Sierra 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 Sierra 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. The project has been completed in two phases: the first resulted in an Existing Conditions Report, which described existing transportation services and programs, and identified service gaps and needs. The second phase of the project focused on identification of potential strategies and solutions to mitigate those service gaps, and on developing a plan to implement those strategies. The results and key findings emerging from both phases of the planning process are documented in this Coordinated Plan.

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] (See Figure 1-1) These projects are intended to improve the mobility of individuals who are disabled, elderly[2], or of low-income[3] 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 rural counties for whom the funds are intended so that potential sponsors of transportation improvements may access the funds.[4]

[1] The term "non-urbanized area" includes rural areas and urban areas under 50,000 in population not included in an urbanized area.
[2] The Federal Transit Administration defines "elderly" as, at a minimum, all persons 65 years of age or older. However, FTA has also determined that grantees may use a definition that extends eligibility for service to younger (e.g., 62 and older, 60 and over) persons (FTA Circular 9070.1F).
[3] The Federal Transit Administration defines "low-income" as an individual whose family income is at or below 150 percent of the poverty line. The poverty line is defined in Section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)), including any revisions required by that section based on family size.
[4] 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

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GIS Data Source: ESRI

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 Sierra County that have helped inform this effort. In addition, it discusses federal and state roles in promoting coordination among public transit operators and human service transportation providers. It also describes the funding environment for transportation in rural California.

Chapter 2 discusses federal and state roles in promoting coordination of human service transportation. It also describes the funding environment for transportation in rural California.

Chapter 3 includes a demographic profile of Sierra County, which was prepared using U.S. census data and the Sierra County Economic and Demographic Profile, prepared by the Center for Economic Development, California State University, Chico, CA, in 2007. 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: persons with disabilities, older adults, and those of low-income status.

Chapter 4 documents the range of public transportation services that already exist in the area. These services include public fixed route, demand response, paratransit services, and transportation services provided or sponsored by other social service agencies. These were identified through review of existing documents and through local stakeholder interviews.

Chapter 5 consists of the needs assessment. An important step in completing this plan includes the identification of service needs or gaps. The needs assessment provides the basis for recognizing where—and how—service for the three population groups 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 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 meetings with the public and stakeholders in a second round of workshops to review preliminary 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, authorized 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 Federal Transportation Administration (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."[5]

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued three 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
http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6623.html	Job Access and Reverse Commute
http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6624.html	New Freedom Program

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

1. An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and non-profit);

2. 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;

3. 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; and

4. Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities.

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 service and transportation service agencies. The requirements of SAFETEA-LU build upon previous federal initiatives intended to enhance social service transportation coordination. Among these are:

[5] Federal Register: March 15, 2006 (Volume 71, Number 50, page 13458)

- **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.[6]

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. CTSAs are considered eligible applicants of Transportation Development Act (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.

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

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

- 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 Service Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC); representatives from the CTSA are required to participate on the SSTAC.

In Sierra County, the Sierra County Transportation Commission is designated as the RTPA. The SSTAC plays an active role and meets annually, or more often as needed, to discuss transportation issues and to advise the Commission.

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. 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).

New Freedom funds 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	Rural JARC	1,467,032	1,573,618	1,659,360
Caltrans	Rural New Freedom	681,111	777,302	821,719
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: 1) to enhance the access of people in non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services, and recreation; 2) to assist in the maintenance, development, improvement, and use of public transportation systems in rural and small urban areas; 3) 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; 4) to assist in the

development and support of intercity bus transportation; and 5) 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 (STA).

- **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.

- **STA** are revenues derived from sales taxes on gasoline and diesel fuels. STA is allocated annually by the local transportation commissions based on each region’s apportionment. Unlike LTF which may be allocated to other purposes, STA 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 their Regional Transportation Planning Agency, the Sierra County Transportation Commission, 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 major service 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

Regional centers are non-profit private corporations that contract with the 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 California. 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 its 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.

Service Clubs and Fraternal Organizations

Organizations such as the Rotary Club, Soroptimists, 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.

Local (Sierra County) Planning Documents and Relevant Research

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

- *Sierra County 2005 Regional Transportation Plan*, LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.
- *Sierra County Economic and Demographic Profile*, Center for Economic Development, California State University, Chico, CA, 2007
- Sierra County Social Services Transportation Advisory Council Minutes of May 18, 2007
- The U.S. Census Bureau (http://factfinder.census.gov)

2005 Regional Transportation Plan

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) provides a coordinated, 20-year vision of the regionally significant transportation improvements and policies needed to efficiently move goods and people in the region. As the RTPA, the Sierra County Transportation Commission is required to adopt and submit an approved RTP to the California Transportation Commission every four years.

A goal of the RTP is "to provide a comprehensive, efficient, and safe intermodal transportation system. Of the policies listed to support this goal, four are particularly relevant to this Coordinated Public Transit- Human Services Transportation Plan:

- The highest priority for regional public transportation is to serve the handicapped, elderly, and reduce traffic impacts
- The County should encourage non-profit and/or private organizations to operate public transportation services, rather than provide services directly
- Encourage application of non-profit and private enterprise for available transit grant funds
- Provide transportation services that enhance the provision of public services, such as education, job training, medical, and cultural activities

A key assumption of the Action Element of the RTP is the following:

- Travel Mode—The private automobile will remain the primary mode of transportation for residents and visitors. Public transportation will remain a vital service for the elderly, low-income, and for persons with mobility limitations.

Sierra County Economic and Demographic Profile

The profile was compiled by the Center for Economic Development (CED), California State University, Chico Research Foundation. The CED's Regional Research Program has provided

Northern California county profiles since 1989. The purpose of the document is to provide economic and demographic information specific to Sierra County with the goal of assisting community and business members to make informed decisions about the future of the area. The 2007 report provides information about the economy and business environment within Sierra County.

Sierra County Social Services Transportation Advisory Council Minutes of May 18, 2007

The minutes reported the results of an unmet transit needs hearing, which documented five issues brought before the Council. "The Council came to an agreement on the identification that the van program as it currently exists fulfills the county's needs that are 'Reasonable to Meet.'"

Sierra County Social Services Transportation Advisory Council Minutes of April 21, 2008

The minutes reported the results of an unmet transit needs hearing. An issue relevant to this *Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan* was noted by participants, who identified the need for a smaller, four-wheel drive vehicle that would be open to the general public. The SSTAC indicated that service provided by this vehicle should meet the 10% farebox return requirement and, in combination with the existing services provided by Incorporated Seniors and Golden Rays, should not exceed the County's TDA allotment.

Figure 1-3 Transportation Funding Matrix

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 *new* 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 CTSAs		
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.

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 1) an assessment of current transportation services, 2) an assessment of transportation needs, 3) strategies, activities and/or projects to address the identified transportation needs (as well as ways to improve efficiencies), and 4) implementation priorities based on funding, feasibility, time, etc. This chapter describes the steps that were undertaken to develop these elements of Sierra County's Coordinated Plan.

Demographic Profile

A demographic profile of Sierra County was prepared using census data and the Sierra County Economic and Demographic Profile, prepared by the Center for Economic Development, California State University, Chico, CA, in 2007. 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. A summary of the literature review is outlined 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 (DMT) identified the Sierra County Transportation Commission as the primary point of contact. The consulting team then collaborated with the Transportation Commission staff to identify key stakeholders to be included during the development of this plan. Stakeholder involvement was solicited primarily through a stakeholder workshop held December 10, 2007 in Downieville attended by 13 people. Stakeholders identified key origins and destinations, gaps and unmet needs, and suggested some strategies to be explored further. The workshop was supplemented by two in-person interviews and three telephone interviews. One e-mail communication was also received. The results of this outreach are described in Chapter 5.

Additionally, two public workshops were convened in Sierra County in May 2008, with the goal of soliciting comments and suggestions for potential strategies intended to mitigate the unmet transportation needs. Workshops were convened in Loyalton and Downieville, and are described in more detail in Chapter 6.

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. The services in the inventory include two demand-response (paratransit) services operated by Golden Rays Seniors in Downieville and Incorporated Seniors in Loyalton. The Department of Health and Human Services also provides a Transporter Program for its clients. There is no public fixed-route service in Sierra County. The description and corresponding maps of existing services are presented in Chapter 4.

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 needs to be improved. In some cases, maintaining and protecting existing services is identified as a service need.

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.

Key findings from this Existing Conditions Report are included in Chapter 5.

Identification and Evaluation of Strategies

On May 29, 2008, the consultant facilitated two public workshops in Sierra County – one in Loyalton and the other in Downieville. These locations represent key geographic regions of the County. The goals of the workshops were to:

- Confirm previously identified unmet transportation needs
- Confirm criteria to evaluate potential strategies
- Identify and prioritize strategies for addressing these needs

The consultant developed an initial set of suggested service strategies intended to address the gaps, and also drafted proposed evaluation criteria to use when ranking the 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 for this planning effort, an implementation plan was developed for each of the highly-ranked strategies. Specifically, this assessment identified:

- Potential lead agency or “champion” with the institutional, operational and fiscal capacity to implement the proposed strategy

- Implementation timeframe: What are the short, medium and long-term steps needed to implement the strategy?

- Estimated Costs: The assessment considered the range of operational and capital costs needed to implement the strategy

- Potential funding sources, including potential use of SAFETEA-LU funds.

Highlights of the implementation plan are summarized on a matrix in order to provide a "snapshot" of the proposed implementation plan, and key elements for implementing the recommended strategies are also discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

Chapter 3. Demographic Profile

Study Area Description and Demographic Summary

Sierra County is located in northeastern California, in the Sierra Nevada foothills and mountain range. It is bordered by Plumas County to the north, Yuba County to the west, Nevada County to the south, and Washoe County, Nevada to the east. A small portion of northeastern Sierra County also borders Lassen County. The county seat is located in Downieville. Overall, the county is very rural, with a significant concentration of population in the incorporated city of Loyalton and unincorporated communities of Downieville and Sierraville.

The county encompasses 962 square miles in area, with remote wilderness in the high Sierra Nevada, the largest ranching basin in the Sierra, and significant recreational opportunities throughout the county.

Population Characteristics

The U.S. Census reported that, in 2000, the recorded population of Sierra County was 3,555. The incorporated city of Loyalton had a population of 874. Population estimates in 2006 were 3,501 for the county and 883 for Loyalton. Population figures for smaller communities are not known. The population has grown at a very low rate since 1990, when there were 3,280 individuals living in Sierra County.

As of the 2000 Census, 17% of Sierra County residents were seniors over the age of 65, which is higher than the statewide average of 11%. Twenty-two percent of residents have a disability, which is higher than the statewide average of 19%.[7] Eleven percent of the population in Sierra County is living below the Federal poverty level. The statewide average is 14%.

Population Projections

The California Department of Finance projects that the countywide population will be 3,589 individuals in 2015 and 3,877 in 2030.[8] Between 2005 and 2030, according to the California Department of Finance, the population of Sierra County is expected to grow by approximately eight percent, at an average annual rate of 0.3%. Comparatively, the population of older adults (60 years or older) is expected grow by four percent, at an average annual rate of 1.6%, a much higher rate compared to the overall population.

[7] It is important to note that 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. 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 the person 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). Furthermore, 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. Corrected results are not yet available for many rural counties or for cities within counties. Therefore, disability tables in this section use the 2000 Census disability data.

[8] Source of data more recent than U.S. Census 2000 is the California Department of Finance and the Sierra County Economic & Demographic Profile, published by the Center for Economic Development at California State University, Chico (2007).

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%
Sierra County	3,555		17%	22%	11%
Loyalton	874	25%	15%	24%	18%

Race and Ethnicity

Approximately 89% of residents in Sierra County classified themselves as white in 2006. Only 7% classified themselves as Hispanic or Latino, compared to 36% in the State of California. However, the Hispanic/Latino population in Sierra County is expected to increase 47% by 2015, while the white population is expected to decrease by 3%.[9] American Indians are the next largest group, but comprise less than two percent of the total population in Sierra County (64 individuals in 2006).

Income Status

The median household income in Sierra County in 1999 was $35,827, compared to $47,493 in the State of California. The median household income for Loyalton was $34,063. As noted earlier, 11% of the population in Sierra County is living below the federal poverty level,[10] compared to 14% statewide. However, the town of Loyalton has a much higher poverty level at 18%.

Figure 3-2 Income Status for Sierra County (1999)

Area	Median Household Income	% of Individuals Below Poverty Level
California	$47,493	14%
Sierra County	$35,827	11%
Loyalton	$34,063	18%

In Sierra County, 34% of students, 178 out of a total of 523, are enrolled in one of the Free or Reduced Price Meal Programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Comparatively, statewide, 51% of students are enrolled in these programs.[11]

Employment

As of 2000, there were approximately 1,696 jobs in Sierra County, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Government and public administration accounted for the largest employment sector, with 645 jobs. Manufacturing, retail trade, and services each accounted for between 200

[9] Source: California Department of Finance (http://www.dof.ca.gov/)
[10] The Federal poverty level varies by household, being dependent on combined family income, size of household, and number of children under 18. See http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-19.pdf for more information.
[11] Source: California Department of Education (http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/)

and 300 jobs each. In 2006, 1,498 jobs were reported in Sierra County by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The BLS reported that the unemployment rate was 7.4% in 2006 in Sierra County, compared to 4.9% statewide.[12]

Figure 3-3 lists the five largest employers in Sierra County, based on data from 2006. The largest employers are medical and public sector organizations. Other employers had 25 or fewer employees.

