate costs; cost-effectiveness; and potential funding sources:

- **Lead Agency or Champion:** As appropriate, an agency is listed to take the lead in implementing the strategy. Agencies were identified based on skills shown in Figure 7-1, interest among agency leaders, or a role that agencies are already playing that is related to the strategy. The lead agency or champion is critical to successfully implementing the strategy.
- **Implementation Timeframe:** Timeframes are estimated for implementing strategies based on experience with similar efforts in other counties.
- **Order of Magnitude Costs:** Approximate ranges of costs for implementation are estimated for each strategy.
- **Cost-Effectiveness of Strategy:** When strategies were prioritized in Chapter 6 based on the evaluation criteria, cost-effectiveness was one of the considerations in ranking a priority as “high” with regard to ease of implementation. Although some strategies may be more costly than others, certain no-cost and low-cost strategies may be easiest to implement in the short-term. More costly strategies are ranked as high when they positively impact the mobility needs of large numbers of seniors, people with disabilities, or low-income residents.
- **Potential Funding Sources:** Refer to Chapter 1 for a basic list of funding sources that might be available to fully or partially implement each strategy.

Figure 7-2 Implementing High Priority Strategies

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Lead Agency/ Champion	Implementation Timeframe	Order of Magnitude Costs (Capital and/or Operating)	Cost-Effectiveness of Strategy	Potential Funding Sources	Comments
Expand Imperial Valley Transit (IVT)	Imperial Valley Transit	Year 1	\$50,000 - \$100,000 annual operating costs (based on \$95/hour)	High	TDA, STAF, fares, FTA 5311, 5311(f), and FTA 5316	New routes, extended hours and other service expansions should be closely monitored to determine if meeting standards.
Increase capacity on AIM Transit	ARC (private contract operator for AIM Transit)	Year 1	\$45,000 - \$90,000 annual operating costs (based on \$45/hour) For capital cost, see below.	Medium	TDA, FTA 5317, 5310, fares, private donations, health and human service agency funding	Monitor wait times and trip denials to assess if additional capacity is addressing peak demand. Steps are underway to increase capacity on AIM.
Create a local circulator shuttle in Brawley that connects to IVT	IVT and City of Brawley	Years 1-2	\$100,000 - \$120,000 annual operating costs (based on \$45/hour)	High	TDA, FTA 5316, FTA 5317, city general funds, and fares	IVT would need to seek competitive bids to operate the service.
Develop a countywide Dial-a-ride service	Imperial Valley Transit	Years 2-3	\$65,000 - \$90,000 annual operating costs (based on \$45/hour)	High	TDA, STAF, FTA 5316 and FTA 5317, health and human services funds and fares	Since countywide service would replace individual dial-a-ride services, there would be cost savings by eliminating these services.

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Lead Agency/ Champion	Implementation Timeframe	Order of Magnitude Costs (Capital and/or Operating)	Cost-Effectiveness of Strategy	Potential Funding Sources	Comments
Develop a transit/transfer center for Brawley	IVT or City of Brawley	Year 1	\$200,000 - \$350,000 depending on amenities	High	FTA 5309 (Congressional Earmark), 5311, 5311 (f), TDA, STAF and private sector funds	IVT or the City of Brawley should take the lead in conducting a feasibility study to explore options for a transit center.
Disseminate transportation information, including Spanish translation	IVAG, Imperial Valley Transit, or ISC	Year 1	\$35,000 for developing and printing new materials	Medium	FTA 5317, FTA 5316, health and human services funds, in-kind donations and private donations	Assumes costs for dissemination of information would be covered through in-kind service.
Create 211 line with transit and service information	United Way of Imperial County or CTSA	Years 1-2	\$50,000 per year for operation of 211 service	Medium	FTA 5316, FTA 5317, health and human services funds and employers	United Way of Imperial County will coordinate with 211 lead agency in San Diego County. CTSA could take role in facilitation of this effort with regard to transportation I&R.
Conduct transportation summit for social service agencies and transportation providers	IVAG, SSTAC, Behavioral Health, CalWORKs or other organization	Year 1	\$3,000 - \$5,000 for materials and supplies and facility rental	High	TDA, in-kind services and donations	
Replace and expand vehicle fleet and capital equipment for transportation programs and transit agencies	Imperial Valley Transit, ARC, AIM Transit, CalWORKs, Behavioral Health, all cities in the county, Regional Center, others	Years 1-2	\$20,000 to \$250,000, per vehicle, depending on vehicle type.	Medium	FTA 5310, FTA 5311, FTA 5316 and 5317 plus variety of local funds as match to capital grants	Ongoing vehicle replacement is warranted for all public transit and nonprofit providers in the county. Expansion vehicles should be secured based on need.

