

Transit Study for the City of Rio Vista

Final Report

U R B I T R A N **R** E P O R T



Submitted to

City of Rio Vista

Submitted by

Urbitran Associates, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

Providing effective public transportation in a rural area is a challenge faced by communities across the country. It is particularly difficult because origins and destinations are often dispersed, institutions to support and promote the service are often undeveloped, and limited funding restricts how much service can be provided.

In spite of these challenges, the City of Rio Vista has offered its residents a valuable service in the form of Rio Vista Transit, a demand responsive, door-to-door transit service. While it has been a vital service for those who use it, Rio Vista also acknowledges the challenges it faces in providing transit service as the city grows. Therefore the city initiated this project to:

- Maintain the system's favorable community awareness,
- Ensure that the transit system is in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations,
- Establish attainable goals and procedures to meet them, and
- Analyze the changing needs and environment of Rio Vista and recommend ways in which Rio Vista Transit can meet them.

To achieve these goals the city solicited the services of Urbitran Associates, a transportation planning and engineering firm, to complete a transit study. As such, the study is organized in the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1** describes how Rio Vista Transit currently operates – what the environment is like, how trips are scheduled and completed, and what facilities are used.
- **Chapter 2** presents the relevant state and federal laws which control how Rio Vista Transit operates and identifies where it is and is not compliant.
- **Chapter 3** evaluates the transit system's performance. Included are a review of ridership trends and trip characteristics, financial performance, and vehicle utilization.
- **Chapter 4** presents elements of a performance measurement system that will help Rio Vista Transit to monitor and evaluate its performance on an ongoing basis.
- **Chapter 5** explains the process and findings of the public outreach for the study and reviews existing policies for the transit system.
- **Chapter 6** introduces relevant findings from other transportation studies in the region that could impact how public transportation is provided in Rio Vista. This chapter also describes the range of other transportation services that are available to residents of Rio Vista.
- **Chapter 7** suggests recommendations that Rio Vista can implement to achieve the project's goals.

CHAPTER 1

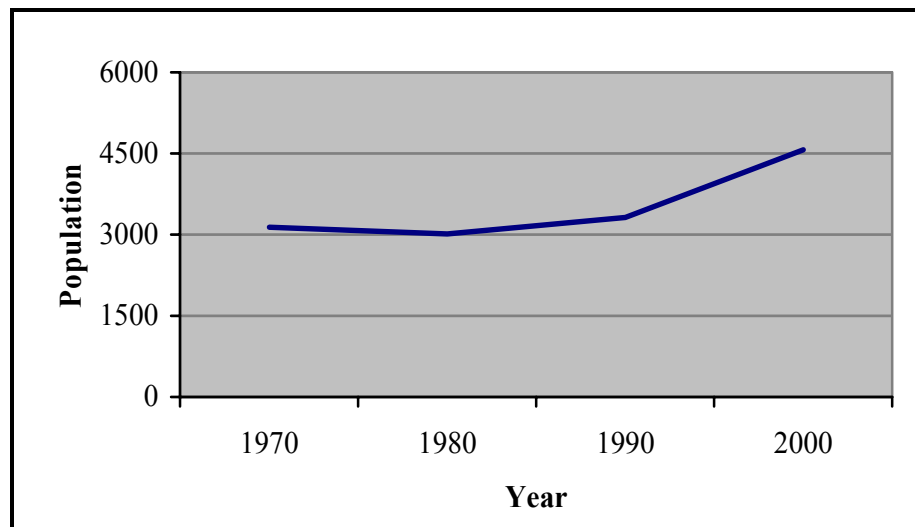
OVERVIEW OF RIO VISTA TRANSIT

This chapter provides a brief overview of the transit services provided by the City of Rio Vista.

1.1 Service Area

The City of Rio Vista is a community of 6,275 people (as of January 1, 2004)¹ in southeastern Solano County, along the Sacramento River delta. In spite of its small size, Rio Vista is the fastest growing community in Solano County and Solano County is one of the fastest growing counties in the Bay Area. As shown in Figure 1-1, Rio Vista's population was fairly stable around 3,100 residents between 1970 and 1990, but started to grow dramatically since then. For example, the city's population has already increased 37 percent since the 2000 census. A median household income of \$46,500² and moderate housing costs make Rio Vista an oasis of affordability in an increasingly expensive region. With 780 acres of land zoned for industrial development and another 70 acres for commercial development, Rio Vista is also ready to accommodate non-residential growth as well. Currently, employment is focused in manufacturing, construction and engineering, and the service industry.

Figure 1-1 Rio Vista Population, 1970 -2000



Source: CA Department of Finance

Located on the Sacramento River between San Francisco (45 miles away) and Sacramento (35 miles away), Rio Vista has served as an important gateway for goods and people traveling between the two cities since its founding in 1893. Locally, fishing has played an integral role in commerce and recreation, from providing fresh fish and canned salmon to San Francisco back in the time of the Gold Rush to hosting the popular Bass Festival every October. In addition to superb fishing opportunities, water-based recreation abounds on the delta and in Rio Vista.

¹ Source: California Department of Finance, "City/County Population Estimates with Annual Percent Change." (www.dof.ca.gov)

² Source: <http://www.riovista.org/econprofile.asp>

Rio Vista Transit provides service throughout the City of Rio Vista in addition to making trips to the communities of Fairfield, Vacaville, Antioch, Walnut Grove, Isleton, Lodi and Stockton. Many of these communities have transit service of their own, but they do not serve Rio Vista. Additional information on other transit systems in the region is presented in section 6.2. After a long period of relatively stable population, Rio Vista’s current and projected population growth are expected to increase the demand for transit service.

1.2 Service Description

Rio Vista Transit currently operates general public demand responsive service during the week from approximately 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM using only one vehicle. City staff operates and administers the service. Rio Vista Transit provides service to different destinations throughout the course of the week, although all trips must originate from within the City of Rio Vista. Table 1-1 summarizes the services provided by Rio Vista Transit and their associated fares while Figure 1-2 depicts the service area.

Table 1-1 Rio Vista Transit Schedule and Fares

Day	City	Fare
Monday	Isleton/Antioch/Walnut Grove	\$2.00/\$5.00/\$5.00
Tuesday	Lodi/Stockton	\$6.00/\$7.00
Wednesday	In-city	\$1.00 + 25¢/stop
Thursday	Lodi/Stockton	\$6.00/\$7.00
Friday	Fairfield/Vacaville	\$6.00/\$7.00

Figure 1-2 Rio Vista Transit Service Area



How trips are provided on a daily basis varies somewhat on which city(ies) are being served and passenger needs. The general practice is that all Rio Vista passengers are collected in the morning and then dropped off at their destination. The driver waits in the destination city while the passengers attend to their business and then at a predetermined time, the driver recollects all of the passengers within the destination city and returns them to Rio Vista. Departure times to and from Rio Vista are chosen to best meet the needs of the majority of passengers and in most cases, a trip out of Rio Vista does not exceed five hours. On days when service is only planned for Rio Vista, trips times are much more flexible as the service functions more like a typical, demand responsive service.

Depending on the specific departure time from and return to Rio Vista, there may also be adequate time to complete local trips when it is requested. Often these local, Rio Vista trips will take place prior to picking up passengers for travel to another city, or after they have returned. It is less common to see the vehicle return from another city to complete a local trip and then return to the other city to pick up passengers. However, for closer locations such as Antioch, this is possible and happens occasionally. Regional *and* local trips are made on roughly 10% of the service days.

Currently Rio Vista Transit does not accept any subscription trips – that is, passengers must call to schedule each trip, even if the same trip is repeated regularly.

1.3 Vehicle Fleet

Rio Vista Transit’s vehicle revenue fleet consists of three (3) vehicles: two (2) minibuses and one (1) van. Table 1-2 lists Rio Vista Transit’s fleet roster.

Table 1-2 Rio Vista Transit Vehicle Fleet Inventory

Year Mfg.	Make/Model	Number of Seats	License	Fleet Status	Meet ADA requirements?	Mileage (6-27-03)
2001	Chevrolet Minibus	10	1101825	Active	Yes	25,207
1994	Ford Minibus	10	438761	Reserve	Yes	129,949
1986	Ford Van	8	069000	Obsolete	No	10,589

1.4 Facilities

Rio Vista Transit operates out of several different facilities. Vehicles are stored and serviced at the City Corporation Yard located at 789 Saint Francis Way. The transit system also has an office staffed by the transit operator at 35 Main Street. When the transit operator is not on the road, this office is utilized for scheduling transit trips. Lastly, the Director of Public Works and the Director of Finance, who oversee parts of the transit system, are located in City Hall at One Main Street.

CHAPTER 2

STATE AND FEDERAL COMPLIANCE

This section provides a summary of Rio Vista Transit’s compliance with relevant state and federal codes and regulations.

2.1 Private Sector Participation

[49 U.S.C. 5323(a)(1)]: Subrecipients must ensure that private transportation companies have been given the maximum extent feasible opportunity to participate in the planning of FTA-funded projects.

Rio Vista Transit has received FTA funding for capital expenses and the city of Rio Vista is currently developing a comprehensive purchasing policy. When procuring vehicles (through lease or purchase), Rio Vista must release a “Request for Proposals” and allow all interested private parties to submit proposals to provide the requested vehicles. During planning efforts, notices should be sent to private transportation providers giving them an opportunity to provide feedback on future plans.

2.2 Buy America

[FTA regulations, 49 CFR Parts 660 and 661, and any amendments thereto]: Per Buy America law, Federal funds may not be obligated unless steel, iron and manufactured products used in FTA-funded projects are produced in the United States, unless a waiver has been granted by FTA.

In compliance with the Buy America legislation, U.S. companies manufactured all Rio Vista Transit vehicles.

2.3 Safety

[Section 5329 of the USC]: FTA may withhold further financial assistance from any recipient who fails to correct any condition which FTA believes "creates a serious hazard of death or injury.

Rio Vista Transit maintains a relatively clean safety record and prioritizes preventive maintenance to ensure that the transit vehicles are always in good condition.

2.4 Drug and Alcohol Requirements

[49 CFR Parts 29, 40, 653, 654]

The City of Rio Vista has a drug-free workplace policy that was last updated in April of 2000.

2.5 Commercial Driver's License (CDL), Certificates, and Endorsements

[49 CFR Part 383 and California Vehicle Code §12523.5, 15275, and 15278]: Federal regulations require all drivers of vehicles designed to transport more than 15 persons (including the driver) to have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). California legislation requires drivers transporting more than ten (10) passengers (including the driver) to have a CDL. In addition, federal law requires a General Public Paratransit Vehicle Certificate (GPPV) for any person who drives a vehicle which carries not more than 24 persons including the driver and provides local transportation to the general public and a Passenger Transportation (PV) endorsement.

Historically, Rio Vista Transit has not required the transit operator to have a CDL. However, this has changed recently as the transit system became aware of the DMV requirements. The GPPV certificate is issued through the California Highway Patrol (CHP) following fingerprinting and a criminal background check, while the passenger endorsement is issued by the California Department of Motor Vehicles after a review of the applicant's driving record and the applicant passing knowledge and skills tests. Currently, the city mechanic and back-up drivers have their CDL and the transit operator is in the process of applying for one. Of the three drivers, the backup drivers have the requisite GPPV certificate and PV endorsement and the regular operator is in the process of applying for them.

2.6 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 provide that no entity shall discriminate against an individual with a disability in connection with the provision of service. The law sets forth specific requirements for vehicle and facility accessibility and the provision of service. Each public entity operating a fixed route system must provide paratransit or other special service to individuals with disabilities that is comparable to the level of service provided to individuals without disabilities who use the fixed route system.

Rio Vista Transit does not provide fixed route service and is therefore not required to provide comparable service to persons with disabilities. However, the general public dial-a-ride service must be accessible to persons with disabilities. Rio Vista Transit vehicles are wheelchair accessible, but the transit system does not have a telecommunications device or a TDD telephone service for deaf persons.

2.7 Disadvantaged Business Enterprise

[49 CFR Part 23, as amended]

The City of Rio Vista has a DBE program, although it is in need of updating for streets and roads contracts.

2.8 Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

The state and subrecipients must ensure that no person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age or disability be excluded from participating in, denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any project, program, or activity funded in whole or in part through FTA programs.

The City of Rio Vista's personnel department is responsible for ensuring full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. The City has not had any civil rights complaints in the past year.

2.9 Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

[Objectives are detailed in FTA Circular 4704.1]: FTA subrecipients must ensure that they comply with the following requirements of EEO: 1) to not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age or handicap, 2) to take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed and that employees are treated during employment without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, sex or age, 3) to post in conspicuous places and make available to employees and applicants for employment notices setting forth an EEO policy.

The City of Rio Vista does have EEO policy posted in the lunchroom at City Hall, although Rio Vista Transit does not always include an EEO statement when advertising open positions.

2.10 Incidental Use of Vehicles

[FTA C. 9040.1E]: Incidental use of Section 5311 funded vehicles for non-passenger transportation on an occasional or regular basis must not result in a reduction of service quality or availability of public transit service.

The only non-passenger transport using the transit vehicles occurs on Thanksgiving and Christmas, which are holidays for the transit system.

2.11 Transportation Development Act (TDA) Requirements

TDA contains a series of rules and regulations that apply to entities receiving Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and State Transit Assistance (STA) monies. Compliance with applicable provisions of TDA and the rules and regulations of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) [California CR Title 21, Chapter 3, Article 5.5, Section 6667] have been verified in audits of the City of Rio Vista's Transportation Fund. According to the audit, completed by Damore, Hamric & Schneider, Inc. (November 2002), Rio Vista was in compliance with the applicable statutes, rules, and regulations of TDA and the applicable allocation instructions and resolutions of MTC as of the end of fiscal year June 30, 2002.