Figure 3-3 Largest Employers in Sierra County

Employer	# of Employees
Sierra County, including Department of Transportation and Health Department	138
Sierra Valley District Hospital	70
Caltrans District III	32
Downieville Fire Protection District (all part-time)	24
United States Forest Service – Sierraville Ranger District	45
United States Forest Service – North Yuba Ranger District	unknown

Source: California Department of Finance and the Sierra County Economic & Demographic Profile, published by the Center for Economic Development at California State University, Chico (2007), USFS data provided by individual ranger districts.

Access to a Vehicle

The 2000 U.S. Census reported that 8.1% of households in Sierra County had no access to a vehicle, compared to 9.5% in California. Of households where the head of household was 65 years and older, 10.8% had no access to a vehicle, compared to 17% in California. These statistics, especially for older adults, corroborate statements made by stakeholders that the residents of Sierra County value and seek to preserve their independence as they grow older.

Demographic Maps

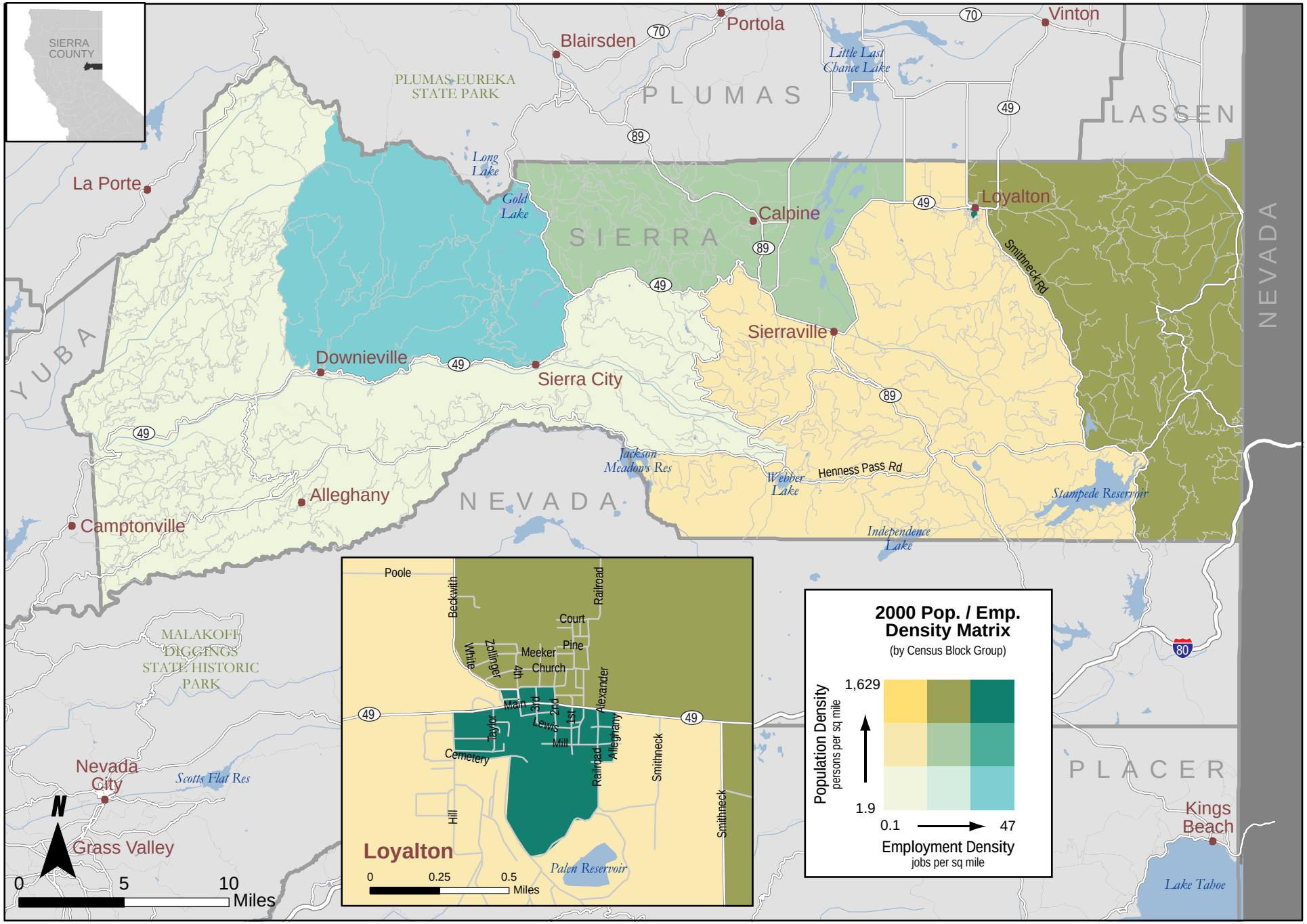
A Population/Employment Matrix and a Transit Dependency Index were created to present existing demographic components and transportation needs of the study area. The Matrix and Index were based upon data from the 2000 U.S. Census, at the block group level. For a complete explanation of the methodology used to create the maps in this chapter, see Appendix A.

The map in Figure 3-4 shows the concentrations of residents and employment in Sierra County. Areas that are darker yellow have a higher concentration of residents, areas that are darker blue have a higher concentration of jobs, and areas that are a darker green have a higher concentration of both residents and jobs. The dispersed, relatively low population of Sierra County limits the ability to analyze demographics at a smaller geographic scale. Communities such as Downieville, Loyalton, Sierra City, and Sierraville have the highest concentrations of residents and employment. However, concentrations of residents are known to live in communities such as Alleghany and Calpine as well.

[12] U.S. Department of Labor Statistics (http://www.bls.gov)

The map in Figure 3-5 shows the varying concentrations of older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income households in Sierra County. Areas with higher concentrations of these target populations are highlighted on the map, whereas areas with lower concentrations have a lighter color. Similar to the population and employment map, geographic analysis of U.S. Census data is limited by the low population that is dispersed throughout the county.

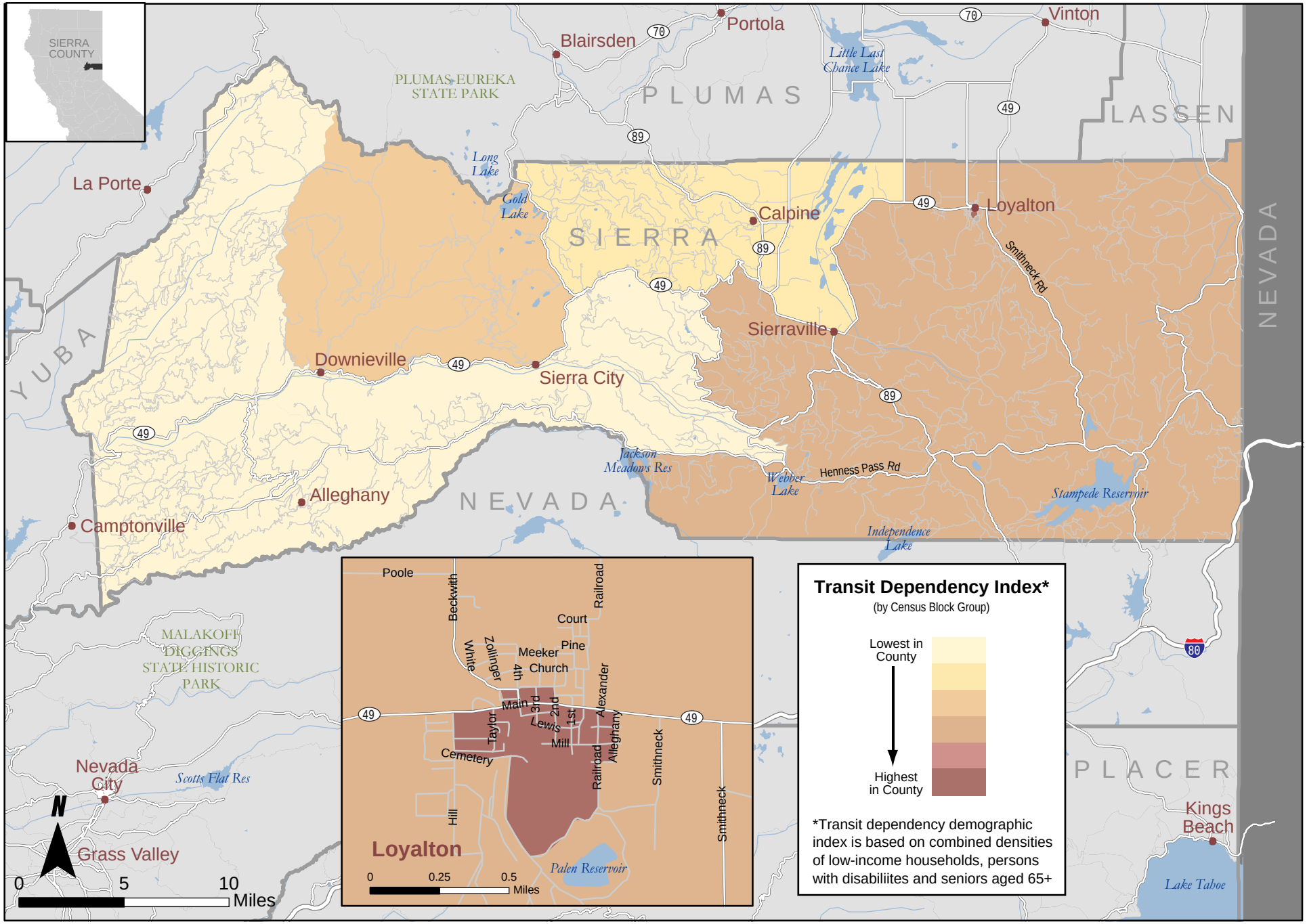
Figure 3-4 Sierra County 2000 Population / Employment Density



Nelson | Nygaard
consulting associates

GIS Data Source: ESRI, Census 2000

Figure 3-5 Sierra County 2000 Transit Dependency Index



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consulting associates

GIS Data Source: ESRI, Census 2000

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

This chapter presents existing public transit service and transportation that is provided by non-profit transportation providers in Sierra County. A matrix summarizing operating characteristics and contact information of all county transportation providers and a map illustrating existing services and major activity centers can be found at the end of the chapter (Figures 4-4 and 4-5, respectively).

Public Transit Operators

Sierra County has no public fixed-route transit service. However, two non-profits offer demand response and scheduled service to older adults and persons with disabilities, while also providing service to the general public if space is available. These two organizations are Incorporated Seniors of Sierra County, offering service in Eastern Sierra County; and Golden Rays Seniors, offering service in Western Sierra County. Both are non-profit organizations providing a broader range of services for older adults and persons with disabilities.

There are no private taxi services in Sierra County. The closest taxi companies are in Nevada County‘s cities of Grass Valley, Nevada City, and Truckee, and in Reno, Nevada.

Incorporated Seniors of Sierra County

Incorporated Seniors of Sierra County is based in Loyalton (see Figure 4-5). It offers demand response and scheduled service in eastern Sierra County and out-of-county service to Reno, Nevada and other nearby communities in Placer and Nevada Counties. Older adults and persons with disabilities have priority, but the service is open to the general public on a space available basis.

Scheduled service includes a weekly trip to Reno, weekly shopping trips within Loyalton, and four to five recreational trips per month. The most common destinations include trips within Loyalton and vicinity, particularly to the Senior Center. Other destinations include inter-city trips to Portola and Quincy in Plumas County. Less frequent trips are made to Susanville (Lassen County), Truckee (Nevada County), Lincoln (Placer County), and Sierraville. Incorporated Seniors does not make trips to western Sierra County.

Trips are frequently for medical purposes, but often for shopping, errands, recreation, and social purposes. Service is also sometimes provided to church on Sundays. The service is available from 9 am until 2 pm Monday through Friday, except on major holidays. Saturday and Sunday service hours vary, depending on the type of trips being provided, since weekend trips are for special purposes.

Fares vary by destination and passenger type, from $1.00 in-town for seniors and persons with disabilities and $2.00 for others, up to $5.00 to Reno or Truckee for seniors and persons with

disabilities and $7.00 for others. Figure 4-1 shows the full fare structure. The fare for seniors and people with disabilities, however, is by donation and not required.

Figure 4-1 Round-Trip Fare Structure – Incorporated Seniors Transportation

Destination	Seniors/Disabled*	General Public
In-Town (Loyalton)	$1.00	$2.00
Portola/Quincy	$3.00	$4.00
Reno/Truckee	$5.00	$7.00

* The fare for seniors and persons with disabilities is by donation.