Medium Priority Strategies

Medium priority strategies include a number of recommended programs that may be more costly to implement or were evaluated to have less of an impact on mobility for seniors, people with disabilities and low-income individuals than high priority strategies. As medium priority strategies, these are assumed to require more time to implement, and it may be more challenging to find funding for implementation of these coordination strategies. Figure 7-3 presents the medium priority strategies.

Figure 7-3 Implementing Medium Priority Strategies

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Timeframe	Comments
Countywide vanpool program	Medium Term	Requires a champion or lead agency to step forward and develop a program. Once a vanpool program is operational, there is minimal ongoing support. However, it does require commitment and resources to get a program underway.
Medical transportation service within Imperial County	Medium Term	Several different approaches could be followed to develop a medical transportation service. The first step is to identify a lead agency that will assess the best way to pursue.
Sidewalk improvement and curb cuts program (safe street crossing in Calexico at Highway 111 and Cole Boulevard)	Short to Medium Term	The City of Calexico is embarking on a capital improvement project for the Cole Boulevard West development area. The City should consider adding this element to the project and pursue funds to cover the additional costs.
Late night employer operated shuttle for employees	Medium Term	This strategy would require outreach to employers to encourage them to initiate a late night (owl) service for employees working the swing shift. If a subscription service is pursued, it would be a low-cost strategy.

Low Priority Strategies

Figure 7-4 illustrates the two low priority strategies. These were identified in Chapter 6 as being lower priority either due to complexity of implementation or effectiveness of the strategy in addressing the needs of the target populations.

Figure 7-4 Implementing Low Priority Strategies

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Timeframe	Comments
Subsidized taxi service program	Medium Term	Experience in other communities suggests that it can be time-consuming to get a subsidized taxi program underway. The tasks require training, signing contracts and developing processes and procedures for consumers and the taxi operators. The CTSA may be an appropriate lead agency.
Transportation kiosk at the mall or plazas	Short Term	This is a low cost strategy that would not be complicated, to implement, however a lead agency or champion is needed to approach potential locations to install a kiosk. Ongoing maintenance would be minimal.

Other Opportunities to Coordinate

Facility Needs

The overall inventory of transportation providers includes a variety of vehicle types and sizes from sedans to mini vans to 26 passenger buses. Virtually all of the vehicle maintenance in Imperial County is contracted out to various contractors and local service shops. The vehicles owned and operated by County agencies (CalWORKs and Behavioral Health) are maintained at the County garage. Given current operations, no significant need has been defined for expanded or new facilities. Nevertheless, agencies in Imperial County may wish to consider consolidation of some maintenance functions to reduce costs and enhance the level of transportation coordination within the county.

The goal of a consolidated maintenance program would be to more fully utilize existing facilities and staff by making services available to organizations and agencies that require a level of technical maintenance expertise beyond what may be available to them. Consolidated maintenance agreements can provide high quality skills and facilities as well as other benefits, including the following:

- Unique Expertise:** A centralized maintenance program that services paratransit-type vehicles (typically cutaway buses) develops specialized technical expertise not usually available from commercial repair shops. This expert knowledge extends to serving wheelchair lifts, fareboxes, tiedown systems, brake interlock systems, electrical systems and cutaway chassis.
- Service Availability:** The human service agencies in Imperial County most frequently utilize their vehicles during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, from about 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM). Maintenance service that is offered evenings and weekends can minimize the need for organizations to cancel service while vehicles are in the shop or to postpone maintenance because there is no back up vehicle. Work schedules that are carefully designed can maximize the use of facilities while providing service geared to meet the needs of the customer.