2.12 Non-TDA Requirements

[CA PUC Division 10, Part 11, Chapter 3, Section 99155, 99155.5]: California transit operators who offer reduced fares to seniors must also offer reduced fares to handicapped persons, disabled persons, and disabled veterans. In addition, operators must accept federal Medicare identification cards, senior citizen identification cards, and current identification cards for other transit operators as valid identification of the purposes of the reduced fare. Operators may not require that passengers be a resident of their service area in order to qualify for service.

Operators providing service to individuals with disabilities shall provide service without regard to whether a member of the potential passenger's household owns a motor vehicle or where they live and shall provide service on the same terms and cost that is provided to other persons residing within the service area of the provider.

Rio Vista Transit does not offer reduced fares to seniors, which means that it does not need to comply with the regulations stipulated by PUC Division 10, Part 11, Chapter 3, Section 99155 (a) – (e). Rio Vista Transit complies with subsection (f) of this regulation, as it does not require that passengers be a resident of their service area. The system also complies with section 99155.5 because its service is accessible to persons with disabilities, regardless of whether they live in a household in which there is a motor vehicle and the service is provided on the same terms and at the same price as service to other persons residing in the service area.

[CA Vehicle Code Division 2, Chapter 1 Article 3, Section 1808.1]: Employer Pull Notice (EPN) Program – employers of transit drivers must obtain a driver's current (within 30 days prior to employment) public record and then review, sign, date and store it. Employers must also participate in the pull notice system, which notifies the employer if a driver receives any convictions, accidents, license suspensions or other actions taken against the driving privilege or certificate of employed drivers. Employers shall obtain periodic reports from the DMV at least every six months, review the report to verify that each employee's driver's license has not been suspended or revoked, the employee's traffic violation point count, and whether the employee has been convicted of a violation of Section 23152 or 23153. After the review reports should be signed, dated, and maintained at the employer's principal place of business.

Currently, Rio Vista Transit does participate in the EPN program and has copies of each driver's driving record in their office. The periodic reports are reviewed to confirm that each driver is still eligible to drive a general-purpose paratransit vehicle.

CHAPTER 3

OPERATIONAL REVIEW

This chapter reviews various aspects of Rio Vista’s transit system, including information on its operating and financial performance.

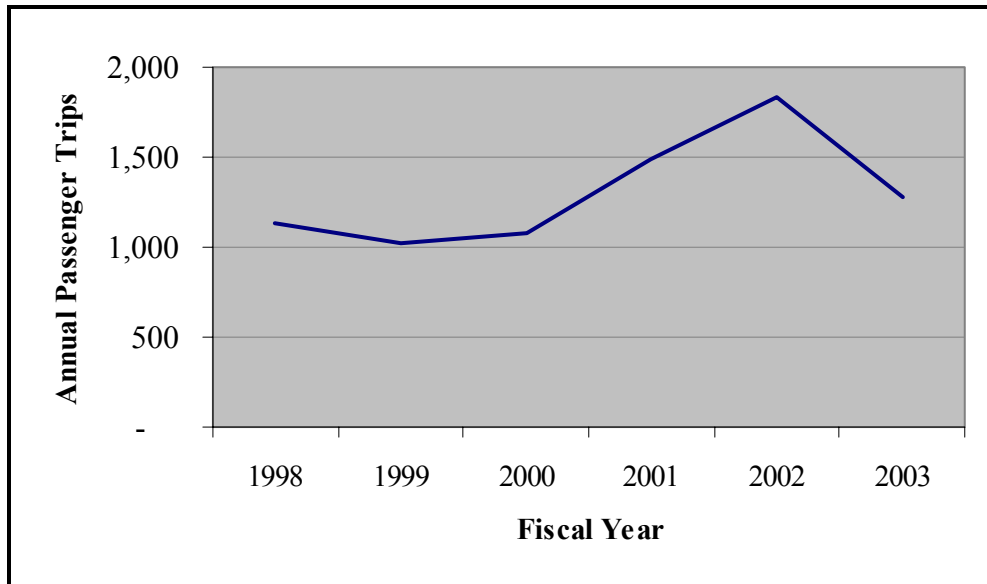
3.1 Operating Performance

Rio Vista Transit maintains daily passenger logs that track passenger names, fares paid, trip purpose, and trip destination. Although the data are not always complete, this information is useful to establish trends in ridership and trip characteristics. This section gives a general overview of the system’s operating performance in the recent past and provides more specific information for Fiscal Year 2003 (July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003).

3.1.1 Ridership Trends

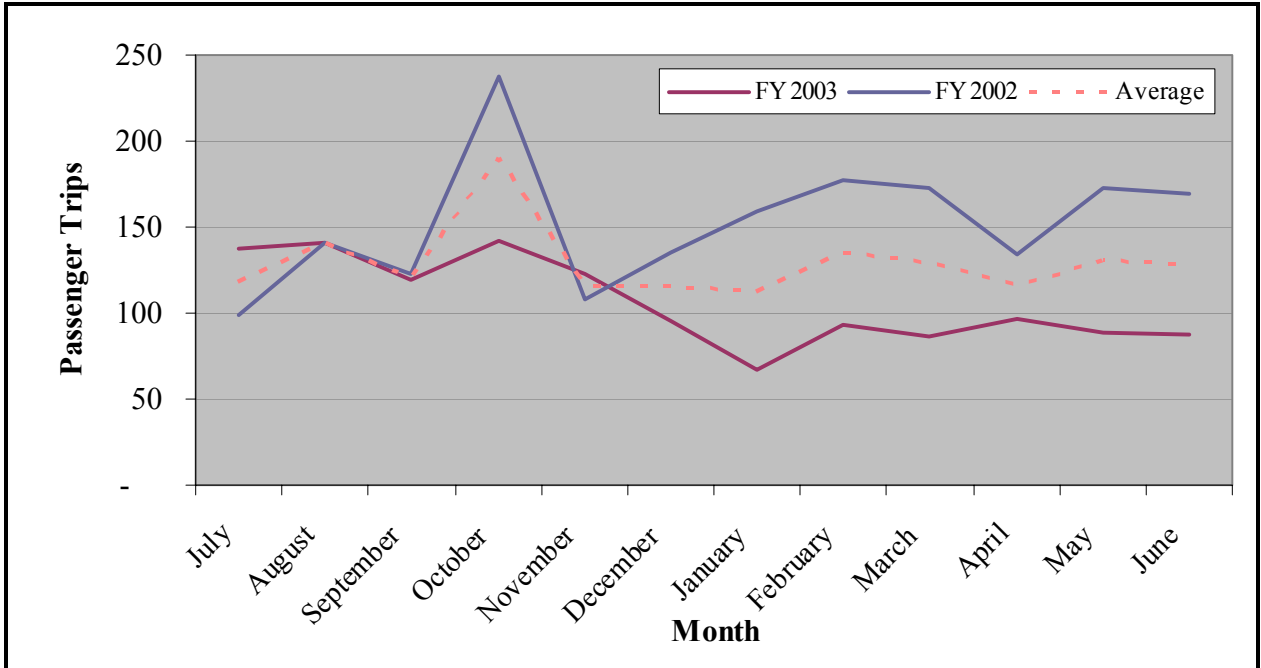
As shown in Figure 3-1, ridership has generally been increasing over the past six years. Ridership peaked in FY 2002 with just over 1,800 passenger trips, but decreased significantly (30%) in FY 2003. In spite of this recent decrease, the trend in ridership remains positive. The drop in ridership in FY 2003 is consistent with the experiences of other transit agencies throughout the Bay Area and is likely the result of the struggling economy.

Figure 3-1 Annual Passenger Trips, FY 1998 - 2003



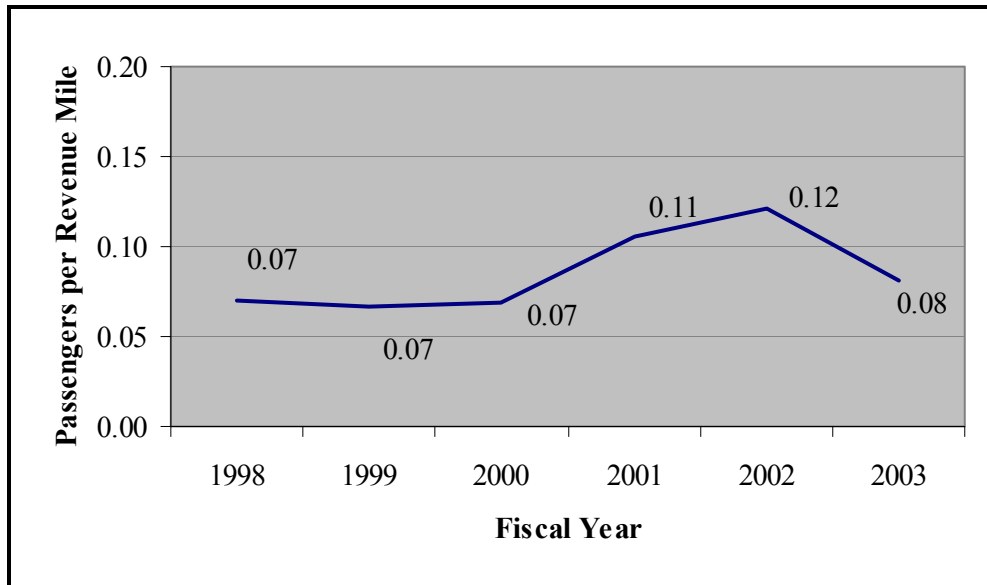
A cursory review of monthly ridership data shows the absence of seasonal trends. As illustrated by the “Average” ridership trend in Figure 3-2, monthly ridership is fairly constant throughout the year with the exception of a moderate peak in October.

Figure 3-2 Monthly Passenger Trips, FY 2002 & FY 2003



Because Rio Vista operates as a dial-a-ride service to regional destinations, it is also helpful to review data on the number of passengers per revenue-mile. This provides insight into system productivity and the effect of trip lengths. Overall Rio Vista's rates for passengers per revenue mile are quite low, reflecting low ridership levels and long trip lengths. Figure 3-3 shows how the metric of passengers per revenue mile has evolved over the past six years. The system experienced an increase in passengers per revenue mile in FY 2001 and 2002, reflecting the increase in ridership and an increase in the proportion of shorter trips.

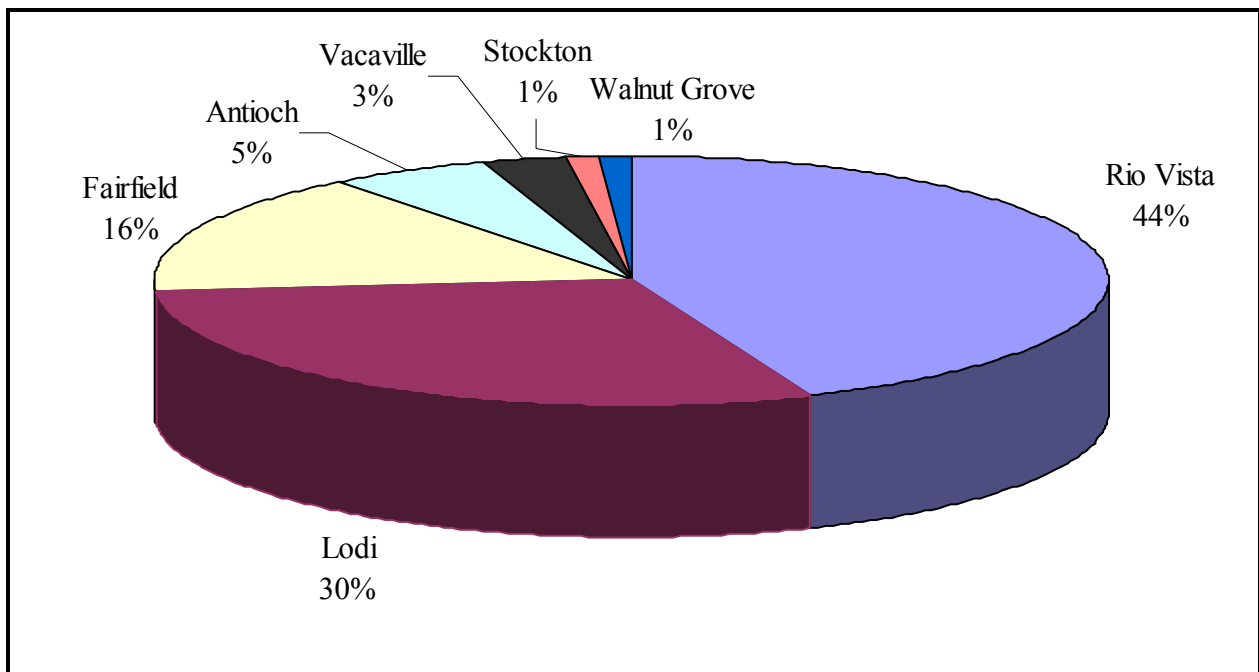
Figure 3-3 Passengers per Revenue Mile, FY 1998 - 2003



3.1.2 Service Coverage & Trip Destinations

As cited in Chapter 1, Rio Vista Transit provides service to eight communities including Rio Vista. Evaluating where most passengers are traveling to and from will help Rio Vista determine if it is effectively matching the supply of transit service with the demand for it. Of course, it is also necessary to ask non-users where the transit system would need to go in order for them to use it. This information has been collected through the public outreach component of this study and will be discussed later in this report. Figure 3-4 shows what proportion of total trips were made to each destination in FY 2003. The most common destinations in the previous fiscal year were within Rio Vista (44%), to Lodi (30%), and to Fairfield (16%). Each of the remaining destinations garnered 5% or fewer of the year's trips.

Figure 3-4 Trip Destinations, FY 2003



According to discussions with the drivers and members of the public, there are existing difficulties regarding the demand for service to Fairfield. One issue is that Rio Vista Transit only provides service to Fairfield on Fridays. As the county seat, many social service and government offices are housed in Fairfield. Unfortunately, some of those offices, such as the social security office, are not open on Fridays, which makes it challenging for some Rio Vista residents to access these services. Drivers also relayed that increasing demand has resulted in them having to deny some trip requests to Fairfield.