In total, Incorporated Seniors provided 1,452 passenger trips in Fiscal Year 2006-2007. Ridership is highest during July, August, and September, with 140 passengers or more per month, but there is significant ridership year-round, with 80 passengers even in January and February. Figure 4-2 provides a summary of ridership for FY 2006-2007.

Incorporated Seniors owns two vans, one of which was purchased in 2003 with Section 5310 funds. One van holds eight passengers plus two wheelchairs, and the other van holds seven passengers plus two wheelchairs. It employs two paid drivers, who are supported by two additional volunteer drivers.

Figure 4-2 Ridership Statistics for Incorporated Seniors Service

Total Passengers	1,452
Most Common Destinations:	Passengers Per Year
Reno	439
Portola	233
Senior Center (Loyalton)	98
Quincy	81
"In-Town"	200+

Source: Incorporated Seniors of Sierra County, FY 2006-2007

In FY 2006-2007 total revenue was $67,923. Fare revenue accounted for $2,536. Other funding sources were $45,717 in Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds, $12,195 in in-kind donations, and $7,475 from the Area 4 Agency on Aging. Funding levels vary somewhat from year to year. Comparatively, the operating budget in FY 2007-2008 is $68,797.

Golden Rays Seniors

Golden Rays Seniors of Sierra County provides demand response and scheduled service in western Sierra County, based in Downieville (see Figure 4-5). The service is primarily used by older adults and persons with disabilities, but is also available to the general public if space is available.

Scheduled trips include two trips a month to Reno and two trips a month to Grass Valley and Nevada City. Golden Rays also provides regularly scheduled trips for the Lions Club and Women's Republican Club, and to the Sierra Daycare Center. Frequent demand response trips are made in-town (Downieville) but a significant number of trips are out-of-town, including Reno, Grass Valley, Nevada City, Sierra City, and less frequently to Sacramento, Marysville, and Yuba City. The most common purposes are for medical trips. Other trips are for shopping and funeral services. Golden Rays currently does not provide service on Sundays to church or any other weekend service. In FY 2006-2007, Golden Rays provided a total of 507 trips, with ridership consistent year-round.

Fares for various trip destinations are shown in Figure 4-3. The fare is by donation for older adults (55 years or older) or for persons with disabilities, but most riders pay the fare. The fare is not optional for the general public. Golden Rays increased their fares slightly in 2008, but ridership has continued to grow despite this fare increase, with current ridership averaging about 70 round-trips per week.

Figure 4-3 Fares by Destination – Golden Rays Transportation

Destination	One-Way	Round-Trip
Downieville	$1	$1
Allegany	$5	$10
Calpine	$5	$10
Grass Valley	$5	$10
Indian Valley	$3	$5
Loyalton	$5	$10
Marysville	$7	$14
Penn Valley	$6	$12
Quincy	$6	$12
Reno	$10	$20
Sacramento	$10	$20
Sierra City	$3	$5
Yuba City	$7	$14

Golden Rays operates a single van that can hold eight to nine passengers. The van is lift-equipped, though unable to carry some motorized wheelchairs. On average, Golden Rays carries four passengers per trip and aims to have at least three people on the van before committing to making a trip. It currently has one paid part-time driver (hours varying between 40 to 100 per month). Golden Rays Seniors has other paid staff, but only the driver and an interim administrator dedicate staff time to the transportation service. The administrator recently applied for a grant from USDA to hire a second driver.

Other Services

Sierra County Health and Human Services

The Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol division of the Sierra County Health and Human Service Agency in Loyalton has a Transporter Program for its clients. Seven part-time drivers are hired by the County and paid by the hour to transport clients to necessary services in four County pool cars. The cars are shared by Social Services and Welfare-to-Work clients as well. When the therapist signs an authorization, clients can receive trips to court appointments, doctors, and specialized programs to treat their illness. About 20 clients regularly need this service. The Transportation Coordinator assigns the trips with the goal of combining clients who need to go to the same city on the same trip. However, the cars are not equipped to handle wheelchairs. Because of liability concerns, the County does not allow the general public to ride in the pool cars along with the clients. Nor are the therapists allowed to transport clients in their private vehicles. The agency does not have a specific line item for transportation, but absorbs the cost within its overall budget.

Examples of typical trips are to bring clients to Downieville for a court appointment or bring clients in outlying communities to Loyalton for services at the mental health clinic. Out-of-county trips are to Reno, Quincy, Portola, Truckee, Auburn, and occasionally to University of California medical services in Sacramento. Because the trips take 45 minutes to an hour one way, clients who travel together may need to spend time before or after their appointments waiting for others from the pool car to finish. In addition, a driver makes a weekly run to a pharmacy in Truckee to pick up and deliver medications for prescriptions phoned or faxed to the pharmacy from therapists. Using the Truckee pharmacy instead of the pharmacy in their home town helps protect the privacy of clients. If applicable, clients who also need services in Truckee are assigned to the pharmacy run vehicle as well.

School Bus Services

Service to transport students to and from school is provided by contractors to the Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District, which serves all of Sierra County and the southern portion of Plumas County.

Bicycle Shuttle

During the summer months, several privately operated shuttles carry people and their mountain bikes uphill from Downieville to various trailheads. Prices in 2007 ranged from $15 per person up to $40, depending on distance and number of passengers.

Vehicle Maintenance and Operations

Golden Rays currently owns one van, and has it serviced as needed in Grass Valley (Nevada County). Golden Rays expects to get significant more use out of this vehicle, though having a back up vehicle would be helpful for days when one vehicle is out of service for repairs.

Incorporated Seniors has two vehicles, both of which it owns. Vehicles are serviced by several local mechanics, in Loyalton and Portola.

Sometimes in other locations, multiple providers are able to coordinate or consolidate maintenance, to reduce costs and increase efficiency. However, due to the highly rural status of

Sierra County and the low numbers of transit vehicles, minimal consolidation or coordination of services would be feasible.

Communication Technologies

Drivers for both Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors do not have reliable communication options when they are on the road, due to the mountainous and remote regions they serve. Both providers have expressed interest in exploring more advance communication technologies that would enable drivers to stay in communication while on the road.

Driver Training

Both Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors provide driver training internally. All drivers, both volunteer and paid, have required licensing and certification from the State of California Department of Motor Vehicles.

See Appendix E for a listing of California's licensing and testing requirements for transit drivers and a discussion of consolidated driver training programs.

Medicaid

It is possible for local providers (including public agencies and non-profit 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.[13]

There are no known Medi-Cal NEMT providers in Sierra County.

Transit Service in Neighboring Counties

Nevada County

Gold Country Stage provides fixed-route services in Nevada City and Grass Valley, and extending to North San Juan approximately thirteen miles from the Sierra County line. Demand response service is also provided in Nevada County by Gold Country Telecare.

In Truckee, fixed-route service is provided by Truckee Trolley, and demand-response service is provided by Truckee Dial-A-Ride.

Amtrak Rail serves the cities of Colfax, Soda Springs, and Truckee.

[13] 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.

Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Reno has an extensive bus system called RTC RIDE, with its main terminal in downtown Reno and secondary terminals in Sparks and at Meadowood Mall in south Reno. RTC ACCESS provides paratransit services for persons with disabilities and older adults. RTC INTERCITY buses link Reno and Carson City.

Amtrak Rail serves Reno as well as Sparks, and the Reno/Tahoe international airport is located in Reno.

Plumas County Transit

Plumas County Transit provides fixed-route service, serving the communities of Portola, Quincy, Graeagle, and Chester. Deviated fixed-route service is also available for persons with disabilities.

Figure 4-3 Transportation Inventory

Agency Name	Agency Type	Transportation Role(s): Public Transit	Transportation Role(s): Operates transportation	Transportation Role(s): Funds or subsidizes transportation	Transportation Role(s): Volunteer / staff drivers	Transportation Role(s): Provides I&R	Program Name	Program Purpose and Description	Funding Source(s)	Annual Operating Cost	Area Served	Service Type	Clients	Vehicles Quantity / Type	Routes	Average Monthly Miles	Number of Drivers	Driver Training Program	Vehicle Maintenance Provider	Technologies	Medicaid Vendor
Golden Rays Senior Citizens, Inc.	Non-profit	X	X				Golden Rays Senior Van Services	Provide transportation to older adults and others in western Sierra County	STA/LTF	$ 44,840	Western Sierra County	Demand	All	1 handicapped equipped van.	Fixed to Reno/Grass Valley/Nevada City	1,200	2 part-time drivers	Yes	Grass Valley Ford	None	No
Incorporated Seniors of Sierra County	Non-profit	X	X				Incorporated Seniors of Sierra County	To provide a reliable means of transportation to Sierra County residents. This program is designed to serve the senior citizens and handicapped population. The general public is welcome on a space available basis.	TDA, A4AA, In-kind Donations	$68,797	Sierra County, CA	Demand	Elderly, disabled and general public on a space available basis	(2) 1 ton passenger vans and one station wagon. Vans are fully accessible.	No regular established routes. Some monthly trips are scheduled on a regular basis. (i.e. Weekly to Reno, weekly in-town shopping, 4 to 5 recreational trips monthly, etc.)	data not available	2 paid, 2 volunteer	Yes	Private mechanics in Loyalton and Portola	None	No
Sierra County Health and Human Services	Public		X				HHS Transporter Program	Transportation for social services and welfare-to-work clients to necessary appointments.	General fund	Not available	All of Sierra County, as well as destinations in Nevada County and Sacramento.	Demand	Social services, welfare-to-work clients	4 County vehicles, not wheelchair equipped.	Not applicable	Not available	7 part-time drivers	Not known	Not known	None except cell phones	No

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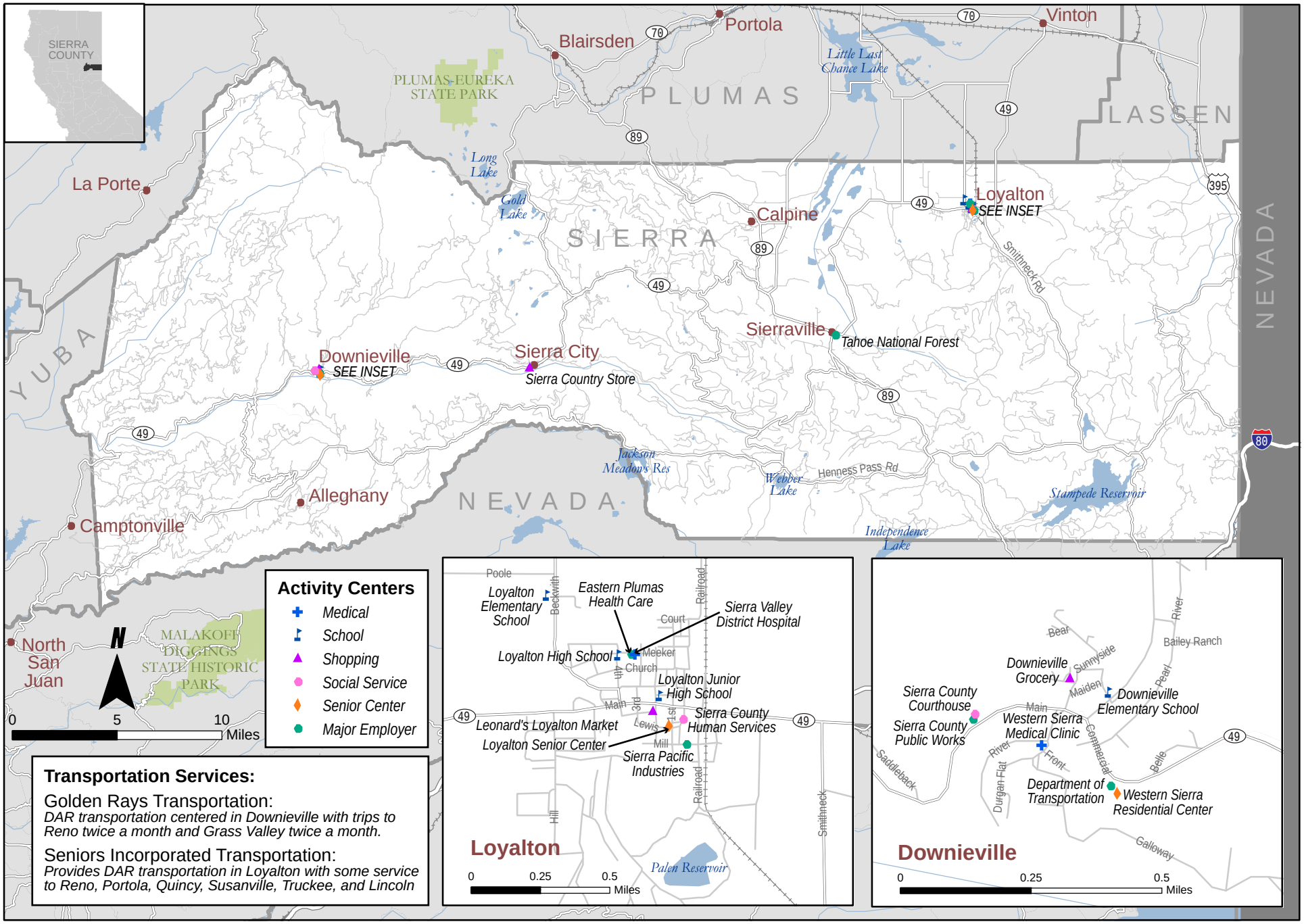
Figure 4-4 Sierra County Transit Services and Major Activity Centers



Nelson | Nygaard consulting associates

GIS Data Source: ESRI, Census 2000

Chapter 5. Key Findings: Service Gaps and Unmet Transportation Needs

Key Origins and Destinations

Findings in this chapter were derived from several methods of communication with stakeholders in Sierra County:

- A stakeholders' workshop;
- In-person interviews;
- One e-mail communication; and
- Telephone interviews.