- **Loaner Vehicles:** Small agencies often have difficulty maintaining routine maintenance schedules because they do not have backup vehicles. Thus, a day in the shop means a day without client transportation. A consolidated maintenance program can address this issue by providing a loaner vehicle of similar size and configuration while servicing the customer’s vehicle. For example, retired buses, still fully functional but not able to take the heavy daily use required by public transit, can be used to provide this type of support. A loaner program allows agencies to continue to provide service while their vehicles are in the shop.
- **Centralized Record Keeping:** Sophisticated maintenance providers rely on software to ensure record keeping is in compliance with federal, state and local laws and regulations. In addition, maintenance software can track customer-specific data such as maintenance intervals, costs, vehicle replacement timing, and life cycle costs. This level of detail is often far beyond what human service agencies maintain.
- **Fueling:** Consolidated fueling from a centralized location also can be a benefit to nonprofit agencies. A fueling program can result in lower fuel prices as a result of bulk purchasing as well as guaranteed availability in time of shortage. It also allows for careful monitoring of fuel usage.
- **Consolidated Purchasing:** A consolidated maintenance agreement can include combined purchasing of commodities such as tires. Cost savings can be realized when several agencies join together to order supplies and equipment.
- **Liability Coverage:** The maintenance provider routinely obtains garage keeper’s liability insurance coverage to protect the customer organizations doing business with the organization. This coverage is standard for repair shops. It is readily available in the insurance market. Such coverage insures an agency’s vehicles while they are in the care and custody of the maintenance provider.

Access to Jobs and Employment

Job access is a significant challenge in a rural county with a limited public transit network and limited service hours. Although many of Imperial County’s major employers —Imperial County, Brawley Beef and Imperial Valley College — afford access to transit service, others have very limited access. Stakeholders indicated that lack of frequency and limited service hours were the major issues impacting transportation for employees to get to jobs. Key opportunities to improve access to jobs and employment, as identified in this plan, include the implementation of a program to increase awareness of and access to IVT; development of evening and weekend transit options to allow individuals to commute to and from service or shift jobs that cannot be accessed during regular transit service hours; and transit service enhancements, including increased service frequencies and an expanded service area that may provide more convenient access to jobs.

Volunteer Transportation Programs

There currently are no programs in Imperial County utilizing volunteer drivers to provide transportation for clients. One of the potential solutions noted in this plan to address medical transportation needs is through a volunteer driver program.

Many rural counties have developed high functioning volunteer driver programs to supplement public transit, especially to support residents who live in outlying areas or who need non-emergency medical transportation. Program administration is the key to the successful

implementation and ongoing viability of volunteer programs, thus the need for an individual or community agency to be the champion is critical.

The issue of agency liability frequently is raised as an obstacle to the implementation of volunteer driver programs. Efforts are underway through agencies such as Nonprofits United to create special insurance packages for individuals or agencies that offer an initial layer of coverage when a volunteer is operating a vehicle. This would supersede the coverage provided by the individual or agency when not in volunteer service. Early indications from Nonprofits United are that such coverage may be on the horizon.

The Beverly Foundation offers online resources for volunteer driver programs at www.beverlyfoundation.org. Additional information is available at the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation in the State of Washington, which has a manual for starting and maintaining volunteer transportation programs. It addresses the liability issues and provides forms and templates for agencies. The manual is available at www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/training/vdg/default.htm

School Transportation

Although an effort was made to include school transportation in the coordinated planning process in Imperial County, only some representatives of agencies that work with students, and not any specific school district, participated. Imperial County may want to advance efforts to work with schools because in selected rural communities across the US, school districts are transporting the general public on school buses, more often at times when the school buses are not being used for student transportation, but in some cases, at the same time. Efforts to coordinate/integrate services are not limited to operations. Transit agencies and school districts, and in some cases, Head Start programs, have coordinated support services such as joint purchasing of fuel and maintenance service.