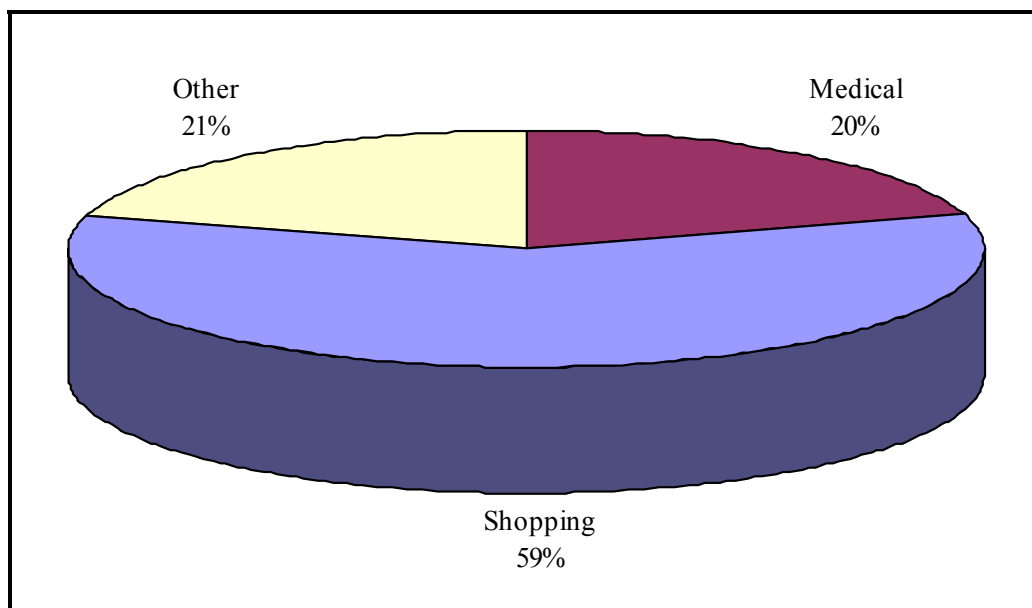
Another complaint heard from the public was that service is not provided late enough in the afternoon. The service is supposed to continue until 4:30 PM, but passengers have indicated that service is sometimes terminated by 2:00 PM. This comment was heard from multiple sources and has been documented in other reports, such as the *Solano County Senior & Disabled Transit Study (March 2004)*.

Finally, it is worth noting that the review of daily trip logs showed that trips within Rio Vista are provided on days other than those scheduled for local trips. This appears to be an informal policy of providing local trips whenever space and time is available.

3.1.3 Trip Purpose

Details on individuals' trip purpose were not always noted in the daily logs. However, the cases in which the trip purpose was given we have assumed those trip purposes to be representative of all trips. Based on this assumption, the most common trip purpose was for shopping which was given as the purpose for 59% of trips. As seen in Figure 3-5, "other" reasons were given for 21% of trips and the remaining 20% of trips were made for medical reasons. This distribution of trip purposes is indicative of the type of service currently provided by Rio Vista Transit.

Figure 3-5 Trip Purpose, FY 2003



3.1.4 Passenger Convenience

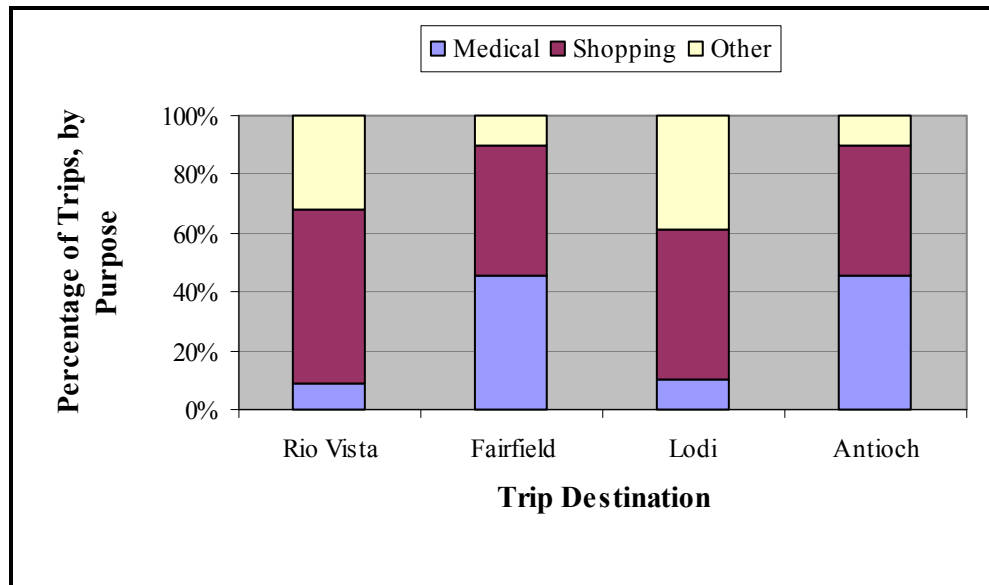
There are a variety of factors that contribute to passenger convenience, including: ease of making trip reservations, service schedule, and on-time performance. Currently passengers must make a trip reservation three days in advance. This is not particularly convenient for passengers. A more common policy among dial-a-ride providers is 24-hour advance notice. In addition to the need to schedule well in advance, no information is kept on whether passengers' desired pick-up times are being accommodated. Especially in cases of medical appointments, it is imperative that passengers be able to schedule their trip for a particular time of day.

As mentioned in section 3.1.2, the current schedule may not be meeting the needs of its passengers as well as it could. The best example of this is that certain services are closed on Fridays in Fairfield, but that is the only day that transit users can travel to Fairfield. Likewise, it is very possible that passengers would like to travel to cities on days other than those scheduled. Because there is no record of these requests, it is difficult to know if this is a serious issue for passengers.

In addition, Rio Vista Transit does not have any policies or data collected relating to on-time performance. Due to this fact it is impossible to determine whether passengers are being picked up within a reasonable timeframe. Adopting and following an on-time policy will allow passengers to have a higher degree of confidence in their ability to use transit for a particular trip. Often it is the uncertainty associated with travel times via transit that limits the number of people willing to use transit.

Finally, it is interesting to note how trip purpose varies for different destinations. Figure 3-6 illustrates the breakdown of trip purposes for the four most common destinations: Rio Vista, Lodi, Fairfield, and Antioch. Each destination has roughly the same proportion of shopping trips but the breakdown varies significantly according to the number of medical trips. Both Fairfield and Antioch have a high proportion of medical trips (around 45%), while Rio Vista and Lodi have more (30 - 40%) “other” trip purposes.

Figure 3-6 Trip Purpose by Destination, FY 2003



3.2 Financial Performance

In addition to reviewing information on the amount and characteristics of the service provided, it is essential to examine how much it costs to provide that service. The depressed regional economy and state budget crisis portend revenue reductions for the near future. In light of this, it is increasingly important to improve the efficiency of the existing transit service as much as possible.

3.2.1 Revenues & Expenses

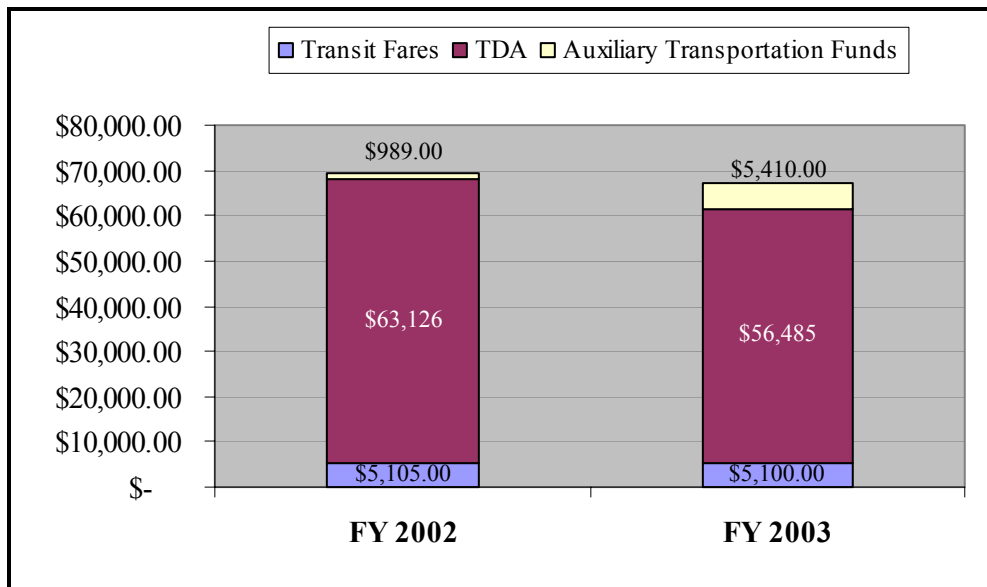
Due to the size and relative simplicity of Rio Vista Transit, there is minimal information to discuss relative to revenues and expenses. The system’s revenue sources include California’s Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 8, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311, fare revenues and auxiliary transportation revenue from the city of Rio Vista. Although the specific source of Rio Vista’s contribution (the “auxiliary transportation revenue”) is unclear, it is likely the general fund. TDA Article 8 funds are used for both operating and capital costs while FTA Section 5311 is used

exclusively for capital expenses. Fare revenues and funding from Rio Vista offset transit’s operating expenses.

As illustrated in Figure 3-7, operating revenues decreased slightly from FY 2002 to FY 2003 due to lower TDA funding, which is by far the largest revenue source for Rio Vista Transit. It is also worth noting that Rio Vista’s contribution increased significantly in FY 2003 from \$989 to \$5,410 in order to maintain a 10% farebox recovery ratio for the year, which is the minimum requirement under TDA for rural transit systems. Fare revenue was fairly consistent between the two years.

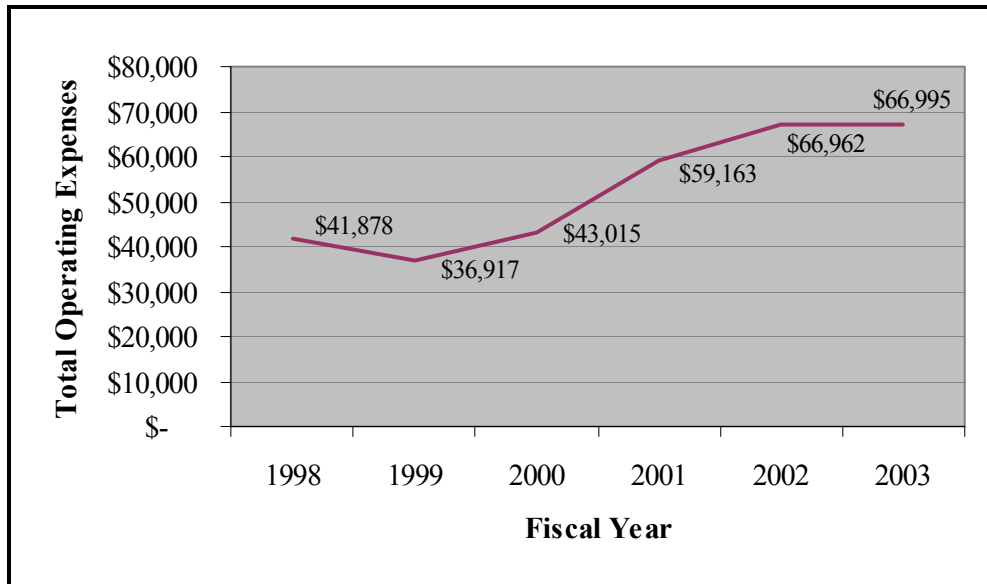
TDA funds are generated from ¼ ¢ of the state’s sales tax, making them susceptible to fluctuations in the economy. To decrease its reliance on TDA funds, Rio Vista would be well served to apply for alternative funding sources, such as FTA Section 5311 Operating Assistance.

Figure 3-7 Operating Revenues, FY 2002 & 2003



Operating expenses include such items as the operators’ salaries and benefits, administrative costs, maintenance, and insurance. Capital expenses include the purchase of new vehicles, which are funded in part by federal Section 5311 grants (80% of cost) and TDA Section 8 (20% local match). With the exception of FY 1999, Rio Vista Transit’s operating expenses have increased every year. The largest increase in expenses occurred in FY 2001 when they escalated by 38%. The trend in operating costs for the past six fiscal years is shown in Figure 3-8 and illustrates increases of roughly \$5,000 each year. Over this time period, the service hours have remained the same and a single vehicle has been in operation at any given time. Consequently, the cost increases are not due to a significant increase in service. Therefore, the most likely explanation is an increase in the cost of labor to provide the service.

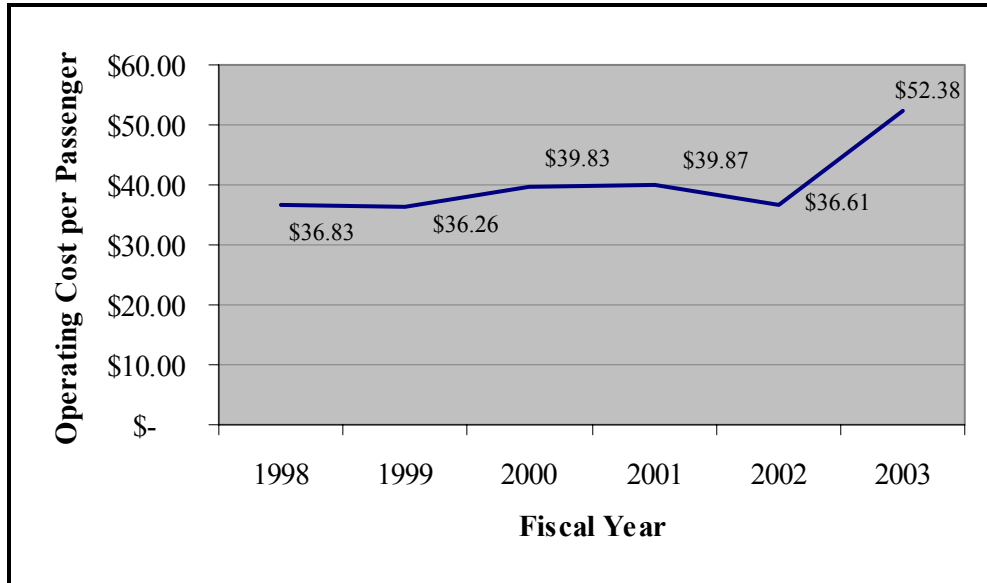
Figure 3-8 Operating Expenses, FY 1998 – 2003



Although detailed budget data for the past five years is not readily available, some level of detail was provided for FY 2002. In that year, roughly 73% of the transit system’s expenses were generated from operations and maintenance. Another 18% was spent on administration and the remaining 9% were depreciation expenses.