A Stakeholders' Workshop was held December 10, 2007. Thirteen people attended, including one resident, one staff employee and one City of Loyalton Councilperson; the director of transportation for the Incorporated Senior Citizens' van service based in Loyalton; a planner from Caltrans District 3; a board member and the president/interim transportation administrator for the Golden Rays Seniors Van Service in Downieville; a representative from the medical clinic in Downieville; a member of the Sierra County Board of Supervisors; three staff members from the Sierra County Public Works department, including the Director of Transportation; and a transportation consultant for Sierra County. The list of attendees can be found in Appendix B.

Following the workshop, in-person interviews were conducted with the President of Golden Rays Seniors and the Administrator of Western Sierra Residential Center. An e-mail communication was received from the Principal of Loyalton Elementary School, who could not attend the workshop.

Requests for telephone interviews were made to a list provided by the Public Works Department of other stakeholders who were unable to attend the meeting. Telephone interviews were conducted with those who responded: the Mayor of Loyalton; the Program Coordinator for Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol in the Sierra County Health and Human Services; and the Pastor of Downieville Assembly of God Church.

According to stakeholders in the workshop, residents in the eastern and western halves of Sierra County have quite different orientations in their travel patterns. Incorporated Seniors Transportation provides transportation to residents in the eastern half, which includes the City of Loyalton. Residents travel outside the county to Portola, Quincy, and Reno for shopping and recreation. Medical trips are to Truckee and Reno. Other trips are local, to church, social events and shopping. Priority is given to older adults and people with disabilities, but the general public is accommodated as space allows. There are no regular connections to the western county in Downieville and its surrounding areas.

In Downieville, the majority of the trips are local, and a significant amount of the ridership is from the general public. Golden Rays Seniors bus service transports residents twice a month to Grass Valley, Nevada City, and Reno. Typical trips are for medical appointments. Golden Rays will provide transportation on occasion to the Sacramento airport, Marysville, and Yuba City. The Lions Club and

the Women's Republican Club receive supplemental transportation services for their events and meetings. There are no regular connections to the eastern county in Loyalton and its surrounding areas.

The County Health and Human Services department operates a Transporter Program for its clients. This service has grown to four pool vehicles and seven part-time drivers as a response to transportation concerns expressed at public Community Town Hall meetings about mental health issues. However, its Transporter Program cannot take people who are not clients due to the County's liability regulations. Trips are to services both in the county and in surrounding counties.

Gaps and Unmet Needs

Stakeholders commented that there should be some connection between the two halves of the county. A timed transfer between the Downieville and Loyalton vans would extend residents' travel opportunities and could help unify the county's population. For example, people from Loyalton would be able to attend Western Sierra Medical Clinic in Downieville for their medical needs and would be able to access Sierra County functions located there, such as applying for building permits or attending meetings of the Board of Supervisors. According to the Program Coordinator, the current Transporter Program for mental health clients is not a line item in the budget of the County Health and Human Services department and it is unclear how long the County can continue to absorb the cost. Clients from the western half of the county who need transportation to mental health services in Loyalton could continue to be served with a timed transfer connection, as well as new patients who are not currently clients.

Another important connection that is lacking is daily commuter transportation to regional transportation services at central hubs in Portola, Nevada City, and Truckee. These connections to regional transportation services would help the general public who work or need to find jobs at locations outside of Sierra County. In addition, there are residents who need frequent access to social services for CalWORKS appointments, child protective services, and residential placement for drug testing.

The Health and Human Services department does coordinate with Incorporated Seniors' calendar to place social service clients in its van and refers callers who are not clients to the van service. However, the van service has limited hours and at times is filled with seniors and people with disabilities, leaving no room for the general public.

A daily scheduled trip to Reno might help low-income residents who need to travel to Reno for job opportunities, which are generally lacking in Sierra County. Welfare-to-work participants have received transportation to jobs from the Transporter Program of the Health and Human Services department for several weeks until they receive their first paycheck. Because CalWORKS mandates that participants work a certain number of hours per week to receive benefits, the County has provided this transportation service, which usually costs more than the first paycheck the worker will receive. However, once the worker begins getting paid, the worker must find his or her own transportation. Often, the worker then drives a car that is unreliable, particularly over snowy mountain roads in the winter, and loses the job. A public transportation option would help remedy this situation and keep the welfare-to-work participant on the path to economic independence, according to the Health and Human Services representative.

Transportation to jobs in Sierra County is acutely needed in the summer tourist season, according to one telephone interviewee. Young people can pick and choose their jobs because of a shortage of workers for local businesses in the summer. The various lodges in the lakes basin are particularly in

need of workers, but reliable transportation is an obstacle to attracting entry-level employees for cleaning hotel rooms, busing tables, etc.

In general, stakeholders noted the need for more frequent transportation and longer service hours. Riders from Downieville want to go to Nevada City and Reno more than twice a month and would like trips to Quincy and Truckee. Gold Country Stage in Nevada County does go to North San Juan, and there have been previous unsuccessful attempts to establish a timed transfer point with the Golden Rays van in order to increase service from Sierra County into Nevada City.

Conversations with transportation providers and other stakeholders indicated that residents in the most rural areas often have unmet transportation needs to travel to more central communities. School children living in rural areas in particular have difficulty participating in after school activities and sports, because there is only one bus home immediately after school ends. The principal at Loyalton Elementary School wrote that the problem is more serious than just participation in after school activities. Two-thirds of the elementary and middle school children ride the school buses. Because the school buses arrive at the elementary, middle and high schools just before classes begin and end, there is no time for teacher intervention with students having problems with school work. Children in the western half of the county in outlying areas, such as Allegheny and Pike, have similar problems. Sometimes teachers giving extra help after school must drive pupils home themselves.

According to the stakeholders, many people in Sierra County are proud of their independence. As such, they are often reluctant to ask for help getting around and are sometimes unwilling to admit that they need transportation assistance. Having a centralized source of information could help these residents as well as the agencies that need to know how to assist them. A travel training program could help them allay fears about using transit.

The following examples of other transportation gaps are from both the Stakeholders' Workshop and the May 2007 minutes of the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council's meeting on Unmet Needs. Gaps include a lack of service for:

- People living in the Nevada County communities of North San Juan and Grass Valley and in the sparsely populated areas of Allegheny and Pike who want to schedule appointments at the Western Sierra Medical Clinic in Downieville.
- Students who want to attend Feather Ridge College in Quincy
- People with disabilities who could attend the adult daycare program under development by Golden Rays Seniors
- Welfare clients who receive food stamps once a month and need to transport large amounts of groceries
- People with disabilities who use power wheelchairs and scooters, which cannot be easily accommodated on the current Incorporated Seniors vans

Existing Coordination of Services

Because the transit service available in Sierra County is operated by the senior centers in Downieville and Loyalton, there is good coordination between these providers and the senior citizen population, who are one of the primary targets of this plan. However, due to the lack of a link between these two van providers, the there is no transit coordination between the two geographic sections of the county.

As space is available, the Health and Human Service Agency (HHSA) places its clients on the Incorporated Seniors vans for transportation to appointments. However, HHSA cannot, in turn, take members of the public who are not clients on its Transporter Program's vehicles.

Golden Rays distributes information about its service, including its phone number to schedule a pick-up, at the Western Sierra Medical Center in Downieville.

Major Barriers to Coordination

Agency funding and regulatory restrictions are a key barrier to coordination. For example, HHSA cannot transport members of the public in its vehicles due to liability insurance restrictions, even if there is space available. In a county with few resources, this existing publicly-funded program is essentially unavailable to the general public.

Insurance concerns for volunteer driver programs are also a barrier to coordination for senior centers and service clubs who may have willing volunteers. These organizations are reluctant to sponsor programs without some assurance that their involvement will be protected from lawsuits if an individual volunteer driver, covered only by his or her own insurance policy, is in an accident.

Geography also presents a major barrier to coordination. The population centers in Loyalton and Downieville are separated by about 50 miles along the winding roadway of Highway 49, which can be particularly difficult to navigate in the winter. Smaller communities off Highway 49 are even more isolated. Cell phone reception is non-existent over large portions of the road. Even though land line communication is good, the physical separation in the County makes coordination a challenge.

County boundaries weave in and out in this part of the state. For example, to transport residents to more robust services in the Nevada City/Grass Valley area of Nevada County, Golden Rays must pass first through Yuba County. To get to services in Reno, Incorporated Seniors must pass first through eastern Nevada County. Inter-county coordination can be necessary for some strategies to be implemented, involving many different jurisdictional entities and levels of government. However, the political and geographic complexity is a barrier to coordination.

Service Duplication

As is indicated in Chapter 4, the transit services in Sierra County are very limited. Therefore, there is no service duplication.

Projected Transportation Needs in the Service Area

Since Sierra County has no formal models that would predict demand for public transportation services that serve older people, people with disabilities, and people with limited incomes, population projections provide the best available evidence. 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 grown in proportion to total population and the population in older age groups. For purposes of this plan therefore, the projected growth of the total population in Sierra 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.

Between 2005 and 2030, according to the California Department of Finance, the population of Sierra County is expected to grow by approximately eight percent, at an average annual rate of 0.3%.

Comparatively, the population of older adults (60 years or older) is expected grow by 41% percent, at an average annual rate of 1.6%. Thus, based on the California Department of Finance population growth projections for Nevada County, a low-end projection for transit demand is that it will grow by 8% between 2005 and 2030, with an average annual growth rate of 0.3%, and a high-end projection is that is will grow by 41% between 2005 and 2030, with an average annual growth rate of 1.6%.

Chapter 6. Identification of Strategies and Evaluation

This chapter presents strategies and solutions for addressing the service gaps and unmet transportation needs. It also presents results of meetings with the public and stakeholders in a second round of workshops to review preliminary strategies and evaluation criteria. The goal of the workshops was to seek feedback on the preliminary strategies and their prioritization. The strategies were prioritized based on criteria agreed to by local stakeholders.

Public Outreach

Two workshops were held on May 29, 2008 in Sierra County: a 10:00 a.m. workshop at the Loyalton Senior Center and a 5:30 p.m. workshop in Downieville at the Community Center.

Methodology

The workshops were advertised to the public by the following means:

- An announcement in the Loyalton Senior Center May 2008 newsletter
- Announcements posted in the community of Camptonville, at the County Courthouse in Downieville, at Loyalton City Hall, and at the senior centers, schools, and post offices in the county
- An insert in the two newspapers, the *Mountain Messenger* and the *Sierra Booster*, with a total circulation of 1,000
- Press releases sent to the newspapers
- An announcement posted on the County website

A copy of the announcement is included in Appendix D.

Approach

In each of the two workshops, the purpose of the Plan, the potential funding sources, the findings from the Existing Conditions Report, and the preliminary strategies were presented to the participants, with subsequent discussion about additional strategies, some of which were added to the preliminary list of strategies. The evaluation criteria were discussed as a tool to narrow the strategies to those most important to those attending the workshop and the constituencies and residents they represented. Each participant was then given three colored dots to place beside their top priorities among the strategies. The priorities chosen by attendees in Loyalton and Downieville are summarized at the end of this chapter.

Copies of the JARC and New Freedom application and the Section 5310 application were made available. One participant in Loyalton and one in Downieville expressed interest in possibly submitting an application and took copies to review.

Workshop Discussions

Loyalton Workshop

Sixteen people attended the workshop at the Loyalton Senior Center (including two staff from the Department of Transportation in Sierra County, who did not vote on the priorities). Participants included members of the Senior Center and one member from the general public, two members of the County Board of Supervisors, a member of the County Transportation Commission, a Councilmember from the City of Loyalton, the Director of Transportation for Incorporated Seniors, and a staff member from the County Human Services Department. See Appendix B for a list of participants.

A key comment during the discussion of coordination between the Incorporated Seniors transportation program and the County's Human Services Department was the need to loosen restrictions on the funding streams and program parameters of the primary funding sources. For example, the Human Services Department places clients on the Incorporated Seniors vans when there is available space. Human Services is able to pay their clients' fares because Incorporated Seniors is a service open to the public. However, because of regulations on the use of its vehicles, and because of insurance liability concerns, the Human Services Department is unable to place seniors and people with disabilities who are not current clients onto its own vehicles, even if there are seats for them. Therefore, although there may be resources for additional trips in Sierra County, agency restrictions limit potential coordination of services.

Incorporated Seniors has a van that can transport people in electric wheelchairs and scooters. However, tying down the wheelchairs is challenging. It was suggested that an application for funding to retrofit the van with different tie-downs could be considered.