In California, there are no state statutes or regulations that prohibit using school buses to transport non-pupils.¹⁰ Indeed, from the state perspective, the use of school buses — in particular the comingling of pupils and non-pupils on school buses — appears to be allowed as long as seating is available. Ultimately, though, the responsibility for school bus operations and policies is delegated to local districts. An agency may contract with the local school district to use buses for agency trips; however, the driver must have proper licensing to drive a school bus.

According to the California Department of Education, there have been sporadic uses of public school buses for transporting the general public, but it has mostly been in connection with moving people for special events, such as spectators at a professional golf tournament or marathon participants. California Department of Education staff is not aware of any instances in California where the general public is being transported along with students on home-to-school routes.

¹⁰ Based on Information provided by John Green, California Department of Education, for TCRP Report on Integrating School Bus and Public Transportation Services in Nonurban Communities, and confirmed via e-mails and a telephone conversation on June 27, 2008.

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

It is possible for local providers (including public agencies and nonprofit organizations) to become providers of non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) under existing Medi-Cal arrangements.

Medi-Cal is California's Medicaid health insurance program. It pays for a variety of medical services for children and adults with limited income and resources. People receiving Medi-Cal covered services may be provided NEMT at Medi-Cal's expense under certain very limited circumstances. Medi-Cal will pay for NEMT only when it is provided by a carrier licensed by Medi-Cal, and only when the individual's medical condition requires transport by a wheelchair van, litter van, or ambulance. Although the rules limit NEMT to people who need a wheelchair van, ambulance or litter van, this can include people who just need a high level of care, for example very frail dialysis patients, even though they do not need to use a lift or ramp.

In Imperial County, none of the transportation providers contacted as part of the inventory identified themselves as Medi-Cal NEMT providers, although two private services that could not be reached are reported to be Medi-Cal providers. By becoming a Medi-Cal NEMT provider, a local agency could help address a lack of providers now available and improve access to medical care for people who have difficulty using other modes, including ADA paratransit, volunteer transportation, or taxicabs.

NEMT is free to the rider. Medi-Cal's standard rates for NEMT are currently \$17.65 per patient plus \$1.30 per mile with a patient on-board. The pick-up rate is reduced when multiple patients are picked up at the same time. Effective July 1, 2008 a 10% reduction from the standard rates is in effect as part of the state deficit reduction program. These rates may not be sufficient to recover the full cost of providing service (or for a private provider to make a profit), but they would pay for the major portion of actual cost in a public operation. Medi-Cal payments would qualify as match for New Freedom funding.

In the Bay Area, the Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority (ECCTA or "Tri-Delta" has created an NEMT program called MedVan. It uses a separate fleet of vehicles and accepts referrals from social workers and medical providers just as a private provider of NEMT would. According to Tri-Delta staff, they got involved because there is a shortage of NEMT providers in their area and this was limiting Medi-Cal clients' ability to get rides. They report that Medi-Cal staff was eager to help them complete the paperwork to become qualified for the program. Requirements for vehicles and driver training are similar to those already met by agencies using federal transit funding. The fact that MedVan is separate from Tri-Delta's dial-a-ride program may help deal with the issue sometimes encountered of whether Medi-Cal will pay full price or only the public fare—there is no public fare for this program. Most of the MedVan riders are going to dialysis. They are not necessarily wheelchair users.

If an agency wishes to make its NEMT service available to riders who are not covered by Medi-Cal, the announced fare would need to at least equal the rate charged to Medi-Cal. However, it might be possible to provide subsidies for this fare. Another limitation concerns use of facilities funded with certain Federal transit grants.

Forms and instructions for becoming an NEMT provider are available on the Medi-Cal web site at http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/prov_enroll.asp.