On a per passenger basis, operating costs have been fairly constant until last year (see Figure 3-9). In the late 1990's the average operating cost per passenger was around \$36. This increased to almost \$40 in 2000 and 2001, but went back to \$36 in 2002 when ridership increased. Last year's drop in ridership coupled with relatively constant expenses led to a dramatic increase of 43% in the cost per passenger (\$52.38).

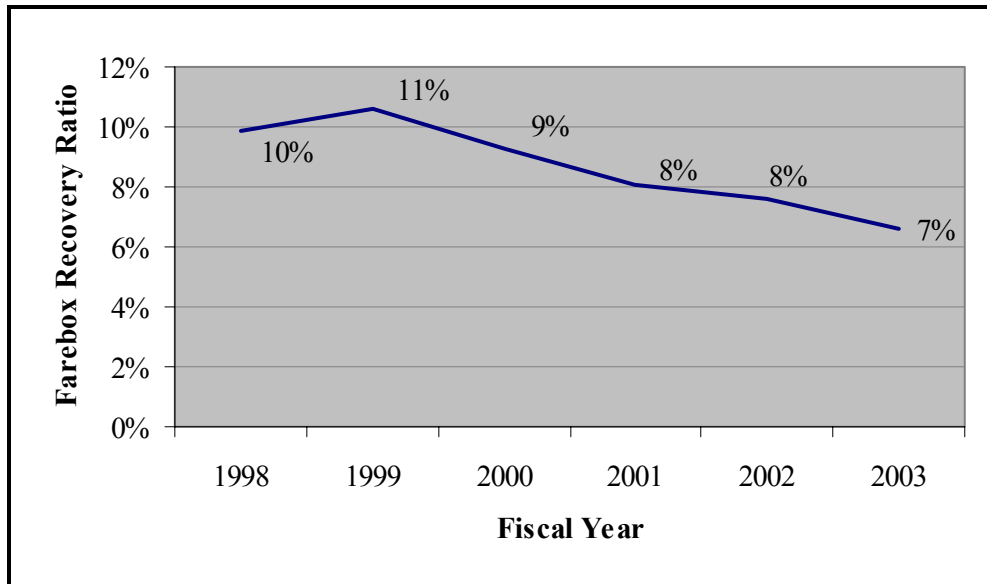
Figure 3-9 Operating Cost per Passenger Trip, FY 1998 - 2003



3.2.2 Farebox Recovery Ratio

The farebox recovery ratio (FRR) describes the portion of operating costs offset by passenger fares. Due to operating expenses rising faster than fare revenue, Rio Vista Transit is experiencing declining FRRs. As seen in Figure 3-10, the FRR peaked in 1999 at 11%, but has since decreased to 7% in 2003. Although this FRR would be considered quite low for most transit systems, it is a respectable rate given that it is demand responsive service. Rio Vista Transit is able to maintain this FRR because its fare structure charges relatively high rates for trips made outside of Rio Vista. These higher rates are for long-distance trips averaging twenty-five miles.

Figure 3-10 Farebox Recovery Ratio, FY 1998 – 2003



As was alluded to earlier, Rio Vista Transit must maintain a farebox recovery ratio of at least 10% each year in order to qualify for TDA funding. In years when the system does not attain a FRR of 10%, the city must allocate additional funds to the transit system such that the total of the fare revenue and auxiliary local funds divided by the operating costs is at least 10%. If the ridership and cost trends continue as they have in recent years, Rio Vista can expect to contribute increasing amounts to Rio Vista Transit.

3.3 Vehicle Utilization

As reported in section 1.3, Rio Vista Transit has two regular vehicles (minibuses) with one active and one in reserve. This means that at any given time no more than 50% of the system's vehicle resources are being utilized, which is not the most efficient use of those resources.

Through the review of the daily logs it is evident that there are days in which no, or very few, trips were scheduled – either because there is low demand to the scheduled destination or on the particular day of the week. This is illustrated by the data in Table 3-1 which shows that fewer passengers are carried on some days of the week than on others. For example, average ridership on Mondays, when trips are made in Rio Vista in the morning and to Walnut Grove, Isleton, and Antioch in the afternoon, is 2.1 passengers. This is considerably lower than the average 5.0 passengers per day which travel to Fairfield on Fridays. Low demand obviously results in poor vehicle utilization.

Table 3-1 Average Passengers per Day of the Week, FY 2003

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Destination(s)	Isleton / Antioch / Walnut Grove	Lodi / Stockton	Rio Vista	Lodi / Stockton	Fairfield / Vacaville
Passengers	99	174	469	199	238
# of Days	47	48	46	46	48
Passengers/Day	2.1	3.6	10.2	4.3	5.0

The average number of passengers per day is influenced by the demand for trips on given days and to given destinations and by the amount of time needed to complete the trips. Even when taking into account the trip destination, these rates suggest that there is unused capacity and underutilization of the vehicles. When trips are made outside of Rio Vista and the driver simply waits for a few hours before returning to Rio Vista with the passengers, this “down” time contributes to poor vehicle utilization. However, due to inconsistent data records, it is impossible to determine what percentage of the time is lost while the driver waits to make the return trip.

It is likely that there is some unmet demand for trips on days with low average ridership, but perhaps not to the scheduled destinations.

From passenger comments, it appears that trips may not be scheduled or provided throughout the published service span. If this is in fact the case, it would also lower the vehicle utilization rate.

CHAPTER 4

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

This chapter proposes a system of performance measures that Rio Vista Transit can use to evaluate and monitor its performance over time. A standard is proposed for each performance measure, representing a benchmark that Rio Vista Transit should be able to achieve. It is recommended that performance standards be established for the following five areas:

- Service effectiveness,
- Cost efficiency,
- Cost effectiveness,
- Vehicle utilization, and
- Service quality.

The recommended performance standards presented below are preliminary and should be discussed further before being adopted by Rio Vista Transit.

4.1 Service Effectiveness

Service effectiveness measures how much transit service was consumed or utilized in relation to the amount of service provided. The more service consumed of what was provided (vehicle miles and vehicle hours) the higher the service effectiveness. The main performance standards used to measure service effectiveness include passengers per vehicle service hour and passengers per vehicle service mile. Passengers are classified as the number of boarding passengers transported by the transit service.

4.1.1 Passenger Trips per Vehicle Mile

The rate of passengers per vehicle mile is affected by local factors, such as the geographic size of the area being served and the intensity of land uses in the service area. Because of Rio Vista Transit's large service area and the relatively low intensity land uses, it is unrealistic to expect performance in this category to equal national averages.

The Transit Cooperative Research Program, Report 6, *Users' Manual for Assessing Service-Delivery Systems for Rural Passenger Transportation* published in 1995, established national norms for the performance of rural and small urban transit systems. For demand-responsive only services, the report identified a mean of 0.49 passengers per vehicle mile. The median was 0.33 passengers per mile, with a typical high of 0.92 and a typical low of 0.05 passengers per mile. Again, these are just rough guidelines that can be used to evaluate the service in the future and to help determine specific performance standards. It should be noted that Rio Vista Transit is on the low end of this scale, carrying just 0.08 passengers per revenue mile in FY 2003. As Rio Vista Transit adjusts its schedule to better match demand, it should be able to improve its service effectiveness with a goal of eventually matching the median value above. Due to the high proportion of trips made outside of Rio Vista, it is reasonable to expect that Rio Vista will continue to have a lower rate of passenger trips per vehicle mile than comparable rural systems. Therefore, it is recommended that Rio Vista Transit adopt a standard of 0.11 trips per vehicle mile which is modestly higher than its current performance, but still attainable.

4.1.2 Passenger Trips per Vehicle Hour

The most common performance indicator used to measure service effectiveness is passenger trips per vehicle hour. As reported in TCRP Report 6, demand-responsive transit services operating in rural environments had a median of 5.02 passengers per hour. The typical high was 8.94 passengers per hour and the typical low was 1.1. Unfortunately, Rio Vista Transit does not currently monitor the number of vehicle hours operated, which makes it challenging to evaluate the system's performance using this metric. However, if it were assumed that Rio Vista Transit provides an average of 6 revenue hours of service per weekday, then the system would have averaged 0.86 passenger trips per vehicle hour in FY 2003. Based upon this information and expected improvements, Rio Vista Transit should attempt to meet the typical low value of 1.1 passenger trips per vehicle hour.

4.2 Cost Efficiency

Cost efficiency addresses how much public transportation service is provided (vehicle hours or vehicle miles) in relation to the resources expended (total operating costs). Performance indicators of cost efficiency include operating cost per vehicle service hour and operating cost per vehicle service mile.

4.2.1 Cost per Vehicle Mile

The mean cost per vehicle mile identified by TCRP Report 6 was \$2.14 and the median was \$1.69. The typical high identified was \$3.74 and the typical low was \$0.53. Based upon Rio Vista Transit's estimated operating costs and revenue miles for FY 2003, it had a cost per vehicle mile of \$4.23. An appropriate goal for Rio Vista is to achieve its average cost over the past five years which was \$3.60.

4.2.2 Cost per Vehicle Hour

The cost per vehicle hour performance indicator is a slightly better tool for measuring cost efficiency because the largest component of operating costs (driver wages and salaries) for Rio Vista Transit are paid by the hour. This performance measure assesses the cost efficiency of the system by dividing the system's operating costs by the number of hours the system's vehicle(s) are in service.

The mean and median costs per hour figures identified by TCRP Report 6 were \$25.80 and \$19.63, respectively. The typical high identified by the report was \$47.93 and the typical low was \$3.66. Again these statistics are for demand-responsive only services in rural and small urban locations. Based upon Rio Vista Transit's estimated operating costs and revenue hours for FY 2003, it had a cost per vehicle hour of \$45.02. An appropriate goal for Rio Vista is to achieve its average cost over the past five years, \$36.70 per vehicle hour.

4.3 Cost Effectiveness

Cost effectiveness looks at the consumption of the transit service (passenger boardings or passenger trips) as compared to the resources used in providing the service (operating costs). Operating cost per passenger trip is the main performance indicator used in the industry to measure cost effectiveness.

Cost per passenger trip is equal to the system's operating costs divided by the total number of unlinked passenger trips. The mean cost per passenger trip identified in TCRP Report 6 was \$6.09.

The typical high reported was \$10.17 and the typical low was \$2.02. Based upon Rio Vista Transit's estimated operating costs and the actual number of passenger trips for FY 2003, it had a cost per passenger of \$52.38 last year. An appropriate goal for Rio Vista is to achieve a rate of \$41.00, which is the system average over the past five years.

4.4 Vehicle Utilization

As has been noted previously, Rio Vista Transit does not optimize the utilization of its vehicles. To be able to better monitor its performance in this area, it is recommended that Rio Vista Transit adopt the following two performance measures: annual passengers per vehicle and annual miles per vehicle.

4.4.1 Annual Passengers per Vehicle

Passengers per vehicle tracks vehicle utilization by determining the average number of passengers carried on system vehicles. Because Rio Vista Transit only uses one vehicle in service at a time, its vehicle utilization is quite low. In FY 2003, Rio Vista Transit averaged 650 passengers per vehicle. Rio Vista Transit should monitor its performance over the next six months to help set a realistic standard for this measure.

4.4.2 Annual Miles per Vehicle

Another performance measure, annual miles per vehicle, tracks how much the system's vehicles are being used. As noted above, because Rio Vista Transit only uses one vehicle in service at a time, its vehicle utilization is quite low. In FY 2003, Rio Vista Transit averaged 7,927 service miles per vehicle. Rio Vista Transit should monitor its performance over the next six months to help set a realistic standard for this measure.

4.5 Service Quality

In addition to the above performance measures, Rio Vista Transit should evaluate its ability to provide high quality service to its clients. Service quality involves the relationship between the delivery of service and customer expectations and demands. The quality of service can be broken down into the following attributes:

- Accessibility,
- Span of service,
- Directness,
- Passenger comfort/satisfaction,
- Reliability, and
- Safety.

4.5.1 Accessibility

Accessibility is defined as the ability of the transportation service to accommodate persons with disabilities on its vehicles. The most common accessibility performance measure is the percentage of vehicles that are lift equipped. Both of Rio Vista Transit's active vehicles are lift equipped. The transit system should maintain the standard of 100% accessibility to ensure that service is available to all residents. In order to achieve this standard all new vehicles must have wheelchair capacity and lifts. In addition, all drivers should be trained regarding compliance with the ADA including appropriate securement and sensitivity training.

4.5.2 Span of Service

Span of service is defined as the time during which service is operated. Rio Vista Transit currently operates between 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday to Friday. No service is provided on weekends or holidays. Given the level of demand within Rio Vista, this span of service is reasonable at this time. However, service should be available and provided during the entire span of service and not be limited by the driver's need to schedule trips or perform other tasks.

As development continues and demand increases, Rio Vista Transit should revisit this standard.