Downieville Workshop

Eight people attended the Downieville workshop at the Community Center (including two staff from the Department of Transportation in Sierra County, who did not vote on the priorities). Participants included the president and vice-president of Golden Rays Seniors Transportation, a physician from the Western Sierra Medical Clinic, and three residents. See Appendix B for a list of participants.

Golden Rays representatives had a number of questions about the funding applications, the process to submit them, and potential sources for the required local match. The representatives then detailed new accomplishments for the transportation service since the last workshop in December 2007. For example, in the past several months the number of passengers and fares has doubled. There are two drivers, often providing service seven days a week.

Golden Rays is exploring the development of a fixed route and is working on establishing a timed transfer with Gold Country Stage in Nevada County. The connection would work best at Camptonville in Yuba County, connected to Sierra and Nevada Counties via State Route 49. Gold Country Stage used to serve Camptonville until it experienced funding problems. Because Camptonville is in another county, and because Yuba County did not agree to help fund the service in Camptonville, the connection to Camptonville was discontinued. This missing connection, due to multiple counties with separate funding streams, was cited as an obstacle to coordination among the various transportation providers in rural areas.

Western Sierra Medical Center (WSMC) will begin a mobile medical van service in August 2008. It will operate three days a week, serving Allegheny, Pike, and Camptonville. The van will have access to electronic medical records of the patients and, therefore, can supply medical services without requiring patients to find transportation to the physical site of the clinic in Downieville.

Evaluation Criteria

Workshop participants discussed and agreed upon the following criteria before using the criteria to base their selected priorities from the list of preliminary strategies.

1. Meets documented need

How well does the strategy address transportation gaps or barriers identified through the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan? The strategy should:

- Provide service in a geographic area with limited transportation options
- Serve a geographic area where the greatest number of people need a service
- Improve the mobility of clientele subject to state and federal funding sources (i.e. low-income individuals, older adults, and persons with disabilities)
- Provide a level of service not currently provided with existing resources
- Preserve and protect existing services

2. Feasibility of Implementation

How likely is the strategy to be successfully implemented? The strategy should:

- Be eligible for SAFTEA-LU or other grant funding
- Result in efficient use of available resources
- Have a potential project sponsor with the operational capacity to carry out the strategy
- Have the potential to be sustained beyond the grant period
- Be able to be measured and evaluated to track effectiveness

3. Coordination

How would the strategy build upon existing services? The strategy should:

- Avoid duplication and promote coordination of services and programs
- Allow for and encourage participation of local human service and transportation stakeholders

Identification of Strategies

Based on the needs and gaps identified from the first workshop and from the documents that were reviewed in Phase I of this project, a list of preliminary strategies was developed by the consultant. The strategies address the problems faced by people who are elderly or who have disabilities and those with low incomes. They were particularly focused on the three funding streams subject to this Plan—JARC, New Freedom, and Section 5310—although not limited to these funding sources.

The strategies were outlined on easel paper and described to workshop participants. Participants then asked questions and discussed the strategies before deciding on their priorities. The following section describes six strategies presented at the workshop, along with sub-strategies within several of the main strategies. All of the strategies are preceded by an identified need which the strategy is designed to address. This section concludes with the prioritization ranking performed by the participants.

1. Identified Need: increase information about transportation options among Sierra County residents

One-Stop Transportation Call Center

Sierra County is very rural with a population of only 3,500. Therefore, people often rely on their neighbors and word-of-mouth for information. However, as residents age, they become less mobile, which can lead to isolation. A One-Stop Transportation Call Center could be a useful focus for transportation information. It would be a source of up-to-date information on not only Sierra County's local transit providers – Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors – but also on the providers in surrounding counties. For example, it would have schedule information and hours of service for Gold Country Stage in Nevada County, RTC RIDE in Reno, Plumas County Transit, and Amtrak in Placer County. It could also serve as a referral to other agencies, such as the Transporter Program offered by the County's Health and Human Services Agency. The cost for this project would be for a toll-free telephone line from anywhere in the county and for staff time to answer calls and keep the information current. Funding for this project would be eligible for JARC, New Freedom or Section 5310 funds under the Mobility Manager category, which requires a 20% local match.

2. Identified Need: expand service area and frequency of trips to other areas

Increased Daily Service through Timed Transfers

Although there is no fixed-route service in Sierra County, transit options can be expanded by establishing connections with other existing services. The additional costs to provide timed transfers would be modest compared to Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors adding daily service beyond Sierra County, which would require more vehicles.

Option A: Timed transfer with Gold Country Stage at San Juan in Nevada County

Riders from Downieville want to go to Nevada City more than the current twice a month provided by Golden Rays. There have been previous unsuccessful attempts to establish a timed transfer point with the Golden Rays van and Gold Country Stage in order to increase service from Sierra County to Nevada County. With a new source of funding for Golden Rays, the transfer might be economically feasible. In addition, it could bring new passengers onto the Gold Country Stage route, which has been reported as underutilized.

This project would seek funding to have the Golden Rays van meet the Gold Country Stage daily in San Juan. The current schedule for Gold Country Stage is as follows:

Arrival at North Columbia Community Center in San Juan
7:20 am
10:30 am
2:40 pm
5:50 pm

Arrival at Church and Neal in Grass Valley
8:15 am
11:25 am
3:35 pm
6:45 pm

Funding could be sought from JARC funds if it could be established that low-income residents seeking or retaining work in the Nevada City/Grass Valley communities could be accommodated by the 7:20 am transfer times. The arrival in Grass Valley would also allow workers to connect to the Gold Country Stage bus to Colfax at 8:20 am, expanding job opportunities into Placer County. The last bus from Colfax at 4:25 pm arrives in Grass Valley in time for a 5:00 pm connection to the bus returning to San Juan.

As an alternative to JARC funds, an application for New Freedom Program funds could be justified if people with disabilities would be served by gaining greater access to services in the Nevada City/Grass Valley communities. It should be noted that both funding sources require a 50% local match for operating funds.

Option B: Timed transfer mid-county between Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors

Currently there is no public transportation between the eastern and western halves of Sierra County. A timed transfer between Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors at a mid-point, such as Sierra City or Sierraville, would extend residents' travel opportunities and could help unify the county's population. The two transit operators would need to review their passengers' travel needs and, perhaps, survey them to determine the optimum times of day to create the transfer. Funding would be needed for the extra driver time, fuel, and maintenance required for these additional trips. The project could be eligible for JARC and New Freedom funding, since it would be an enhancement to public transit and would create mobility coordination.

3. Identified Need: provide transportation options for work and school trips, to retain independence for seniors, and to supplement existing van services

Establish Ridesharing Programs

Neighbors and family members are enlisted to help people with travel needs in their daily lives, such as to medical appointments, from after-school activities, and to church on Sundays. The following are examples of formalized carpool programs that have been implemented elsewhere and could be adapted in Sierra County to:

- Address mobility problems older adults have, while providing cost-effective options to expanding Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors van programs

- Assist students and their parents by allowing participation in after-school activities, sports, and academic counseling
- Help students attending community college outside of Sierra County
- Help low-income workers link up with others to travel to jobs.

Option A: Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program. Many older adults and people with disabilities take pride in their self-sufficiency and are uncomfortable asking for rides as often as they would like to. Nor do they wish to accept "a handout." A non-profit, church, or social service agency could organize volunteer driver programs, where the rider either pays for the full-cost of the trip or reimburses mileage costs. A fund could be created so that lower income individuals could apply for funding to reimburse their volunteer drivers for their transportation costs to provide rides.

Option B: Volunteer Exchange Program. A member who needs a ride calls and is matched with a member who has volunteered to drive. Drivers' hours are recorded in a computer program and banked for services the drivers may need to draw upon for themselves, such as pet care or handyman services. No money is exchanged between members; it is simply an exchange of skills. A senior center, non-profit, or social service agency would be appropriate organizations to create such a program.

Option C: Rideboards. For seniors, a Rideboard could be implemented at individual facilities, such as senior centers and assisted living homes. People post a need for a trip and others post the desire for carpoolers to share the trip in their vehicle. Riders and drivers then match themselves. Someone at the site—either a participating senior or a staff person—would need to organize it and keep the postings current.

The Rideboard concept is also applicable at a school site for students or at a public site, such as the court house or post office, for the general public. It can have a section for those who need a one-time or occasional ride, a section for those who are willing to give rides, and a section for those who need ongoing transportation, such as to a college class or a job. However, someone must be assigned the responsibility to keep the postings current or the Rideboard becomes dated and loses its usefulness. It is up to the rider and driver, not the organizer, to decide whether or not a mileage reimbursement is exchanged.

Option D: School Pool. Even though students may attend the same school, their parents may not be aware of the schedules of other students at the school. For example, a third grader may need to stay after school for help in math while a fifth grader may be involved in a team sport. If the parents of these children could link up, they could arrange a carpool between them. The School Pool program is a formalized effort to connect parents. It can be sponsored by the school itself, by the PTA, or by an individual parent. It can be as simple as a Rideboard or a phone list or be a more sophisticated computer program. The advantage of a School Pool is that all the individuals participating are known through the school, providing a sense of safety for the children in the carpools.

Utilize Summer Bicycle Shuttles for Supplementary Transportation

Two privately-owned companies based in Downieville provide bicycle shuttles uphill to various trailheads during the summer months for bicyclists and their mountain bikes. One of them, Yuba Expeditions, responded to a phone call to assess their interest in adding passengers. Yuba Expeditions has two vans, each seating 10 people, running on a route from Downieville along Highway 49 to Parker Saddle. Reservations for the shuttle can be made online or by phone. The fee is $20 for a trip up the mountain. Currently, the two vans are full on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays during the

summer with bicyclists, when each van makes four trips a day on the two-hour run. However, the shuttles could be utilized as space permits on their regular run on weekdays to drop off people at work sites along the route. The owners are willing to discuss with Sierra County adding a firm schedule for other trips on weekdays, since there is capacity, particularly on Tuesday and Wednesday, for a new service. Expanding the shuttle service for general public passengers would provide an additional mobility option with the advantage that equipment and operators are already in place. This project could be eligible for JARC funds if it provided new access to jobs.

Apply for a Vehicle to Serve the General Public

Currently, senior citizens and people with disabilities receive priority in services provided by Incorporated Seniors and Golden Rays. Although Incorporated Seniors has one van that can serve the general public on a non-priority basis, Golden Rays does not. Golden Rays is interested in applying for a small four-wheel drive vehicle which could serve the general public, without the limitation of giving priority to seniors and people with disabilities. This strategy is based upon the unmet needs hearing in April 2008 and confirmed by comments and needs expressed in the December 2007 and May 2008 workshops. These needs include school and work trips, as well as transportation to medical appointments and grocery shopping.

4. Identified Need: increase reliability of owner-operated automobiles

Basic Auto Maintenance Program

Since job opportunities in Sierra County are limited, a car is necessary to access work in nearby counties. However, people with low incomes often can only afford an older model car. These cars frequently require a higher level of maintenance. A class offered in basic automobile maintenance would help these owners keep their cars running longer while defraying the labor costs of hiring a professional mechanic. By offering the class in Sierra County, prospective students can attend in their own community instead of having to put even more miles on their car driving to a class in another county. The labor, skills, and expertise for such a class could be identified by working with regional auto shops, schools, colleges and Regional Occupational Programs (ROP). A school district, community college extension program, or social service agency administering welfare-to-work programs are possible sponsors to create the program through funding sources available to their agencies.

5. Identified Need: new staffing resources to implement coordination projects

Mobility Manager

Rather than selecting individual strategies, Sierra County could consider applying for funding from JARC, New Freedom, or Section 5310 funds for a Mobility Manager. This source requires a 20% local match. The Mobility Manager would be a full or part time staff position housed in a lead agency to oversee local coordination efforts. Responsibilities of this staff position would include implementation of several of the projects listed here, including:

- Staffing a One-Stop Transportation Call Center
- Managing a Rideboard and other carpool programs
- Finding sponsors for a Basic Automobile Maintenance Program
- Assisting Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors in coordinating schedules with other transit providers in nearby counties
- Writing grants and seeking funding from other sources for program implementation.

A Mobility Manager would provide a focal point for coordination activities in Sierra County and, by designating a staff position, would increase the probability of implementing new mobility options for residents.

6. Identified Need: accommodate electric wheelchairs and scooters

Section 5310 Vehicle Application

The current vehicles operated by Incorporated Seniors have difficulty transporting large electric wheelchairs and scooters. An application could be made to Caltrans for an additional vehicle that would better accommodate electric wheelchairs and scooters. At the May workshop, the suggestion was made to instead retrofit the Incorporated Seniors vans with tie-downs that better accommodated electric wheelchairs, in lieu of ordering a new vehicle. The Section 5310 funding requires an 11.47% local match.