Summary and Next Steps

The initial impetus for this plan was to meet federal requirements in order to apply for SAFTEA-LU funds: FTA Section 5310, FTA Section 5316 (JARC), and FTA Section 5317 (New Freedom) programs. In the process of developing the plan, it became clear that stakeholders were participating in the process for more than funds alone. This plan can be a blueprint for programs and projects to increase the mobility of older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals. By increasing mobility for these targeted populations, the mobility of all Imperial County residents can be improved.

After this plan has been adopted and distributed, it is recommended that stakeholders reconvene to identify specific individuals and agencies with the willingness and capacity to move the implementation of the strategies forward.

Updates to the Coordinated Plans are required every four or five years, (i.e., four years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas and five years in air quality attainment areas). However, Caltrans may choose to update the coordinated plans to align with the competitive selection process based on needs identified at the local level.

APPENDIX A

STAKEHOLDERS

Appendix A. Stakeholders

Following is a list of stakeholder organizations whose representatives provided input in the development of this plan.

- ARC-Imperial Valley
- Alegria ADHC
- Alzheimer's Care / Alzheimer's Association
- Area Agency on Aging
- Behavioral Health
- Brawley DAR
- Calexico Dial-a-Ride
- Calexico Transit System
- CalWORKS
- Campesinos Unidos
- Center for Employment Training - CET
- Central Union High School District Family Resource Center
- City of Brawley
- City of Calexico
- Community Catalysts of California
- County Office of Education
- Day Out
- El Centro Elementary School District, FACT Center
- El Centro Regional Medical Center
- Golden Acorn Casino (employee transportation)
- Imperial County Children and Families First Commission
- Imperial County Work Training Center, Inc.
- Imperial Valley Blind Center
- Imperial Valley College
- Interagency Steering Committee
- IVROP
- Local Coordinating Committee
- MS Society
- Neighborhood House
- Niland Family Resource Center
- Numero Uno Shuttle
- Pioneers Health Center
- Quechan Indian Tribe
- Salvation Army
- San Diego Regional Center
- San Pasqual Family Resource Center
- Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC)
- Veteran's Association
- Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization

APPENDIX B

WORKSHOP PUBLICITY AND ATTENDANCE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Michelle Merino, Imperial Valley Association of Governments, (760) 482-4290

Public Input Requested for the Imperial County Human Service- Public Transportation Coordination Plan

Community Workshops

BRAWLEY	Tuesday, May 6, 2008, 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM Chamber of Commerce, 204 S. Imperial Ave.
EL CENTRO	Tuesday, May 6, 2008 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM County Administration Building, Conference Rooms C&D, 940 W. Main St.
CALEXICO	Wednesday, May 7, 2008 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM Community Center, Senior Hall, 707 Dool Ave.

The Imperial Valley Association of Governments (IVAG), in cooperation with Caltrans, is sponsoring transportation workshops.

You are invited to share your opinions and recommend strategies for transportation for seniors, people with disabilities and low-income residents of Imperial County.

The workshops are being held as part of the Imperial County Human Service-Public Transportation Coordination Plan. Sponsored by Caltrans, the Plan's goal is to improve basic mobility for county residents through better coordination of services among transportation providers and human service agencies in Imperial County.

For agencies seeking federal transportation funds, information will also be available at the workshops about three types of federal funds: Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom, and the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (5310 Grant Funds).

An interpreter will be available for Spanish-speaking participants.

For more information please call Michelle Merino at IVAG, (760) 482-4290. People unable to attend the workshop may email michellemerino@imperialcounty.net or call with comments.

Contacto: Michelle Merino, Asociación de Gobiernos del Valle Imperial, (760) 482-4290

Se Solicitan Comentarios Del Público Acerca Del Plan Coordinado de Transporte Público-Servicios Humanos

Taller Comunitario

BRAWLEY	Martes 6 de mayo, 2008, 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM Chamber of Commerce, 204 S. Imperial Ave.
EL CENTRO	Martes 6 de mayo, 2008 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM County Administration Building, Salas de Conferencia C&D, 940 W. Main St.
CALEXICO	Miércoles 7 de mayo, 2008 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM Community Center, Senior Hall, 707 Dool Ave.