4.5.3 Directness

Directness refers to the time it takes to complete a trip via transit in comparison to the time it takes to complete a trip via a private automobile with no intermediate stops. Rio Vista Transit should try to schedule efficient trips that do not subject passengers to unreasonable travel times. In order to evaluate the system's performance, information must first be collected on the average travel time to each destination (city or town). The average trip length by car should be collected and updated at least once a year. Then a sample of passenger pick-up and drop-off times can be used to calculate an average trip time via transit which can then be compared to the travel time by car.

The suggested standard is that the travel time via transit should not exceed twice the time it would take to drive by car. This ratio reflects the point at which most people will no longer use transit instead of a private car. Because Rio Vista Transit serves multiple destinations, this metric should be evaluated separately for each destination.

4.5.4 Passenger Comfort/Satisfaction

Passenger comfort and satisfaction is often dependent upon many variables, including seat availability, climate control, and a smooth ride. The number of passenger complaints received is usually a good measure of overall passenger satisfaction. In order to track its performance, Rio Vista Transit needs to begin recording and filing passenger complaints. Rio Vista Transit should investigate all complaints and corrective actions should be taken.

Once Rio Vista Transit begins tracking complaints it can make an informed decision about what an appropriate standard would be. In general, the rate of complaints is tracked as the number of passenger complaints as a percentage of total boardings.

4.5.5 Reliability

Reliability can be tracked using on-time performance and trip denials as quantitative performance indicators. For a demand-responsive service such as Rio Vista Transit, a trip should be considered "on time" if the passenger is picked up within 15 minutes before or after the scheduled pick-up time. The standard for the system should be that 95% of trips are on time. These values are consistent with industry standards.

Tracking trip denials allows a system to evaluate how well the supply of transit service matches the demand for it. For example, if there are repeated trip denials to certain destinations Rio Vista Transit may decide to increase the times available for trips to that location. Rio Vista should evaluate its performance in this category for at least three months before setting a standard.

4.5.6 Safety

Passenger safety is also an important service quality issue. It can be measured several different ways to include the number of vehicle miles per accident or the number of passenger injuries per 100,000 passenger trips. Because Rio Vista Transit travels relatively long distances for small numbers of passengers, the mileage standard will likely be a more enlightening indicator. Either way, Rio Vista Transit should prioritize passenger safety in its daily operations and monitor its performance carefully towards achieving its chosen goal.

A standard of 80,000 vehicle miles between preventable accidents is appropriate for Rio Vista. This value is consistent with standards for other demand responsive operators in suburban and rural environments. Based on average mileage of 15,000 per year, this standard equates to less than one preventable crash every 5 years.

CHAPTER 5

PUBLIC OUTREACH & POLICY REVIEW

This chapter presents the results of two tasks:

- A series of public outreach efforts used to better understand the transportation needs of the Rio Vista community, and
- A review of the policies and practices currently utilized by Rio Vista with regards to its transit service.

5.1 Public Outreach

Understanding the transportation needs of a community can be a very intensive process that is often best informed by multiple outreach efforts. For this project stakeholder interviews, meetings with the bus drivers, and a community survey were the primary methods used to collect the community's input on the role and importance of public transportation. These efforts, and our findings, are described in detail below.

5.1.1 Stakeholder Interviews

As part of the study effort, interviews were conducted with key transit stakeholders, such as decision makers from the City of Rio Vista, city staff, and others involved with local social service agencies and employment centers. Table 5-1 lists the stakeholders who were interviewed.

Table 5-1 Stakeholders Interviewed

Name	Title	Organization
Thomas Bland	Director of Planning and Community Development	City of Rio Vista
Marci Coglianesse	Mayor	City of Rio Vista
Adriana Bejarano and Zaida Mungaray	Administrative Assistant and Community Outreach	Rio Vista Care
Denise Rubiaco	Executive Director	Chamber of Commerce
Carol Hermsmeyer	Director	Community Assistance Center
David Melilli	Director of Public Works	City of Rio Vista
Ava Williams	Program Specialist	Solano County Health and Social Services Department
Jan Rayl	Activities Director	Trilogy
Marc Bettencourt and Jeff Fernandez	Mechanic and Back Up Driver	City of Rio Vista

Some of those interviewed were quite familiar with the day-to-day operations of the city's transit system and were able to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Rio Vista Transit. Others were far less knowledgeable regarding the transit system, but offered a valuable perspective on the social, political, and economic conditions of the area and on how Rio Vista Transit might be able to respond to changing trends in these areas. The result was a mixture of detailed and broad ranging discussion about the issues affecting transit provision in Rio Vista and its environs. This participation technique provided valuable perspectives, a context for framing the overall study objectives, and should prove

useful as preliminary recommendations are developed for Rio Vista Transit. The major themes gleaned from the stakeholder interview process are discussed below.

5.1.1.1 Attitudes and Perceptions

Stakeholders were asked about their general perceptions regarding transit services in the region. There was a surprising lack of knowledge among some stakeholders regarding Rio Vista Transit. Those individuals who were familiar with the transit system indicated that it has always been a fairly informal transportation service used by a limited sector of the population. Several people mentioned that the limited service provided by Rio Vista Transit makes it challenging for most residents to use. Furthermore, it was noted that many individuals in Rio Vista live on a limited or fixed income and the transit system is too expensive for them to use on a regular basis.

There was consensus among most stakeholders that Rio Vista Transit's current operation is extremely limited in scope and, as such, only provides a service that is of value to a finite group of individuals. Nonetheless, it was agreed that those who do rely on the transit system are greatly appreciative of the service and it is critical to their livelihood. Some stakeholders mentioned that they periodically receive complaints from Rio Vista Transit passengers about the service, however. Typical complaints relate to the hours of service, driver performance and/or courtesy, and system policies such as reservation requirements.

Another issue that came up in several stakeholder interviews was the lack of marketing by Rio Vista Transit. It was perceived as one of the system's biggest problems, particularly since many of the stakeholders themselves knew very little about the transit system. Recognizing that the transit system operates with limited resources, stakeholders volunteered to assist Rio Vista Transit with its marketing efforts. For instance, the Chamber of Commerce is willing to distribute and promote information on Rio Vista Transit.

5.1.1.2 Unmet Transportation Needs

During the interviews, stakeholders were asked if there are unmet transportation needs in Rio Vista. Most stakeholders noted that the private automobile is the dominant mode of transportation throughout the community. However, there are individuals who either cannot drive, prefer not to drive, or do not have access to an automobile and must seek other transportation options. For this sector of the population, the following issues were identified as unmet transportation needs:

- Insufficient service to Fairfield,
- Lack of service to BART,
- High level of service to medical facilities outside of Rio Vista,
- Later service to destinations outside of Rio Vista,
- Weekend service,
- Improved intra Rio Vista transit service,
- Service to Sacramento airport.

5.1.1.3 Recommended Service Improvements

Stakeholders were also asked about the future of transit services in Rio Vista and were encouraged to provide their long-term vision for how transit might operate five, ten or fifteen years from now. Some stakeholders did not have grandiose plans for future transit services and expected things to continue as is, while others presented fairly ambitious plans for improving service in Rio Vista and throughout the region. The following is a summary of the comments received.

One service concept that came up in several conversations was improved transportation for commuters. Commuters do not currently use the transit service because it does not meet their transportation needs. However, several individuals thought that there was demand for service between Rio Vista and surrounding cities, primarily for work-related trips. In order for this service to be a viable transportation option, interviewees emphasized that it must offer travel times that are competitive with the private automobile and it must be easy to use and schedule trips. It was suggested that commuter bus service be designed to provide one or two trips out of Rio Vista in the morning and one or two trips back in the evening. Potential destinations for this service include Fairfield, Antioch, Lodi/Stockton, and the Pittsburg/Bay Point BART station.

Another topic that was raised multiple times was increased service to Trilogy, the age-restricted housing development on the edge of town. At present, there does not appear to be significant demand for transit service to or from Trilogy as most residents are able to drive everywhere they need to go. However, it is anticipated that this will change as the community ages and as Trilogy approaches build out. Currently, there are approximately 800 occupied units at Trilogy and plans call for 3,200 units at build out. Trilogy does not have any transportation plans for addressing these changing demographics. It is expected that much of the demand for transportation services will be to out-of-town medical facilities. A Trilogy representative indicated that many residents access medical services at the Kaiser facilities in Vallejo, Walnut Creek, and Sacramento. It should be noted that Rio Vista Transit does provide service to some Trilogy residents, but current demand is very limited. Several stakeholders indicated that demand for transit services to and from Trilogy will increase significantly in the next five to ten years and it would be beneficial to plan for this increased demand.

In addition to the increased demand for transit services from Trilogy, there are extensive development plans for the land between Trilogy and downtown Rio Vista adjacent to Highway 12. Rio Vista plans to build a wastewater facility in two years, which will allow other residential development projects to move forward. There are currently plans to construct 4,500 homes along Highway 12 over the next 20 years. Once these development projects have been completed, Rio Vista will be a very different community with new transportation issues and needs. Several stakeholders emphasized that the transit system must monitor these development projects and be prepared to offer additional services to meet the increasing transportation needs of the community.

The last comment regarding the future of transit services related to improving existing operations. While several project stakeholders thought that the service provided by Rio Vista Transit has been appropriate for meeting community transportation needs, it was generally accepted that the transit system needs to improve its overall operations to provide a higher level of service. As far as specific recommendations are concerned, interviewees proposed various operational changes ranging from better customer service to better vehicle utilization. For instance, it was proposed that Rio Vista

Transit use their spare vehicle for transporting children to school or child care, as children's transportation can be a particularly challenging issue for CalWorks clients who are seeking employment.

5.1.2 Driver Meetings

Informal meetings were held with both Rio Vista Transit drivers during a site visit on May 13, 2003. Driver meetings are very valuable as the drivers are often most familiar with customer concerns and day-to-day operations. The following is a summary of the comments received during these meetings:

- Regular requests from passengers for additional service to Fairfield,
- Passengers also request additional service within Rio Vista as there is only one day for intra-city travel,
- The transit system periodically receives trip requests from the Delta Loop/Tower Park community in San Joaquin County,
- Passengers also request improved connections to Fairfield-Suisun Transit and BART,
- Requests for additional service to destinations currently served,
- Rio Vista Transit would benefit from additional marketing efforts,
- Rio Vista Transit would benefit from having a no-show policy because time is wasted waiting for passengers or returning to pickup passengers,
- The transit system does not have a procedure in place for tracking trip denials at present,
- Demand for transit services fluctuates from week to week,
- City residents use the cab company (Delta Cab) in town from time to time,
- Most passengers are elderly and have been riding the transit system for some time,
- Passengers often express their gratitude for the service provided by Rio Vista Transit,
- One driver mentioned that the transit system implemented a fare increase eight years ago that was well received by the passengers,
- Drivers regularly check the oil and wash the vehicle, although more substantive maintenance is performed by the city's mechanic,
- Drivers complete daily inspection sheets to ensure that vehicles are well maintained and to identify issues that require attention.

5.1.3 Community Transit Survey

In conjunction with the Solano Transportation Authority, a brief survey about Rio Vista Transit was distributed in January 2004 (see the survey instrument in the appendix). The mail-back survey was sent to a wide range of persons and agencies including: city departments, social service agencies, and major employers. From this effort, thirty-six (36) completed surveys were returned. The following summarizes the findings from this survey:

- **Transit use** (34 valid responses) - 74% of the survey respondents do not ride Rio Vista Transit, 12% ride weekly, 6% ride a few times a month, 6% ride a few times a year, and only 3% ride daily.

- **Destinations** (23 valid responses) – the most popular destinations among those who ride Rio Vista Transit were Lodi (35%), Rio Vista (22%), Fairfield (22%) and Antioch (13%).
- **Trip purpose** – (16 valid responses) the most common reason for using Rio Vista Transit was for medical trips (44%), followed by shopping (38%), and “other” reasons (19%).
- **Improvements to entice non-riders to use Rio Vista Transit** (38 valid responses) – more frequent service to other cities (38%), more information about the existing service (22%), will not use transit (19%), more frequent service in Rio Vista (14%), and an easier trip reservation system (8%). For those respondents who wanted additional service out of town, the following locations were listed: Fairfield (listed 5 times), Lodi (5), Stockton (2), Vacaville (2), Antioch (2), Pittsburg (1), Sacramento (1), and San Francisco (1).
- **Age of respondents** – 71% were over 55 years old, 23% were between 36 and 55, and 6% were between 18 and 35.
- **General comments** – overall the survey respondents had very positive responses to the service and if anything, requested additional service. A couple of respondents commented on the lack (and need) for service to Trilogly.

5.2 Functional Area Review

This section reviews the functional areas of Rio Vista Transit, including leadership and strategic planning, customer service, human resources, employee development, employee safety, operations, routing and scheduling, on the road services, maintenance, vehicles and equipment, and federal compliance. A description Rio Vista Transit’s performance in each functional area is included.

5.2.1 Leadership and Strategic Planning

Rio Vista Transit is a small and relatively informal organization and the system’s institutional framework is reflective of this. As Rio Vista Transit grows, the system will want to develop a mission statement, clear goals and objectives, system by-laws, and an overall emphasis on teamwork to provide the best possible transit service to the community.

At present, Rio Vista Transit does not have any of the following:

- Mission statement
- Goals and objectives
- Performance measurement program
- System by-laws
- Coordination plan with neighboring transit systems

In the past, the City’s Finance Director has been responsible for the compilation of the system’s operating and financial statistics. This responsibility has recently been shifted to the Department of Public Works. As far as reporting requirements are concerned, Rio Vista Transit provides the City Council with their annual TDA claim and annual financial report each year.

5.2.2 Customer Service & Marketing

Rio Vista Transit has not historically put much emphasis on customer service as their clientele has been relatively stable and the transit system has not prioritized expansion in its market or services offered. Following is a summary of Rio Vista Transit's performance in customer service.