Figure 6-1 Priorities from Loyalton Workshop

Gap/Need	Strategy	Meets Criteria	Priority Ranking
Increase information about options	One-stop Call Center	Meets documented need from 1st workshop; feasible to implement and sustain and Golden Rays was indentified as a potential sponsor, which is already performing to a limited degree; potential for coordination as providers centralize information.	Tie for #1 with 11 votes
Expand service area	Timed transfer between Incorporated Seniors and Golden Rays	Meets documented need from 1st workshop, as long-standing strategy attempted previously; discussions for implementation underway between two providers; promotes coordination among existing services.	Tie for #1 with 11 votes
Provide options to supplement van services	Ridesharing programs	Meets documented need from 1st workshop, including new service not currently provided; low-cost to implement; potential to coordinate resources by identifying willing volunteers available in senior centers, schools, and county departments	7 votes
Better accommodate electric wheelchairs and scooters	Section 5310 application	Meets documented need from 1st workshop for Incorporated Seniors' vehicles to better transport electric wheelchairs; eligible for Section 5310 funding with an identified project sponsor; would allow greater future coordination with Golden Rays.	6 votes
Increase reliability of autos	Basic Auto Maintenance Program	Meets documented need from 1st workshop for reliable autos; low-cost to implement and results in efficient use of available resources; builds upon Human Services programs for low-income workers.	2 votes
New resources to implement coordination programs	Mobility Manager	Meets documented need from 1st workshop by improving mobility options in the county; eligible for federal funding programs; provides new level of coordination within county.	1 vote

Figure 6-2 Priorities from Downieville Workshop

Gap/Need	Strategy	Meets Criteria	Priority Ranking
Increase reliability of autos	Basic Auto Maintenance Program	Meets documented need from 1st workshop for reliable autos; low-cost to implement and results in efficient use of available resources; builds upon Human Services programs for low-income workers.	5 votes
Expand service area	Timed transfer between Golden Rays & Gold Country Stage at North San Juan	Meets documented need from 1st workshop, providing a level of service not currently provided; eligible for federal funds and can be implemented by providers with existing vehicles; promotes coordination among existing services in two counties.	Tie for #2 with 3 votes
Expand service area	Timed transfer between Incorporated Seniors and Golden Rays	Meets documented need from 1st workshop; discussions for implementation underway between two providers; promotes coordination among existing services.	Tie for #2 with 3 votes
New resources to implement coordination programs	Mobility Manager	Meets documented need from 1st workshop by improving mobility options in the county; eligible for federal funding programs and Golden Rays is potential sponsor; provides new level of coordination within county.	Tie for #2 with 3 votes
Increase information about options	One-stop Call Center	Meets documented need from 1st workshop; feasible to implement and sustain; potential for coordination as providers centralize information.	1 vote
Provide options to supplement van services	Ridesharing programs	Meets documented need from 1st workshop, including new service not currently provided; low-cost to implement; potential to coordinate resources by identifying willing volunteers available in senior centers, schools, and county departments.	no votes
Better accommodate electric wheelchairs and scooters	Section 5310 application	Meets documented need from 1st workshop for Incorporated Seniors' vehicles to better transport electric wheelchairs; eligible for Section 5310 funding with an identified project sponsor; would allow greater future coordination with Golden Rays,.	no votes

In the discussion preceding the votes in Downieville, one participant noted that Lassen College had taught an auto maintenance program in the community for many years. This participant had attended

the program, considered it very valuable, and strongly urged the others to vote for it to return, using all his three votes on that one program.

Participants were concerned about the liability individuals might face in a volunteer driver program or liability incurred by rideboards sponsored by the County or senior centers. They said they needed more information about how other counties had successfully structured the various carpool programs, not only concerning the liability, but also the level and funding source of mileage reimbursements.

The strategy to better accommodate electric wheelchairs and scooters was not considered applicable in Downieville, since Golden Rays can already transport people using these mobility devices.

Chapter 7. Implementation Plan for Recommended Strategies

Introduction

Four high priority strategies were identified for implementation. The recommended strategies considered the prioritization of strategies by participants in the second workshop. However, this prioritization was not the only input into the recommendations, particularly since different priorities were chosen in the two May 2008 workshops held in separate parts of the county. In addition, participants in the first workshop in December 2007, where needs were discussed, did not necessarily attend the second workshop. Therefore, the overall discussions in the county from both workshops, the evaluation criteria, a review of previous planning documents, and the consultant's knowledge of other rural counties needs were all blended to form the basis for the recommended strategies.

In addition to the four high priority strategies, five additional strategies were selected as priorities, but with less emphasis than the first four. These strategies are considered important, yet less critical than the top four. One of the five, use of school buses for public transit, was not discussed in the workshops but has been added after review of additional material presented to the staff of the Sierra County Department of Transportation. There are also several other worthy strategies outlined in Chapter 6 that are not included here. The reason is simply to narrow the list in order not to overwhelm those who will implement this plan and scatter their efforts. Certainly, if an opportunity arises to take on some of the strategies not mentioned in this chapter, it should not be overlooked simply because the strategy is not ranked high priority here.

Implementing the Strategies

This section addresses what needs to be done to move forward with many of the strategies identified in Chapter 6. Several interrelated activities and decisions need to be addressed to begin implementing the strategies. They are discussed in the following sections.

As a final step for this planning effort, an implementation was plan was developed for each of the highly-ranked strategies. Specifically, this assessment identified:

- The potential lead agency or "champion" with the institutional, operational and fiscal capacity to implement the proposed strategy
- The Implementation timeframe addressing the short, medium and long-term steps needed to implement the strategy ;
- The Estimated Costs considering the range of operational and capital costs needed to implement the strategy; and
- Potential funding sources, including potential use of SAFETEA-LU funds.

Highlights of the implementation plan are summarized in Figures 7-1 and 7-2, providing a "snapshot" of the proposed implementation plan. Key elements for implementing the recommended strategies are discussed in more detail in the following text.

Recommended High Priority Strategies

Mobility Manager

Rather than selecting individual strategies, Sierra County could consider applying for funding from JARC, New Freedom, or Section 5310 funds for a Mobility Manager. This source requires a 20% local match. The Mobility Manager would be a full- or part-time staff position housed in a lead agency to oversee local coordination efforts. Because the Sierra County Department of Transportation is an umbrella agency with planning responsibilities, it would be an appropriate organization in which to house the Mobility Manager, although there are other stakeholder agencies that have the capacity to take on this role, such as the Downieville and Loyalton senior centers. One of the high priority strategies—establishing a volunteer driver program—and three of the other priority programs—creation of a one-stop call center, providing a basic automobile maintenance class, and use of school buses for public transit—could be tasks for a Mobility Manager. Other worthy strategies that are listed in Chapter 6 but have not been selected as top priorities for implementation would also benefit from the coordination that a Mobility Manager could bring. A first step in implementation will be to determine where the Mobility Manager will be housed—that is, can DOT take on the role with existing staff or will a new person need to be hired. Next step will be to draw up a job description and to apply for funds in an upcoming SAFETEA-LU application cycle. A part-time position is estimated at $30,000 a year.

Timed transfer between Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors

Currently there is no public transportation between the eastern and western halves of Sierra County. A timed transfer between Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors at a mid-point, such as Sierra City or Sierraville, would extend residents' travel opportunities and could help unify the County's population. As a first step, the two transit operators would need to review their passengers' travel needs and, perhaps, survey them to determine the optimum times of day to create the transfer. Funding would be needed for the extra driver time, fuel, and maintenance required for these additional trips. The project could be eligible for JARC and New Freedom funding, since it would be an enhancement to public transit and would create mobility coordination. Before a funding application is submitted, the applicants would need to identify the source for a 50% local match. Both organizations would need to make two round trips to bring people to the transfer point and to return them home later in the day. The combined cost is estimated at approximately $326,400 for both organizations' daily service—less if the service was fewer days a week.

Volunteer Driver Program

In a county as sparsely populated as Sierra County, fixed-route transit is not cost-effective. At the same time, people value their independence and rely upon their friends and neighbors when they are in need. A volunteer driver program is a good fit for increasing mobility in a cost-effective manner. A non-profit organization, church, service club, or social service agency could organize volunteer driver programs in Sierra County, where the rider reimburses the driver's mileage costs. A fund could be created so that low income individuals could apply for trip costs to reimburse their volunteer drivers. For example, if a service club took on this role, the members might contribute to a mileage fund as a service project. Alternatively, a Mobility Manager could organize the program, seek reimbursement funding, and manage the reimbursement program. The two van programs might be willing to schedule the volunteers. The Sierra County Department of Transportation could help identify a lead agency, which would be the first step toward implementation. If volunteers in east and west county transported residents

in need of a ride three times a week, the cost would be $18,000 a year, assuming 100 miles a day at 58.5 cents a mile reimbursement, which is the current federal guideline. Administration of this program is eligible for New Freedom program funds, which require a 50% local match.

Apply for a Vehicle to Serve the General Public

Currently, senior citizens and people with disabilities receive priority in services provided by Incorporated Seniors and Golden Rays. Although Incorporated Seniors has one van that can serve the general public on a non-priority basis, Golden Rays does not. Golden Rays is interested in applying for a small four-wheel drive vehicle could serve the general public, without the limitation of giving priority to seniors and people with disabilities. This strategy is based upon the unmet needs hearing in April 2008 and confirmed by comments and needs expressed in the December 2007 and May 2008 workshops. These needs include school and work trips, as well as transportation to medical appointments and grocery shopping. Specifically, Golden Rays is planning to seek grant funds to procure a modified mini-van with two wheelchair positions. The van could seat two passengers and two wheelchair patrons or five passengers with no wheelchair patrons. Sierra County has identified Section 5311 funds and Proposition 1 B funds as grant sources.

Summary of High Priority Strategies

Figure 7-1 on the following page summarizes the High Priority Strategies discussed above. For each strategy a lead agency/champion has been suggested to initiate action. The implementation timeframe describes how long before the strategy could be implemented, followed by approximate costs or range of costs; the cost-effectiveness of the strategy; and potential funding sources.

When strategies from Chapter 6 were prioritized, based on the evaluation criteria, cost-effectiveness was one of the considerations in ranking a priority as “high.” 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.

Figure 7-1 Implementing High Priority Strategies

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe	Order of Magnitude Costs (Capital or Operating)	Cost-Effectiveness of Strategy	Potential Funding Sources	Comments
Mobility Manager	Sierra County DOT	Winter 2008	$30,000 for a half-time person, if additional staffing required	High	• Sierra Co. DOT if existing staff can take on role; • JARC, New Freedom or Section 5310 for new staff	Considered to have high cost-effectiveness because many of the strategies depend upon staff to set up and/or coordinate. A designated person could jump start the suggested strategies, particularly the volunteer driver and other ridesharing programs.
Expand service area by timed transfer between Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors	Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors	2009, depending on procurement of new funds	Approx. $326,400 annual operating costs for combined daily service—less for fewer days a week	Medium	• New Freedom if serving people with disabilities can be demonstrated; • JARC, if the transfer occurs when people need to get to jobs or to training elsewhere in the county or to connect to a van out-of-county • Section 5311 rural transportation funds • Health and Human Services funds for better access to health care, including mental health services	Connecting the east and west sections was considered an important priority by all stakeholders. Cost-effectiveness is ranked medium since the actual demand has not been tested and is unknown.

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe	Order of Magnitude Costs (Capital or Operating)	Cost-Effectiveness of Strategy	Potential Funding Sources	Comments
Establish Carpool Reimbursement Volunteer Driver Program	Sierra County DOT in coordination with Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors	Winter 2008	$18,000/year at .585/mile assuming 1 volunteer in east county and 1 volunteer in west county 3 days a week @ 100 miles/day	High	• New Freedom if serving people with disabilities can be demonstrated; • Health and Human Services funds for better access to health care and welfare-to-work classes • Service Club sponsorship • Area Agency on Aging	The county has a low population and is spread over long distances, making scheduled public transit routes impractical. This strategy is highly cost-effective because it increases mobility by creating a new program to tap into the people of the county who own cars and are willing to share rides.
Apply for a Vehicle to Serve General Public Riders	Sierra County in coordination with Golden Rays	Winter 2008	$40,254	High	• Section 5311 and Proposition 1B funds	Rated high in cost effectiveness, since no general public transit now exists in west county. Provides dual purpose of serving new general public riders as well as supplementing current service for seniors and people with disabilities.

Other Priority Strategies

One-Stop call center

Sierra County is very rural with a population of only 3,500. Therefore, people often rely on their neighbors and word-of-mouth for information. However, as residents age, they become less mobile, which can lead to isolation. A One-Stop Transportation Call Center could be a useful focus for transportation information. It would be a source of up-to-date information on not only Sierra County's local transit providers – Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors – but also on the providers in surrounding counties. For example, it would have schedule information and hours of service for Gold Country Stage in Nevada County, RTC RIDE in Reno, Plumas County Transit, and Amtrak in Placer County. It could also serve as a referral to other agencies, such as the Transporter Program offered by the County's Health and Human Services Agency. The cost for this project would be for a toll-free telephone line from anywhere in the county and for staff time to answer calls and keep the information current. Funding for this project would be eligible for JARC, New Freedom or Section 5310 funds under the Mobility Manager category, which requires a 20% local match.