La Asociación de Gobiernos Del Valle Imperial (IVAG), en cooperación con Caltrans, está patrocinando talleres de transporte.

Se le invita a compartir sus opiniones y recomendar estrategias de transporte para adultos mayores, personas discapacitadas y residentes de bajos recursos del Condado de Imperial.

Los talleres se llevarán a cabo como parte del Plan de Coordinación de Transporte Público-Servicios Humanos del Condado de Imperial. Patrocinado por Caltrans, el propósito del Plan es de mejorar la movilidad básica de los residentes del condado por medio de una mejor coordinación de servicios entre los proveedores de transporte y las agencias de servicios humanos del Condado de Imperial.

Se proporcionará información en los talleres a las agencias que busquen fondos federales de transportación, de los siguientes tres tipos de fondos: Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom, and the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (5310 Grant Funds).

Una intérprete estará disponible para participantes que solo hablen español.

Para más información contactar a Michelle Merino de IVAG, (760) 482-4290. Las personas que no puedan asistir a los talleres pueden enviar comentarios por correo electrónico a michellemerino@imperialcounty.net o llamar por teléfono con sus comentarios.

Human Services/Coordinated Transportation Plan

For Seniors, People with Disabilities and
Low-Income Residents of Imperial County

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND ONE OF THREE WORKSHOPS:

BRAWLEY

Tuesday, May 6, 2008, 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Chamber of Commerce, 204 S. Imperial Ave.

EL CENTRO

Tuesday, May 6, 2008 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

County Administration Building, Conference Rooms C&D,
940 W. Main Street

CALEXICO

Wednesday, May 7, 2008 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Community Center, Senior Hall, 707 Dool Ave.



Share your opinions on transportation for seniors, people with disabilities and low-income Imperial County residents.

- Learn about ongoing Human Service-Public Transportation Coordination Plan.
- Provide input about community transportation.
- Share your opinion about options.
- Recommend strategies.
- Find out about the Sec 5310, 5316, and 5317 federal transportation program funds available to certain agencies in Imperial County.

Who should attend?

- Human Service Agency Representatives
- Human Service Agency Program Participants
- Bus and Dial-A-Ride Passengers
- Community Members

For More Information

Michelle Merino

Imperial Valley Association of Governments (IVAG)

(760)482-4290

michellemerino@imperialcounty.net



Spanish Interpretation will be provided at workshops.



Plan Coordinado de Transporte / Servicios Humanos

Para Adultos Mayores, Personas
Discapacitadas y Residentes de Bajos
Recursos del Condado de Imperial

TALLER COMUNITARIO

SE LE INVITA A ASISTIR A UNO DE LOS TRES TALLERES:

BRAWLEY

Martes 6 de mayo, 2008, 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Chamber of Commerce, 204 S. Imperial Ave.

EL CENTRO

Martes 6 de mayo, 2008 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
County Administration Building, Salas de Conferencia C&D,
940 W. Main Street

CALEXICO

Miércoles 7 de mayo, 2008 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Community Center, Senior Hall, 707 Dool Ave.



Comparta sus opiniones de transporte para adultos mayores, personas discapacitadas y residentes de bajos recursos del Condado de Imperial.

- Entérese del Plan Coordinado de Transporte-Servicios Humanos del Condado de Imperial.
- Provea comentarios de transporte en la comunidad.
- Comparta su opinión de opciones.
- Recomiende estrategias.
- Entérese de las Sec 5310, 5316, y 5317 del programa de fondos federales de transportación disponibles para ciertas agencias en el Condado de Imperial.

¿Quién debe asistir?

- Representantes de las Agencias de Servicios Humanos.
- Participantes de Programas de Servicios Humanos.
- Usuarios de Autobuses Públicos y Dial-A-Ride.
- Miembros de la Comunidad.



Para Mayor Información
Michelle Merino
Asociación de Gobiernos del Valle Imperial (IVAG)
(760)482-4290

michellemerino@imperialcounty.net

Habrà Interpretación en español durante los talleres



Division of Mass
Transportation