As mentioned above, Rio Vista Transit does not target potential customers through any type of marketing campaign or distribution of materials. Unmet transit needs are determined annually at the regional level by the Solano Transportation Authority (STA). Rio Vista Transit does not conduct its own unmet needs hearings but it does provide customers with the opportunity to access information or file complaints verbally with the bus operator or by calling the Director of Finance. Complaints are handled in an informal fashion, on a case-by-case basis and actions are taken to address the complaint if possible. Rio Vista Transit does not keep a log of complaints received and it has never conducted a customer survey. Therefore, it has no other means of evaluating customer satisfaction aside from complaints received. It should be noted that the majority of complaints received pertain to the bus operator's driving skills or practices.

Passengers are encouraged to schedule their trips 24 hours in advance, although Rio Vista Transit will attempt to accommodate trips with less notice. If the transit operator is not available to take a client's phone call, they can leave a message on the system's answering machine with details of their desired trip.

Rio Vista Transit's sparse marketing program consists of a 1-page description of the transit system and the transit system's phone number and logo on the side of the transit vehicles. A "blue screen" text advertisement used to run periodically on cable channel 8. Aside from photocopies of their brochure and painting their vehicles, Rio Vista Transit does not spend any money on its marketing program. The transit system brochure is available at City Hall, the Transit Office and other locations stocked by the Solano Transportation Authority. The system does not receive brochure requests from other agencies or locations. There is no information on Rio Vista Transit on the City of Rio Vista website, although www.511.org does have limited information on the transit system.

The primary barrier to expanding Rio Vista Transit's marketing program is a general lack of support for system expansion. The transit system has additional capacity but it does not want to aggressively market the system such that demand exceeds capacity.

5.2.3 Human Resources

With such a small staff, Rio Vista Transit has historically not prioritized employee development and training. For instance, Rio Vista Transit does not provide employees with special training or education to stay current with new technologies, industry practices or state or federal requirements. Following is a review of Rio Vista Transit's performance in the human resources functional area.

Rio Vista Transit does have a job description on file for the transit operator position. It aptly describes the basic responsibilities and functions of the position. With respect to qualifications for the position, the job description indicates that an individual with two years of transit related experience and the possession of a Class C California driver's license by the date of appointment is qualified for the

position. Recently Rio Vista Transit updated this requirement to include possession of a Class B California driver's license with the necessary passenger endorsements. Employees are responsible for keeping their Class B license and passenger endorsements current, as the City does not offer driver safety classes.

As with all City employees, Rio Vista Transit staff receives an annual review to evaluate performance. However, there are no interim evaluations or formal policies or procedures in place for motivating employees or encouraging staff to utilize their full potential. When hiring for a new position, Rio Vista Transit posted classified advertisements in the local newspapers, including the Rio Vista River News Herald and the Vacaville Reporter. Prior to hiring, the City of Rio Vista requires a medical report for the prospective candidate. Rio Vista Transit does not require more than one individual to conduct interviews of prospective candidates and the system does not use a standardized questionnaire/evaluation form to conduct the interviews.

Once hired, there is no formal orientation program for new hires. Rio Vista Transit relies upon the current transit operator to train a new hire. Rio Vista Transit applies Rio Vista's personnel policies to all employees. Applicable minimum wage, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements are posted in the lunchroom at City Hall. Rio Vista hosts an annual employee recognition dinner as well as a holiday party every winter.

5.2.4 Employee Safety

Rio Vista Transit does not have a safety committee responsible for setting the transit system's safety policy, nor does it have a system for ensuring compliance with OSHA laws and regulations. Rio Vista Transit relies on the city's emergency and fire prevention plan for all transit facilities and it maintains functional fire extinguishers, first aid kits and flares onboard all transit vehicles.

Rio Vista Transit provides blood borne pathogen training for transit operators on an annual basis.

5.2.5 Routing and Scheduling

As was mentioned above, the transit operator is responsible for all routing and scheduling duties. In addition to the main phone number, which is normally used for scheduling trips, the transit operator has a cell phone that can also be utilized for scheduling trips. When the transit operator is not in the office, passengers have the opportunity to leave a voicemail message with information regarding their trip request. Rio Vista Transit does not have formal "no show" or cancellation policies. The transit operator stated that they have returned 1-2 times to pick up a passenger when a "no show" has occurred.

Rio Vista Transit operators maintain a driver's log in which information pertaining to each passenger is recorded, such as passenger name, time picked up, date, destination,³ type of trip (e.g., medical,

³ Within the City of Rio Vista the destination can be an address or landmark. Outside of Rio Vista, the destination should be the destination city, at a minimum, but ideally it would include a major landmark or cross streets in addition to the city name.

shopping or other) and revenue collected. The following information is not recorded on the driver's log: address of passenger origin or destination, trip mileage or time, or drop off time.

The transit operator spends approximately 75% of her time on operational tasks (e.g., driving, cleaning vehicle, etc.) and the remaining 25% of her time completing administrative duties, such as scheduling future trips and completing requisite paperwork.

While Rio Vista Transit indicated that they want to meet existing demand for transit service, stakeholder interviews revealed that there is not much political support to fund service expansion at this time. Nonetheless, Rio Vista Transit does appear amenable to considering potential service expansion if demand is identified for such service. Furthermore, Rio Vista Transit conceded that they do periodically receive trip requests that they are unable to serve.

5.2.6 On the Road Services

Rio Vista Transit does not distinguish between accidents or incidents, nor does the system have accident or incident forms. Transit operators will assist passengers with boarding or disembarking the vehicle, including those passengers needing assistance with the wheelchair lift. Rio Vista Transit does not have an aides/attendant policy and transit operators are not prohibited from providing any type of assistance to passengers. The transit system does not have a formal policy for passenger behavior.

Rio Vista Transit allows the transport of parcels onboard system vehicles and does not have a policy for the transport of animals. Rio Vista Transit does not utilize their vehicles for meal delivery, except on Thanksgiving and Christmas when the Chamber of Commerce and the Community Assistance Center delivers meal baskets with the vehicles.

5.2.7 Maintenance, Vehicles and Equipment

Rio Vista Transit does not have a written vehicle maintenance plan; however, the system does have specific guidelines that are followed in maintaining all system vehicles. For instance, all vehicles receive a 30-day inspection and checkup and vehicles are serviced (e.g., oil change, filters, lube, etc.) every 3,000 miles. The city mechanic performs the vast majority of all maintenance work and generally follows the vehicle manufacturer's guidelines for the completion of all work. The transit operator completes a daily vehicle inspection form that is turned into the city mechanic at the end of each day. Most operational problems are either identified through the completion of vehicle inspection forms or during regularly scheduled vehicle checkups. In general, the newest van is used for making trips unless it is being serviced.

According to the drivers and vehicle mechanic, the wheelchair lifts on the Rio Vista Transit vehicles do not receive much use and as a result, do not have many problems or require much maintenance. All vehicles are stored and fueled at the city's corporation yard. The transit operator is responsible for the cleaning of the vehicle interior and the city mechanic is responsible for keeping the vehicle exterior clean. The city mechanic does not maintain an extensive list of parts at the corporation yard but is able to order most vehicle parts via 24-hour delivery. Vehicles are stored inside a locked chain link fence at night and on weekends and the system has not had any theft, vandalism or other security related problems.

According to the city mechanic, Rio Vista Transit has not had any serious accidents within the past two to three years. The transit system does not maintain a record of road calls. In the event of a vehicle breakdown or other incident, the transit operator calls the city mechanic who drives the spare transit vehicle to the breakdown location to relieve the transit operator of the disabled vehicle. The city mechanic generally has the vehicle towed back to the corporation yard to complete necessary repairs. The city mechanic indicated that this has only occurred once in the past year.

CHAPTER 6

HIGHLIGHTS FROM RELATED STUDIES AND SERVICES

This chapter summarizes key findings from other transportation studies and services that may impact or provide supplemental information on how transit is provided to residents of Rio Vista.

6.1 Related Transportation Studies

The following descriptions highlight those sections of relevant transportation plans that could influence when or how transit service is provided in Rio Vista. Additional detail can be found in the original text of each study.

6.1.1 Solano Comprehensive Transportation Plan (May 2002)

Purpose

The comprehensive transportation plan was developed to identify a future transportation vision for Solano County and will be updated by Fall 2004. Community input helped identify transportation needs that were then associated with various modes and prioritized. Then these priorities were evaluated to determine if existing funding sources could address these needs, if not, potential revenue options were identified. The plan was split into three elements – 1) transit, 2) arterials, highways and freeways, and 3) alternative modes. The review of this plan focused on the transit element – which would have the most impact on transit service for Rio Vista.

Relevant Conclusions

As part of the needs analysis conducted for the plan, the following needs were identified for Rio Vista:

- Construct ferry dock, and
- Fixed intercity routes to BART and rail.

The bus service plan recommended a series of intercity bus transit routes for implementation. Only those routes providing direct service to Rio Vista are included here, although improved regional mobility through transit centers in Fairfield and Suisun will benefit Rio Vista as well.

- **Route 12B** would establish a new link between Rio Vista and Fairfield and Suisun via Highway 12. Implementation of this service is included in the first phase system, which can be funded if all local TDA funds are dedicated to transit.
- **Route 12C** would establish a new link between Rio Vista and Lodi via Highway 12. Implementation of this service is included in the third phase system, which can be funded if all local TDA funds are dedicated to transit and an additional \$2 million is provided.
- **Route 12D** would establish a new link between Rio Vista and Antioch via Highway 160. Implementation of this service is only included in the unconstrained plan – which would require a significant influx of additional funding.

Another component of the plan's transit element was a discussion of the intercity transit support system, including park and ride facilities and intermodal transit stations. The following park and ride locations are recommended for Rio Vista:

- Highway 12 and Church Street and
- Downtown near Main Street.

6.1.2 Rio Vista General Plan 2001 – Circulation & Mobility (July 2002)

Purpose

The circulation and mobility element of Rio Vista's general plan outlines the city's plans for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods through and around the community.

Relevant Conclusions

Goals from the plan for transit include the following:

- The City shall ensure that a mix of uses and intensities are programmed for areas within $\frac{1}{4}$ - to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile radii of logical future transit routes and commercial activity centers. Park and Ride lots will be located where convenient and accessible; most likely adjacent to Highway 12 within the Neighborhood Core District.
- The City shall ensure that the physical design of new development projects facilitates transit use.
- As population growth and circumstances warrant, the City shall provide reliable bus service to Rio Vista residents. The City shall continue to provide the current service to destinations within and outside Rio Vista.
- The City shall support improved access to public transportation by people with impaired mobility.
- Where needed, the City shall supplement the future public transit system with continued availability of paratransit services.
- The City shall encourage private taxi service in Rio Vista.
- The City shall encourage innovative methods of running shuttle services within Rio Vista as needed.
- The City shall actively support the plans of transit service providers to increase service frequency and hours of service. The Solano Transportation Authority's Comprehensive Transportation Plan, Transit Element, is incorporated by reference into the Rio Vista Circulation and Mobility Element.

6.1.3 Senior and Disabled Transit Study (June 2004)

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to identify the transportation barriers faced by seniors and persons with disabilities and then to develop strategies to overcome these barriers. Transportation barriers were identified through a series of focus groups and a mail back survey.

Relevant Conclusions

The following strategies were specifically recommended for implementation in Rio Vista:

- **Short-term Strategies** included establishing procedures for same day medical return trips, changing the scheduled day for service to Fairfield.
- **Medium-term Strategies** included implementing a shopping shuttle and providing travel training for older adults.
- **Long-term Strategy** was to provide service from Rio Vista to the Pittsburg BART station.

6.1.4 Solano County Welfare to Work Transportation Plan (April 2002)

Purpose

The goal of this study was to identify strategies for improving transportation options available to Cal Works clients and other low-income individuals in Solano County. The plan was developed while working closely with an advisory committee to summarize existing transportation resources in the county, identify and prioritize transportation gaps and barriers, and develop solutions and identify potential funding sources to address those gaps and barriers.

Relevant Conclusions

The following are brief descriptions of those programs recommended for implementation in Rio Vista:

- **Morning and Evening Service between Rio Vista and Westfield Shopping Town-Solano or the Fairfield Transportation Center** is seen as a way to improve commute options for Cal WORKS clients who reside in Rio Vista and are seeking pre-employment services and employment outside the city. This strategy is being pursued. The city of Rio Vista, jointly with the County of Solano and the Solano Transportation Authority, secured a Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Low Income Flexible Transportation (LIFT) grant to implement a three-year commuter vanpool program. The contract between MTC and the City of Rio Vista was executed in FY03/04. The project would be jointly implemented among the three agencies with the Solano Transportation Authority's Solano Napa Commuter Information (SNCI) program taking the lead. The vehicles are expected to be secured and service to begin by the end of 2004.

The project funds two commuter vanpools that would leave Rio Vista each morning and travel to Fairfield. One is planned to be an earlier trip serving transit transfer locations such as Solano Mall (local Fairfield/Suisun Transit routes) and Fairfield Transportation Center (inter-city transit services). The other vanpool is planned to travel later in the

morning and return earlier in the afternoon to transport Cal WORKS clients to the Ready Center in northeast Fairfield so that they can access pre-employment services.

The primary cost of this program is to cover the cost of leasing commuter vanpools from a third-party vendor. As the vanpool driver would be someone traveling to work, the driver is unpaid as is typical of a commuter vanpool. The cost of the vehicle lease, gas, and other incidentals would be shared by the County of Solano, City of Rio Vista, and MTC's LIFT grant. The County's Transportation Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds would pay for the vanpool fare for the Cal WORKS clients. Unfilled seats would be paid for by the City of Rio Vista's Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds and the LIFT grant. Because of the grant funding, the first priority for these vanpools is to serve Cal WORKS clients. If there is capacity remaining, the general public may be able to use the service at their own cost. This project's cost is approximately \$35,000 annually.