Basic automobile maintenance classes

Since job opportunities in Sierra County are limited, a car is necessary to access work in nearby counties. However, people with low incomes often can only afford an older model car. These cars frequently require a higher level of maintenance. A class offered in basic automobile maintenance would help these owners keep their cars running longer while defraying the labor costs of hiring a professional mechanic. By offering the class in Sierra County, prospective students can attend in their own community instead of having to put even more miles on their car driving to a class in another county. The labor, skills, and expertise for such a class could be identified by working with regional auto shops, schools, colleges and Regional Occupational Programs (ROP). A school district, community college extension program, or social service agency are possible sponsors to create the program and seek funding for it.

Timed transfer between Golden Rays and Gold Country Stage

Riders from Downieville want to go to Nevada City more than the current twice a month provided by Golden Rays. There have been previous unsuccessful attempts to establish a timed transfer point with the Golden Rays van and Gold Country Stage in order to increase service from Sierra County to Nevada County. With a new source of funding for Golden Rays, the transfer might be economically feasible. In addition, it could bring new passengers onto the Gold Country Stage route, which has been reported as underutilized.

This project would seek funding to have the Golden Rays van meet the Gold Country Stage daily in San Juan. Funding could be sought from JARC funds if it could be established that low-income residents seeking or retaining work in the Nevada City/Grass Valley communities could be accommodated. As an alternative to JARC funds, an application for New Freedom Program funds could be justified if people with disabilities would be served by gaining greater access to services in the Nevada City/Grass Valley communities. Both funding sources require a 50% local match for operating funds.

Securements for Incorporated Seniors Vans

The current vehicles operated by Incorporated Seniors have difficulty transporting large electric wheelchairs and scooters. An application could be made to retrofit the Incorporated Seniors vans with tie-downs that better accommodated electric wheelchairs, in lieu of ordering a new vehicle. The Section 5310 funding requires an 11.47% local match.

Use of School Buses for Public Transportation

Because there is an existing contract for school transportation, the possibility of using school buses to provide rides to adults when buses are not carrying school-aged children could be explored (for example, mid-day or when the buses are traveling empty back from school in the morning and to the school in the afternoon). This could provide more employment opportunities for bus drivers, as well as increased mobility for the general public who may not be able to schedule a ride with the two senior dial-a-ride programs. The first step in implementation would be to contact the Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District to assess its interest in pursuing the idea further. Funding would then need to be identified to pay for the additional hours. Coordinated public/pupil transportation is addressed in more detail later in this Chapter.

Summary of Other Priority Strategies

Figure 7-2 on the following page summarizes other strategies that emerged as priorities in the development of this plan. The matrix lists the strategies that were discussed above, identifies a timeframe and concludes with some comments about implementation.

Figure 7-2 Implementing Other Priority Strategies

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Timeframe	Comments
One-stop call center	Fall 2008	Currently, Golden Rays, Incorporated Seniors, and HHS are providing transportation information for their own constituencies. Because the east and west sections orient their activities to different counties beyond their own borders, this current situation is working. However, residents would be better served with a more complete picture of their transportation options. The Mobility Manager could take on the role of a one-stop call center.
Auto maintenance classes	Winter 2008	Although this could be a high priority strategy for low-income workers, further research is needed before implementation. A workshop participant indicated that Lassen College had previously offered classes in Downieville. Research on why the class was discontinued should be performed in order to address any changes that need to be made in order to reinstitute the class and to offer such a class in Loyalton.
Timed transfer between Golden Rays and Gold Country Stage in Nevada County	2009	This strategy is a high priority for the Downieville area of Sierra County and could provide more job opportunities with this connection. However, there are logistical issues to solve, since Golden Rays would have to operate through Yuba County before connecting with Nevada County. Furthermore, Gold Country Stage may have to modify its current schedule to San Juan. Because this strategy has been explored unsuccessfully in the past, it is ranked as medium until the issues have been resolved.
Securements for Incorporated Seniors' vans	2009	This strategy would upgrade the vehicles to better accommodate large electric wheelchairs. Implementation requires research on the best securement system and the cost to purchase and install it.
Use school buses for public transit	2009-2010 school year	Some barriers to this strategy are discussed in the next section. No co-mingling students and the public is likely to be the most acceptable strategy for start of service.

Focus Issues

This section focuses on three of the strategies discussed in this chapter. Each has a particular relevance to the implementation of this plan.

Access to Jobs and Employment

The most effective way of providing access to jobs and employment in a county as rural as Sierra County is to ensure that people have working automobiles. For this reason, a Basic Automobile Maintenance Class is recommended as a priority strategy. Another strategy is to increase the hours and frequency of public transit. Since transit is limited, two projects to create timed transfers—one in mid-Sierra County and one with Nevada County—are recommended. These strategies build upon existing services and may create a link that opens up more job opportunities. If a position of Mobility Manger is created, a key task could be to develop viable carpool programs. Such programs are a low-cost way to increase access to jobs and employment out of Sierra County.

Volunteer Transportation

No volunteer programs are currently in operation in Sierra County. Volunteer drivers could help provide supplemental transportation to the services provided by Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors, as well as rides for students after extracurricular activities.

Volunteer driver programs that include a mileage reimbursement to the driver are especially cost-effective. Therefore, the recommended high priority strategies include establishing such a program in Sierra County. However, there are some barriers to overcome:

- The budgetary implications of an increase in the reimbursement rate to 58.5 cents per mile, which recognizes the higher cost of fuel
- A concern over accident liability when an agency sponsors a volunteer driver program

Several successful volunteer driver programs are in place in neighboring Nevada County, including Telecare's Neighbor-to-Neighbor Volunteer program, the Veterans transportation program administered by the Department of Social Services in Truckee and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program coordinated by the Area 4 Agency on Aging. Telecare currently has six volunteer drivers who are reimbursed at 40 cents per mile. It is considering raising the reimbursement to 58.5 cents per mile in accordance with the new federal guidelines, which recognize the increased cost of fuel. One consideration, however, is the extra cost that Telecare's budget for the volunteer driver program would incur.

The issue of agency liability is frequently 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

As noted in Chapter 4, service to transport students to and from school is provided by contractors to the Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District, which serves all of Sierra County and the southern portion of Plumas County. However, there is only one bus leaving school each day directly after classes are over. A ridesharing program could help students stay later, for both extracurricular and supplemental academic support, and get a ride home with another student whose parent (or another trusted driver) is able to provide transportation. A rideshare program could be administered by an employee at the school, member of the PTA, or other individual who is entrusted to organize safe transportation for students.

Opportunities for Coordination

There may be opportunities to use school buses to transport the general public when the buses are running empty after dropping off students. Adult riders could then make their return trip when the bus travels to the school to pick up students at the end of the school day. Another option would be to institute a specific public transit route midday. The following discussion describes the state of combining school busing and public transit in California as well as some of the obstacles that might need to be overcome to implement this strategy.

Coordinating/Integrating School Bus and Public Transportation Services

In selected rural communities across the US, school districts are transporting students – particularly in high school – via the local/regional public transit system. In other rural areas, the general public is being transported 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. And, in other communities, the same private carrier that operates student transportation services also provides public transit and/or paratransit services under a separate contract. One of the issues surrounding the inability to serve rural communities with public transit is unpaved roads. This has not been an obstacle for school buses, however.

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 spite of these successes, the coordination/integration of student transportation and public transportation services is fraught with obstacles. These include legislative and institutional barriers; restricted funding requirements and reporting requirements; turfism; attitudes and perceptions about student safety; vehicle design, and operational issues.

Legislative Environment in California

In California, there are no state statutes or regulations that prohibit using school buses to transport non-pupils. Indeed, from the state perspective, the use of school buses and in particular the co-mingling 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 the local districts. In addition, 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 (CDE), 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. CDE staff is not aware of any instances in California where the general public is being transported along with students on home-to-school routes.

California Utility Vehicle

In response to the quandary regarding vehicle design (i.e., school buses are not designed to carry the general public, and transit buses are not designed for children), the CDE initiated in the late 1990s the development of an accessible hybrid utility vehicle merging currently available technology from both school bus and transit industry vehicles. The integrated passenger-school bus, known as the California Utility School Bus, is intended to meet the needs of the entire passenger transportation industry. Currently, the CDE uses the vehicle in its Bus Driver Instructor Training Program and takes it to educational conferences and industry trade shows. Interest in this vehicle has remained dormant for some time, but recently has increased because of the upswing in coordination planning. In future years, the CDE envisions the flexible Utility School Bus as a vehicle that can be used for the transportation of both students and the general public.

Program Administration

Effective program administration is a crucial factor in ensuring the ongoing success of a new program or project. As a first step, a project sponsor or lead agency needs to be designated to manage the project. The lead agency would most likely be responsible to:

- 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.

For each of the highest ranked strategies, a lead agency is suggested; however, in some cases numerous entities could serve in this capacity. Some strategies will require communication and coordination between two or more organizations, including agencies from outside Sierra County for some strategies, such as a timed transfer with Gold Country Stage in Nevada County. The lead agency should have the administrative, fiscal, and staffing resources needed to carry out the program on an on-going basis; successfully applying for grant funds is just the first step.

The specific lead agency for each strategy has been provided in the text above and summarized in Figure 7-1.

Decision Making Process

In addition to staff administering the program or service, a more formal decision making process will need to be in place to ensure effective program oversight. As noted in Chapter 1, the Sierra County Transportation Commission is designated as the RTPA. This organization will play a

lead role in overseeing the implementation of many of these strategies, since it is responsible to allocate and disburse state transportation funds, and will adopt the Coordinated Plan.

The SSTAC plays an active role and meets annually, or more often as needed, to discuss transportation issues and to advise the Transportation Commission. By definition, the SSTAC is comprised of a wide variety of stakeholders, including users of transit, and those representing older adults and persons with disabilities. The SSTAC will advise the Transportation Commission to provide ongoing program oversight as new services are considered and/or implemented.

At the same time, especially for a rural county such as Sierra, significant responsibility for decision making lies with small individual organizations. For example, the timed transfer between Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors will be an initiative determined by individual managers at each organization.

Guidelines for Transportation Provider Agreements and Service Standards

Part of Program Administration includes developing service agreements with transportation providers and following through and monitoring system performance. Suggested service agreements should include the following basic monthly and year-to-date operating and performance data, which are industry standards for dial-a-ride contracts:

- Revenue Hours
- Deadhead Hours (Non-Revenue Hours)
- Passengers (including a breakdown by category such as fare type, transfers, passes, etc)
- Passenger Fares
- Revenue Miles
- Deadhead Miles (Non-Revenue Miles)
- Operating Costs
- Cost/Passenger
- Cost/Hour
- Farebox Recovery Ratio (as applicable)
- On-Time Performance or Ride Time
- Accidents/Incidents/Passenger Complaints/Driver Issues
- Vehicle Issues
    - Road Calls
    - Out of service
    - Maintenance activities
    - Missed Runs or Service Denials.

Agencies are encouraged to develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating dial-a-ride services. While specific standards can vary depending on the service and operating environment, industry practice generally uses the standards to monitor efficiency, and service quality and reliability.

Efficiency standards use operational performance data to measure the performance of a dial-a-ride system.

Many rural agencies do not have the staff resources to collect and analyze a broad range of performance data. Therefore the recommended efficiency performance standards are limited to key indicators that will provide agencies with a good picture of how well service is doing. Recommended efficiency performance for dial-a-ride services include:

- Operating Cost per Passenger: Calculated by dividing all operating and administrative costs by total passengers (with passengers defined as unlinked trips).
- Operating Cost per Revenue Hour: Calculated by dividing all operating and administrative costs by the total number of vehicle revenue hours (with revenue hours defined as time when the vehicle is actually in passenger service).
- Revenue to Non-Revenue Hour Ratio: Non-revenue hours include deadheading between the garage and the location where the buses go in and out of scheduled service. This is a relevant measure due to the potential long-distance deadheading that occurs in rural counties. Non-revenue hours can also include paid operator time before and at the end of their shift (vehicle checks, sign in time and time spent refueling buses etc.) and the time to deliver replacement buses when a bus is taken out of service because of an accident or breakdown. Note that revenue to non-revenue hour measurement is difficult to apply to contracted services because contractors are not normally required to track non-revenue hours of operation.
- Passengers per Revenue Hour: Calculated by dividing the total number of passengers (unlinked trips) by the total number of vehicle revenue hours. The number of passengers per hour is a good measure of service productivity.
- Farebox Recovery Ratio: Calculated by dividing all farebox revenue by total operating and administrative costs. Farebox recovery evaluates both system efficiency (through operating costs) and productivity (through boardings). Farebox recovery ratio benchmarks are critical to the establishment of passengers per revenue hour benchmarks and benchmarks for design standards.

Dial-a-ride services also measure and monitor **reliability standards**. Recommended reliability standards for dial-a-ride services include:

- On-Time Performance: Dial-a-ride service should pick up passengers within the policy pick-up window established for the service.
- Passenger Complaints/Passengers Carried: Requires the systematic recording of passenger complaints.
- Preventable Accidents/Revenue Mile Operated: Operator training efforts should increase as the number of preventable accidents increases. While there should be no preventable

accidents, a benchmark should be established to permit some flexibility in the evaluation of training efforts.

- Road Calls/Revenue Mile Operated: 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.

Summary and Next Steps

The initial impetus for this plan is to meet federal requirements in order to apply for SAFTEA-LU funds: Section 5310, JARC, and New Freedom programs. However, the plan can be much more than a supporting document for funds. It can be a blueprint for programs and projects that will increase the mobility of older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals. By increasing mobility for these targeted populations, the mobility of all Sierra County residents will be increased as well. Many of the strategies are modest in cost but high in positive impacts.

Community leaders and citizens who participated in the development of this Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan can use it to take transportation in the county to a new level. It can be a basis for greater communication and coordination between the transportation profession and the social service profession. To do that, the plan should be adopted by the Sierra County Transportation Commission and disseminated widely among the stakeholders who have been involved. A Next Step after adoption should be to reconvene the stakeholders and identify those who have the willingness and capacity to move the implementation of the strategies forward. With continued focus on the issues and solutions raised in this plan, the citizens of Sierra County will surely benefit.

APPENDIX A

MAPPING METHODOLOGY

Appendix A. Methodology for Demographic Maps

This section presents the methodology of demographic analysis conducted for the demographic maps included in this chapter. Population/Employment Matrix and Transit Dependency Index were created to present existing demographic components and transportation needs of the study area.

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		

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 some number 3 through 15. Block-groups with higher index values have greater concentrations of seniors, people with disabilities and/or low-income population.

One limitation of this analysis is that rural counties tend to have a small number of block-groups. For example, Alpine County contains only 2 block-groups, while El Dorado County has 123 block-groups. The average number of block groups for the studied twenty-three counties is 39.

APPENDIX B

PUBLIC WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

Appendix B. Public Workshop Attendees

December 20, 2007 Downieville, CA		
Name	Organization	Locale
Gary Shelton	Sierra County Transportation Commission	City of Loyalton
Jennifer Hood	Sierra County Transportation Commission	City of Loyalton
Marianne Moore	Sierra County Transportation Commission	City of Loyalton
Russ Skustad, Transportation Director	Incorporated Senior Citizens City of Loyalton	City of Loyalton
Will Schilling, Planner	Caltrans District 3 Planning	
Bryan Davey, Transportation Planner	Sierra County	
Miriam Dines, Executive Secretary	Sierra County Transportation Commission	
Arlene Monjar, President	Golden Rays Seniors	Downieville
Cindy Osborn, Administrator	Western Sierra Residential Center	Downieville
Mark Lang, Executive Director	Western Sierra Medical Center	Downieville
Peter Huebner, Sierra County Board of Supervisors	Member of Sierra County Transportation Commission	
Tim Beals, Director of Transportation	Sierra County Department of Transportation	
Darrel Huckabay, MGE Engineering		

May 29, 2008 Loyalton, CA	
Name	**Representing**
Miriam Dines	Sierra County Staff
Gary Shelton	Loyalton, Member City Council, Member SCTC
Peter W Huebner	Sierra County Supervisor District 2, Member SCTC
Dave Goicoechea	Loyalton Sierra County Supervisor Elect, District 4
Kathleen Goicoechea	Loyalton, Community
Sandra Bighaus	Loyalton City Council and SCTC
Martha Laceritser	Loyalton, Community
Don Copeland	Loyalton, Community
Pat Whitley	Chairman of the Board of Supervisors (Supervisor District 5); Member SCTC
Charlie Foster	Loyalton, Community
Jo Pearcy	Loyalton, Community
Ronald Cowser T	Loyalton, Community
Tami Thompson	Loyalton, Community
Janice Stafford	Sierra County Human Services
Bryan Davey	Sierra County Staff, SCTC Staff
Russ Skustad	Loyalton, President of Incorporated Senior Citizens
Bryan Davey, Transportation Planner	Sierra County Staff

May 29, 2008 Downieville, CA	
Name	**Organization**
Miriam Dines	SCTC
Bryan Davey	SCTC
Cindy Osborn	GRS Transportation
Arlene Monjar	Golden Rays services
Frank J. Lang	WSMC
Pete Villarral	Retired
Andy Carpenter	*not given*
Doris Carpenter	*not given*

APPENDIX C

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Appendix C. Sierra County Interviews and Survey Respondents[1]

In-Person Interviews	
Arlene Monjar	Interim Transportation Administrator and President Golden Rays Seniors
Cindy Osborn	Board Member, Golden Rays Seniors and Administrator, Western Sierra Residential Center
Phone Interviews and/or Email Surveys	
Mike Hudson	Mayor, City of Loyalton
Melody Graves	Program Coordinator, Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Sierra County Health and Human Services
Bernie Stringer	Pastor, Downieville Assembly of God
Penny Berry	Principal, Loyalton Elementary School

[1] These individuals were interviewed or surveyed while preparing the Existing Conditions Report.

APPENDIX D

FLYERS PUBLISHED FOR PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Appendix D. Flyers Published for Public Workshops

Coordinated Transportation Plan
For Seniors, People with Disabilities and Low-Income Residents of Sample County

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND ONE OF TWO WORKSHOPS:

LOYALTON — **Thursday, May 29, 2008, 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM**
Senior Center, Loyalton

DOWNIEVILLE — **Thursday, May 29, 2008, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM**
Downieville Community Hall, Downieville

Help to shape the future of transportation for seniors, people with disabilities and low-income Sierra County residents.

- Learn about ongoing Human Service-Public Transportation Coordination Plan.
- Provide input about community transportation needs and priorities.
- Share your opinion about options.
- Recommend strategies to improve regional mobility.
- Find out about federal transportation funds that may be available to agencies in Sierra County.

Who should attend?

- Human Service Agency Representatives
- Elected Officials
- Transit Staff
- Bus Riders
- Community Residents

For More Information Contact
Bryan Davey
Sierra County Local Transportation Commission
530-289-3201
bdavey@sierracounty.ws

Contact the Sierra County Transportation Commission at least three business days prior to workshop to request language interpretation assistance or alternative information formats at the workshop.

SIERRA COUNTY CALIFORNIA 1852

Caltrans
Division of Mass Transportation

Public Asked to Share Ideas to Improve Transportation Services for Sierra County Older Adults, People with Disabilities and Low-Income Residents

Sierra County Human Service-Public Transportation Coordination Plan
Community Workshops

Loyalton	**Thursday, May 29, 2008, 12:00 PM to 2:00 p.m.** Senior Center, 302 First Street, Loyalton
Downieville	**Thursday, May 29, 2008 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM** Downieville Community Hall, Downieville

Lunch may be purchased at the Senior Center, Contact the Senior Center at 993-4770 for lunch reservation; Refreshments will be provided at the Downieville Meeting

The Sierra County Transportation Commission, in cooperation with Caltrans, is sponsoring transportation workshops for Sierra County organizations and residents. Project planners invite organizations and residents to discuss strategies to improve transportation services for low-income residents, as well as seniors and people with disabilities.

The workshops are being held as part of the Sierra County Human Service-Public Transportation Coordination Plan. Sponsored by Caltrans, the Plan's goal is to improve mobility for county residents through better coordination of services among transportation providers and human service agencies in Sierra County. The Plan will address transportation improvements so residents can get to medical appointments, classes, day care and jobs. The Coordination Plan will also identify transportation services needed to help people run errands and go shopping, as well as connect to other transportation services, like Amtrak.

Each workshop is scheduled to last up to two hours. Planners will share results of recent meetings, surveys and data analysis. Workshop participants will be asked to help prioritize transportation needs and strategies. Several exercises are planned so community members can explore different ways to improve local transportation services.

For agencies seeking federal transportation funds, information will 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).

The Human Service-Public Transportation Coordination Plan is a required document for local organizations and the Transit Agency to apply for certain types of federal funds. These dollars can be used to add new transit service, replace buses or purchase new equipment like bus shelters or dispatch software.

The workshops will allow planners to develop transportation strategies based on community priorities.

Caltrans commissioned the Human Service-Public Transportation Coordination Plan on behalf of the Sierra County Transportation Commission to find transportation needs and gaps, and define opportunities for better coordination. An Existing Conditions Report was prepared in March 2008, which provides findings from interviews with planners, community representatives and political leaders; an analysis of community demographics and transportation data; and a review of regional issues.

For more information about the Sierra County Human Service-Public Transportation Coordination Plan and the community workshops, please call Bryan Davey at the Sierra County Local Transportation Commission, 530-289-3201.

APPENDIX E

DRIVER TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

Appendix E. Consolidated Driver Training Programs

The safety of passengers, whether they are riding in a bus, paratransit vehicle, van or personal car, rests in the hands of the driver. Driver training is a key component of transportation services; however, in California, training requirements vary depending on the type of vehicle operated. Consolidated programs that coordinate this effort have the potential to provide a more efficient, cost effective method of driver training, and can also enhance driver awareness and passenger safety.

In California, the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Program was enacted to improve traffic safety on state roadways. As a result, California has developed licensing and testing requirements for drivers of commercial vehicles that equals or exceeds federal standards. The State defines "commercial vehicle" to include any vehicle that is designed, used or maintained to carry more than 10 passengers, including the driver, for hire or profit, or that is used by any nonprofit organization or group. In order to operate a commercial vehicle in California, the driver must obtain a commercial drivers license (CDL).

Basic Requirements for a Commercial Drivers License

To receive a California Commercial Drivers License, applicants must:

- Be 18 years old or older and not engaged in interstate commerce activities; or be 21 years old or older to engage in interstate commerce activities
- Be a resident of the State of California
- Submit a completed CDL application
- Pass a drug and alcohol screening test
- Pass a physical exam and submit an approved medical form completed by an approved medical practitioner
- Pass a vision test
- Pass a knowledge (law) test
- Pass a performance (pre-trip and driving) test

Specific basic and ongoing training requirements, as well as the class of license and type of endorsement, are triggered by the type of vehicle to be operated. These are detailed in Figure 1.

Figure 1 California Special Drivers License Requirement

Vehicle Type	Maximum Passenger & Driver	License Required	Endorsement Required	Original Training	Renewal Training (Annual)	Testing Required
Car, Minivan		Class C "regular" drivers license	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Paratransit Vehicle	10	Class C "regular" drivers license	N/A	4 hr Safe Operation 4 hr Special Transportation	4 hr Safe Operation 4 hr Special Transportation	N/A
Paratransit Vehicle	24	CDL[2] A or B	P[3]	4 hr Safe Operation 4 hr Special Transportation	4 hr Safe Operation 4 hr Special Transportation	Drug Medical Written Pre-trip BTW[4]
GPPV[5]	24	CDL A or B	P	12 hr classroom 8 hr Certified Defensive Driving 20 hr BTW	2 hr refresher training	Drug Medical Written Pre-trip BTW
Transit VTT[6]		CDL A or B	P	15 hr classroom 20 hr BTW	8 hr per training period (classroom/BTW)	Drug Medical Written
School Bus		CDL A or B	P, S[7]	20 hr classroom 20 hr BTW	10 hr (Classroom.BTW)	Drug Medical Written First Aid (written) Pre-trip BTW
School Pupil Activity Bus		CDL A or B	P	15 hr classroom 20 hr BTW	10 hr (Classroom/BTW)	Drug Medical Written Pre-trip BTW

[2] Commercial Drivers License
[3] Passenger Endorsement
[4] Behind the Wheel
[5] General Public Passenger Vehicle (operated by a public transit agency not a nonprofit agency
[6] Verification of Transit Training
[7] School Bus Endorsement

As illustrated by Figure 1, the required number of hours for original training for drivers varies from eight hours (paratransit vehicle) to 40 hours (school bus, GPPV). Renewal training requirements differ as well, ranging from two to ten hours per year. Volunteer drivers using cars or minivans are not required to participate in any training, although many agencies recommend defensive driver classes for their volunteers.

Often, small organizations in rural communities do not have certified driver trainers on staff and are unable to provide on-site training. New employees are required to have their CDL upon hire, which can mean lengthy trips to certified training/testing locations. Available training in other subject areas may also be limited.

Agencies with a large driver staff and high turnover often offer initial training classes on an ongoing basis (e.g., monthly or quarterly)., Rural agencies tend to provide classes on an as needed basis when filling a specific vacancy, in some cases as infrequently as once every two years. This type of scheduling can make it difficult to coordinate with other organizations that need to respond quickly to employment needs. Opportunities could be available, however, to coordinate renewal training by preparing an annual schedule of classes in which all interested parties may participate.

A consolidated program could be implemented in rural areas that would meet the highest level of training requirements for driver education and thus would satisfy needs for all classes of licenses and endorsements. However, it is likely that small agencies whose drivers only need eight hours of training would be reluctant to participate in a longer and thus more expensive program.

Variations in licenses, endorsements, and training for drivers necessitate a well designed approach if consolidated training is to be effective. The CTSA could provide the leadership to achieve such coordination in both initial operator training and renewal training. Course content and scheduling are paramount issues to be resolved if public transit, private and nonprofit agencies are to benefit.