- **Volunteer Driver Program** was suggested to address the lack of transportation from Rio Vista to the rest of Solano County. This service would rely on volunteers from the general public to provide "non-regular" rides to SolanoWORKS participants who do not have access to transportation. Eligible trips might include those for medical appointments, shopping, or job interviews. The Plan suggested that the City of Rio Vista could be the lead agency in implementing this service while the STA's Solano Napa Commuter Information (SNCI) program Solano County Health and Social Services (SCHSS) would provide technical assistance help quantify expected demand, and promote the service to SolanoWORKS participants.

Subsequent to the study making this recommendation, the Rio Vista Community Action Council (CAC) has begun planning to develop a more comprehensive volunteer driver program that would be inclusive of Cal WORKS clients. The Plan is estimated this project to cost approximately \$35,200 annually.

6.1.5 Highway 12 MIS TDM Elements (October 2001)

Purpose

This report explores a number of alternatives to maintain desired level of service (LOS) ratings on Highway 12. The LOS on the highway is expected to be reduced by anticipated growth around the Highway 12 corridor.

Relevant Conclusions

The report developed five build and one no-build alternative to address the expected traffic volumes. One of these alternatives, Alternative Package 2 – Transportation Demand Management, if implemented would impact the level of transit service in Rio Vista. The following are the projects included in this alternative:

- **Carpooling Program – Park and Ride Lot Construction** consists of constructing two park-and-ride lots to facilitate carpooling – one of which would be in Rio Vista. The lot would be visible from Highway 12 and built so that it could expand as needed to accommodate growing demand. An advertising campaign would promote the park-and-ride lots, benefits of carpooling, and the ride-matching services provided by the Solano Transportation Authority (STA).

- **Local Shuttle Program** would connect the retirement communities on the east end of the corridor (Trilogy) with the commercial and medical facilities in Suisun City, Fairfield, and Rio Vista. The service would run on one-hour headways initially and coordinate with existing transit service in Sacramento and San Joaquin counties.
- **Transit Service** would consist of a new SolanoLinks route traveling from Fairfield to Suisun City to Rio Vista along Highway 12. Important transfer points would be at the Capitol Corridor Station (Suisun City) and the Fairfield Transportation Center. This route would also run on one-hour headways initially.

6.1.6 I-80/I-680/I-780 Transit Corridor Study (July 2004)

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to successfully implement the Intercity Bus Element from the Solano Comprehensive Transportation Plan through the development of detailed transit improvements along the corridor defined by I-80, I-680, and I-780.

Relevant Conclusions

Although Rio Vista does not sit in the I-80, I-680, and I-780 corridor, it would benefit from circulation and transit service improvements around Suisun and Fairfield. In particular, improvements that would benefit Rio Vista residents include:

- **Super express service** from the Vallejo Ferry Terminal to Sacramento, which would serve the Fairfield Transportation Center.
- **Expanded Route 40 (FST) midday service** would improve north-south accessibility during off-peak hours.
- **Increased frequency along I-80** would improve north-south accessibility during peak hours.
- **Fairfield Transportation Center access improvements** will improve the flow of transit vehicles around the center.

6.1.7 Planned State Route 12 Transit Study (2004-05)

The State Route 12 Transit Study is an upcoming study that will examine long-term demand for transit along the Highway 12 corridor. Though the scope has yet to be finalized, the extent of the corridor could extend from Lodi (San Joaquin County), through Rio Vista (Solano County), and all the way to Napa (Napa County). After estimating the expected transit demand, phased service recommendations and their anticipated costs will be developed to help local and regional transportation officials plan for their implementation. This study will be completed by the STA during 2004-05 with oversight provided by a steering committee with a representative from Rio Vista as well as the other communities along the corridor.

6.2 Transportation Services

There are a variety of regional transit and transportation services available to residents of Rio Vista. The text below summarizes how residents might access these services, the level of service provided, and basic fare information.

6.2.1 Transit and Paratransit Services

Although Rio Vista is isolated from other communities, many of its closest neighbors have fixed-route transit service (see map of Rio Vista Transit's service area in Chapter 1). Table 6-1 lists these cities and identifies important transfer facilities or access point to their transit system. Likely due to Rio Vista's small population and resulting low transit demand, none of the adjacent systems have documented plans to provide new service to Rio Vista. However, Fairfield-Suisun Transit has expressed a willingness to serve Rio Vista in the future if the service were funded through a cost-sharing agreement with Rio Vista.

Table 6-1 Area Transit Services and Major Transfer Locations

Community -Transit System	Major Transfer Locations
Fairfield – Fairfield-Suisun Transit	Fairfield Transportation Center Westfield Shoppingtown Solano Suisun/Fairfield Train Station
Vallejo - Vallejo Transit	Solano Mall York and Marin Serenio Transit Center El Cerrito del Norte BART Station
Galt – South Sacramento County Transit – SCT/Link	City Hall, Galt Florin Center, Sacramento Lodi Train Station Elk Grove Blvd/Emerald Vista, Elk Grove Concilio, Isleton Post Office, Walnut Grove
Lodi – Lodi Transit	Lodi Station Wal-Mart and Target stores - off Hwy 12 at Lower Sacramento Road
Sacramento – Sacramento Regional Transit District	Arden Fair Mall Cosumnes River College Cal State University at Sacramento (CSUS) Florin Mall Sunrise Mall
Eastern Contra Costa County Transit District - Tri-Delta Transit	Los Medanos College Pittsburg/Bay Point BART Station Hillcrest Park & Ride Brentwood Park & Ride
San Joaquin County – SMART	Channel and Sutter – Downtown Transit Center (under construction) Claremont Mall Yokuts Mall

In addition to the fixed-route transit systems described above, Solano County also offers countywide paratransit service through Solano Paratransit (SP). SP serves residents throughout the county, except those living in Vallejo or Benicia. Service is only available to those residents who qualify for the

service under ADA, have completed Fairfield/Suisun Transit's ADA application form and been approved. SP operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm and Saturday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Passengers can purchase a multi-ride pass for \$15.00. SP's service area extends beyond the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile buffer around the fixed-route network that is required by the ADA to provide a comprehensive service to its passengers.

Currently, very few Rio Vista residents use SP and have been using it less than in years past. For the first three quarters of FY 2004, an average of 2 passengers used the service each month. Ridership averaged 5 passengers a month in FY 2003 and 19 passengers a month in FY 2002. However, it is worth noting that this is not inconsistent with the overall trend experienced by SP. Ridership for the entire paratransit service dropped by 5% between FY 2002 and FY 2003, and it appears that FY 2004 will experience a 9% drop from FY 2003.

6.2.2 Intercity Transportation

Although Rio Vista Transit provides intercity transportation, there are limits to how far away service is provided. Rail service and private bus services provide additional mobility options for Rio Vista residents who need to travel outside the region.

Rail

Although Rio Vista does not have any direct intercity rail service, it is within 30 miles of the Suisun City Amtrak station and the Pittsburg/Bay Point BART station. Suisun's Amtrak station is served by the Capitol Corridor, which stops at stations between Sacramento, Oakland and San Jose, with connecting bus service to San Francisco. The Pittsburg/Bay Point BART station provides direct service to downtown Oakland, downtown San Francisco, the San Francisco International Airport and many other parts of the Bay Area.

Greyhound

Rio Vista's nearest Greyhound station is also in Suisun City, roughly 22 miles away. The station offers fairly extensive operating hours - Monday through Friday, 5:45 AM to 6:00 PM, and Saturday 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM.

Charter Buses

Private bus service is also provided through charter services. Due to Rio Vista's proximity to Napa Valley and its famous wineries, many of the charter companies in the area cater to tourists and offer trips to the Napa Valley.

Airporters

Several airporter services will pick up and drop off in Rio Vista. These are privately operated, door-to-door services that operate seven days a week. This gives Rio Vista access to the three major airports in the area: Sacramento, Oakland, and San Francisco.

6.2.3 Other

While rail and bus services can meet regional travel needs, residents may have occasion to need door-to-door service outside of Rio Vista Transit's operating hours. For these trips, private transportation providers such as taxis and limousines are invaluable. Some of the companies that provide private transportation in and around Rio Vista are listed below.

Rio Vista

- Delta Cab Co.

Fairfield

- A Touch of Class Limousine
- Ambassador Limousine
- Bahia Limousine
- Checker Cab
- Commercial Taxi
- Fairfield Cab
- Greyline Cab
- KMA Corporate Sedan and Limousine Service
- Platinum Luxury Limousines
- Veteran's Cab
- Yellow Cab

Antioch

- Black Diamond Limousine Service
- Brentwood Cab
- D'Vince Limousine Service
- Yellow Cab Inc. Oakley
- Yellow Metro Cab

6.3 Summary

Due to Rio Vista's small size and relatively remote location, it has fewer transportation alternatives. In order to improve the mobility and accessibility of its residents, it is imperative that public officials from Rio Vista actively engage in the transportation planning process and advocate on behalf of its citizens for improved services. The Solano Transportation Authority can provide valuable technical support and advice to Rio Vista – but the people of Rio Vista must ultimately drive the request for support and interest in change.

CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on information presented and analyzed in previous chapters, this chapter develops recommendations for Rio Vista Transit to implement. These recommendations address both the policy direction and operating characteristics of Rio Vista's transit service, with a focus on short-term improvements. Included with the discussion of each recommendation is a suggestion for who should take the lead on implementing the recommendation. Due to Rio Vista's limited range of experience operating transit service, additional collaboration with other transit agencies, the Solano Transportation Authority (STA), and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) will be critical to the future success of the service.

7.1 Clarify Roles for Rio Vista Transit

Until recently, Rio Vista Transit has had a very basic organizational structure in which the transit driver works collaboratively with the mechanic and reports almost exclusively to the Finance Director. This arrangement was changed recently, such that the mechanic and driver both report to the Public Works Director and the Finance Director is solely responsible for the financial elements of the service. To ensure that there is an appropriate level of oversight of the transit service and that improvement is made in provision and tracking of the service, it is important to formalize the roles played by different parties, in the support and operation of Rio Vista Transit.

The Finance Director will continue to be responsible for filing TDA claim forms, but the responsibility to facilitate decision making on operating issues, and to collect and maintain data will fall to the Director of Public Works. The mechanic who services the transit vehicles and the drivers who operate them will be part of the Department of Public Works (DPW). Due to the inextricable link between funding and operations, it will be important for the two departments to communicate regularly about their respective needs. However, it is also worth noting that other city departments, particularly community development, should be included when making decisions about the future direction of transit within Rio Vista.

Rio Vista should also consider providing Rio Vista Transit with additional administrative support to assist with making and scheduling transit trips. This would permit the transit driver to spend all of their time making trips – instead of having to commit part of their day to returning phone calls and scheduling trips – resulting in a higher level of service for the community and better utilization of the transit vehicles. Depending on current staff commitments, an existing employee might be able to fill this role without the need to pay for additional help. It is expected that one person, working quarter time, would be sufficient to fulfill this role.

The following briefly describes the proposed role of each entity with regards to the transit system:

- **City Council** adopts policies directing how transit services should operate and makes decisions on the level of funding for the service.
- **City Manager** will serve as a liaison between city departments and the council and provide direction to city departments to ensure the implementation of coordinated and

effective transit service. In addition the City Manger will ensure that a city representative participates in regional transportation and planning studies that could impact Rio Vista.

- **Finance Director** provides financial oversight of the transit service.
- **Public Works Director** provides operational oversight of the transit service and supervises the mechanic and driver(s).
- **Transit Staff** responsible for trip planning, making trips, cleaning vehicle interiors, and collecting trip information.
- **Mechanic** maintains transit vehicle and tracks maintenance related data.

The recommended organizational chart for transit and a matrix of roles and responsibilities is presented in the next section to illustrate how city staff and outside agencies might work together to provide improved transit service. Adopting this structure as soon as possible will facilitate the successful implementation of the remaining recommendations.

7.2 Agency & Staff Responsibilities

As suggested at the beginning of this chapter, there are a number of areas in which Rio Vista would benefit from outside assistance and formally defined roles within the city. Figure 7-1, below, illustrates the proposed organizational structure for Rio Vista Transit and Table 7-1 identifies who should complete various tasks for the system. This includes recommendations for which tasks should fall within the purview of Rio Vista and which would be best addressed by another agency. This is a short-term recommendation that should be implemented as soon as possible.

Figure 7-1 Proposed Organizational Structure

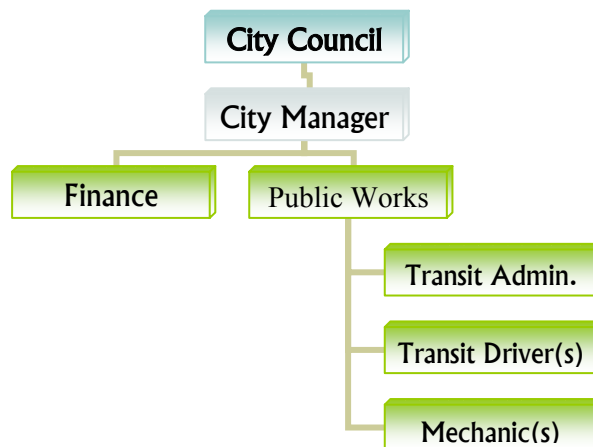


Table 7-1 Roles and Responsibilities

Agency	Roles & Responsibilities
Rio Vista City Council	Provide policy direction Make funding decisions
City Manager	Serve as liaison between City Council and city departments Provide direction to ensure that the transit service is effectively implemented Participate in regional transit and transportation planning activities to ensure that the city's interests are being represented, or designate a representative to do such
Public Works	Supervise mechanic Provide regular oversight Formulate and update transit policies Conduct annual performance evaluations Update and distribute bus schedules Maintain and archive transit records and data
Finance	Prepare documents/reports as needed to receive TDA funding Explore opportunities for local funding Advise on funding availability
Transit Administration	Answer phone and/or respond to phone calls Schedule trips Maintain and submit log of scheduled trips and trip denials
Transit Driver(s)	Pick up and drop off passengers Maintain and submit log of completed trips Cycle wheelchair lift daily Clean vehicle interior
Mechanic	Clean exterior of transit vehicles Maintain vehicles Keep and submit maintenance log
Solano Transportation Authority	Finalize performance measurement system Help monitor transit demand Explore non-local funding opportunities
Metropolitan Transportation Commission	Update schedule and service information on 511 Provide guidance on financial reporting

7.3 Modify Service Schedule

According to trip data from the daily logs and discussions with the drivers and members of the public, it is evident that there is room to improve Rio Vista Transit's schedule. At a minimum, service to Fairfield should be rescheduled to a day other than Friday when some social service and government offices are closed. From the trip data, it is also evident that the supply of service to Antioch, Walnut Grove, and Isleton exceeds the demand. Table 7-2 presents an alternative service schedule that attempts to balance the supply of transit service with the demand for it.

This is a short-term recommendation that should be implemented as soon as possible.

Table 7-2 Proposed Schedule

Day	A.M.	P.M.
Monday	Fairfield	Rio Vista/Antioch
Tuesday	Lodi	Lodi/Walnut Grove/Isleton
Wednesday	Rio Vista	Rio Vista
Thursday	Fairfield	Fairfield/Vacaville
Friday	Lodi	Lodi

This schedule increases service to Fairfield from one to two days a week and eliminates service to Stockton. Monday trips to Fairfield must be relatively short in duration to allow time for the vehicle to return to Rio Vista by 12:30 PM. Monday afternoon trips will be made within Rio Vista and to Antioch. Those passengers who still need to travel to Stockton may transfer between Rio Vista Transit and transit service to Stockton at the Lodi Transportation Station. Lodi Transit has two routes (Routes 21 and 22) that serve Stockton and San Joaquin Regional Transit District's Routes 23 and 24 also serve Lodi. ADA-eligible passengers from Rio Vista should be certified for San Joaquin Regional Transit District's dial-a-ride service in order to use it to travel from Lodi to Stockton.

As mentioned above, as long as regional trips are prioritized on their scheduled day, accommodating local trips as time and space allow will improve the service's cost effectiveness and vehicle utilization.

The Public Works Department should review the proposed schedule, modify if necessary, and then present it for approval to the City Council. Upon adoption, the current and any new policies under the "Guidelines" section of the schedule should be updated. The revised schedule should be distributed to social service agencies, city departments, and municipal buildings for display and distribution, posted on the city's website, and provided to MTC to incorporate in the 511 information services.⁴

7.4 Improve Data Collection

In order to better understand the needs of its customers and to track its own performance, Rio Vista should improve its data collection. At a minimum, when scheduling trips, data should be collected on: scheduled pick-up time, pick-up location, destination (address/landmark/cross streets and city), if a trip is denied and if it is cancelled. For each completed trip the driver should collect information on: the actual pick-up time, trip destination, drop-off time, fare collected, trip purpose, if the wheelchair lift was deployed, and if the passenger did not show up. In addition, the mechanic should systematically track all road calls and preventable and non-preventable crashes. This is a short-term recommendation that should be implemented as soon as possible, as this data will be instrumental in gauging future transit needs.

⁴ 511 is a toll-free and Web service (www.511.org) that provides consolidated information on transportation throughout the Bay Area. The service provides real-time information on traffic incidents, public transportation routes and fares, carpooling, vanpooling, and bicycling. Any changes in the transit service should be communicated to the Travel Information section of MTC. The current contact is Tom Spiekerman (510.817.3219).

The Public Works Department should refine the scheduling and trip sheets to include all of the desired information in a straightforward, easy to use format. Whoever schedules trips (whether it is the driver or an administrator) will be responsible for completing the scheduling forms and the driver will be responsible for the trip sheets. The completed forms should be submitted to the finance department monthly, at which time a spot check will reveal if the required information is being recorded. The mechanic should submit the log of road calls and crashes annually for review and storage with system files. All of these forms should be stored in organized files for future use. If possible, paper records should be converted to digital format prior to filing.

7.5 Improve Regulatory Compliance

In addition to maintaining areas in which it is currently compliant, there are a few areas in which Rio Vista can improve its compliance with existing state and federal regulations. They are:

ADA

- To facilitate the use of the transit system by persons with hearing impairments, Rio Vista Transit should have a telecommunication device or a toll-free service for deaf persons (TDD).
- To better plan for the needs of passengers with mobility devices, drivers should track each time the vehicle's wheelchair lift is used.
- To maintain the wheelchair lift and ensure that it is functioning, it should be cycled each day prior to starting the day's trips.
- Full-time *and* reserve drivers should all be given sensitivity training to better prepare them to courteously and competently meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

Other

- Drivers and mechanics should all have a commercial driver's license and the drivers should also have the GPPV certificate and the passenger endorsement.
- Rio Vista should formally review all applicable OSHA rules and regulations to determine if it needs to develop a formal program to ensure continued compliance with regards to the transit service.
- New drivers need to be trained to understand the transit service as provided as well as to understand the system's policies and the various requirements they must fulfill in operation of the transit service.

This is a short-term recommendation that should be implemented as soon as possible.

7.6 Formalize Transit Policies

Adopting a coherent set of policies to direct the operation of Rio Vista Transit will clarify expectations for both passengers and staff and inform future decisions about appropriate service levels. The following discussion presents a number of areas in which Rio Vista Transit should adopt policies and makes recommendations as to their content. This is a short-term recommendation that should be implemented within 6 months.

Reservation Policy: A two-day advance reservation is the maximum notice that Rio Vista Transit should require and it should continue accepting same-day reservations as the schedule permits. If and when additional administrative assistance becomes available, reservations should be required no more than 24 hours in advance. However, this policy would be very difficult to implement if the driver continues to schedule and drive all trips. To establish an appropriate and realistic reservation policy, Rio Vista's City Council must first decide if it is interested and willing to provide additional funding and or support to the transit program.

Rio Vista Transit should continue to prioritize trips being made to the scheduled destination, but if demand warrants the system should consider allowing trips to other destinations when possible. At a minimum, Rio Vista Transit should allow trips within Rio Vista whenever the schedule permits.

On-Time Policy: Passengers should be picked up within 15 minutes before or after their scheduled pick-up time. Having more confidence in their ability to use transit for a particular trip will encourage increased use by passengers.

Cancellation Policy: Due to the limitations caused by having the driver develop the service schedule, an appropriate cancellation policy is to require 12 hours advance notice of a cancellation. This policy allows the schedule for the next day to be adjusted in advance – which could improve the chances of using the available time slot. When passengers cancel a trip less than 12 hours before the scheduled trip time, the passenger should be sent a warning that details the cancellation policy and consequences. After a third late cancellation, the passenger should lose their transit privileges for a period of 6 months. If an administrator takes over the scheduling duties, the cancellation window can be reduced to 2 hours before the trip.

No-Show Policy: When passengers fail to cancel a trip and are not present at their designated pick-up time they are considered a “no-show” and Rio Vista should send the passenger a warning which details the cancellation policy and consequences. After a third no-show, the passenger should lose their transit privileges for a period of 6 months. When passengers miss their scheduled trips, they waste valuable resources that could have been used more productively on other riders. Therefore, it is important to enforce the no-show policy.

Once a decision has been made on providing administrative support to the transit drivers, the Director of Public Works should make recommendations to the City Manager and council on formal reservation, on time, cancellation, and no-show policies. If needed, additional information on these policies can be gathered from other Solano or San Joaquin County transit agencies.

7.7 Implement Performance Measurement System

Rio Vista Transit should review the proposed (see Chapter 4) performance measures and standards, make any necessary modifications, and adopt a formal performance measurement system. The table (Table 7-3) below summarizes the proposed performance measures and their corresponding standards. For those measures without standards at this time, a notation of “monitor” signifies that Rio Vista should track data on the measure for six months and then use that information to establish an appropriate standard. This is also a short-term recommendation that should be implemented within 1 year.

Due to the more technical nature of this recommendation, STA should take the lead on finalizing the performance measurement system in consultation with Rio Vista. The resulting system should be presented for adoption to the City Council. Once the performance measurement system is established, the Department of Public Works should compile the relevant transit data and evaluate system performance, in advance of the annual budget process.

Table 7-3 Performance Measures and Standards

Performance Area	Performance Measure	FY 02/03 Performance	Proposed Standard
Service Effectiveness	Passenger trips per vehicle mile	0.08 pax/veh-mi	0.11 pax/veh-mi
	Passenger trips per vehicle hour	0.86 pax/veh-hr	1.1 pax/veh-hr
Cost Efficient	Operating cost per vehicle mile	\$4.23	\$3.60
	Operating cost per vehicle hour	\$45.02	\$36.70
Cost Effectiveness	Operating cost per unlinked passenger trip	\$52.38	\$41.00
Vehicle Utilization	Passengers per vehicle	650 pax/veh	Monitor
	Miles per vehicle	7,927 mi/veh	Monitor
Service Quality			
- Accessibility	% of vehicles lift equipped	100%	100%
- Service Span	Hours of service	8:30 AM – 4:30 PM	8:30 AM – 4:30 PM
- Directness	Transit travel time/auto travel time	NA	≤ 2
- Comfort/Satisfaction	Number of passenger complaints	NA	Monitor
- Reliability	% of trips within 15 minutes of scheduled pick-up time	NA	95%
	Number of trip denials	NA	Monitor
- Safety	Vehicle miles between preventable accident	NA	80,000 miles

“NA” means that there is insufficient data to report on.

“Monitor” means that Rio Vista Transit should evaluate the system’s performance over a period of six months before establishing an appropriate standard.

7.8 Expand Funding Sources

Given Rio Vista Transit’s dependence on TDA funds and that the City has had to contribute more funding to the system, everyone would benefit from identifying additional funding sources. This would make Rio Vista less sensitive to fluctuations in TDA funding and put it in a better position to grow with increasing demand. This is a short-term recommendation that should be implemented within 1 to 2 years, if not sooner.

The most logical funding source would be FTA 5311 – Non-urbanized Area Formula Program for Public Transportation – operating funds. Rio Vista could also apply for State Transportation Assistance (STA) funds, but due to the small size of the city and its limited fare revenues, this source would not generate a significant amount of revenue.

Rio Vista may also wish to consider local funding sources such as transportation impact fees on development projects. This particular local funding strategy has considerable potential given the amount of development scheduled to occur in the near future and its likelihood of increasing demand for transit service. As suggested earlier, Rio Vista may also want to work directly with Trilogy to expand the level of transit service available to its residents. One possibility would be to negotiate an arrangement with Trilogy to finance a shopping shuttle once or twice a week using the second transit vehicle. Options include a cost-sharing agreement for dedicated service or a flash pass program. For the flash pass program, Trilogy could purchase passes in bulk at a discounted rate. Then all Trilogy residents would be issued a pass and would show the pass in lieu of paying a fare for each trip they make.

Due to the relatively high fares charged for trips outside of Rio Vista, raising regional fares should not be considered a viable short-term solution unless efforts will be implemented to subsidize fares for qualifying low-income residents. The fare for local, Rio Vista trips could be increased by \$0.25 without dramatically reducing existing ridership. However, it should be kept in mind that this would not generate much additional revenue without a significant increase in ridership. For example, in order for local fares to cover the difference between 10% of the operating expenses and collected fares in 2003, they would have to be over \$4.00 a trip. An increase of this magnitude would dramatically reduce the number of passengers willing to use the service.

STA is the most logical entity to evaluate the viability of non-local funding sources while the Finance Department should take the lead on expanding local funding sources. It is expected that a variety of approaches will need to be pursued to effectively meet the needs of the transit service.

7.9 Improve Vehicle Utilization

In addition to the schedule changes suggested above, as the city grows Rio Vista Transit should consider making its second vehicle available on demand to improve its vehicle utilization. This change would double the system's capacity and provide more service to the community, as it is needed. Operating the second vehicle would, of course, require having a second driver on call. Possible uses for this second vehicle include: intra-Rio Vista trips on days when service is regularly scheduled for other cities, service to Trilogy, trips to social service agencies, or commute service to BART. This is a mid-term recommendation that Rio Vista should revisit in a couple of years once more complete data has been collected.

As the community and demand for transit grows, the system should accommodate any increase in demand through the utilization of both of its vehicles. Depending on what additional services are offered will suggest ways to fund the service. For example, if special transit service is provided to Trilogy residents, Rio Vista should work with Trilogy to establish a cost-sharing agreement or another approach to help offset the costs incurred to serve its community. When it is time to increase service, Rio Vista should consider exchanging its Ford van for an ADA-accessible vehicle to serve as a backup.

Although its utilization rate is low, Rio Vista does not appear to have sufficient demand for two vehicles in regular operation at this time. STA should work with Rio Vista staff to monitor ridership and trip denials to determine when an increase in service is appropriate. When demand warrants an increase in service the discussion will need to expand within the city to set appropriate funding levels.

7.10 Conclusion

Rio Vista Transit is currently providing valuable transportation service to a group of dedicated passengers, but can improve its policies and practices. As the city grows and matures, its transit system will need to grow along with it. The recommendations presented here will help Rio Vista improve the quality of its service, better organize and coordinate its efforts, comply with all applicable state and federal laws, and enable it to expand when demand warrants.

APPENDIX

RIO VISTA TRANSIT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you ride the Rio Vista Transit system?

- Yes, how often?
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - A few times a month
 - A few times a year
- No (Skip to Question 3)

2. Where do you ride Rio Vista Transit? (check all that apply)

- Antioch
- Fairfield
- Isleton
- Lodi
- Rio Vista
- Stockton
- Vacaville
- Walnut Grove
- Other: _____

3. What do you think about Rio Vista Transit? What, if anything, would you change?

4. If you don't ride Rio Vista Transit, what would entice you to ride? (check all that apply)

- More frequent service
- More information about the existing system
- Improved regional connections
- Nothing, I prefer to drive
- Other: _____

5. Do you have any other comments or suggestions? _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME & COMMENTS!

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