

AGENDA ITEM III – A

YUBA-SUTTER TRANSIT AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

I. Call to Order & Roll Call (6:00 P.M.)

Present: Bains (Chair), Buttacavoli, Fuhrer (Vice-Chair), Hudson and Kirchner
Absent: Blaser, Flores and Shaw

II. Public Hearings

A. Final Draft Sacramento Service Plan.

1. Staff Presentation

Executive Director Mauk stated that in May of 2020 during the onset of the pandemic, Yuba-Sutter Transit suspended six of its twenty-three weekday Sacramento schedules due to the State shutting down. Three and a half years later, ridership has not come back to pre-pandemic numbers and the six schedules remain suspended.

In FY 2023, the Sacramento ridership was 38,456 trips which is a 32% increase from FY 2022, but still down 71% from the last pre-pandemic year of FY 2019. With the 2020 reduction in service, we are operating 25% less vehicle service hours than we did pre-pandemic. Our productivity, as measured by passengers per vehicle service hour, was 3.6 passengers per hour in FY 2023 which is down from 9.6 passengers per hour in 2019.

Mauk stated that our NextGen Transit Plan recommended the elimination of one AM and one PM commuter schedule, in part to reallocate resources for the implementation of the Roseville service. Yuba-Sutter Transit did public outreach starting in mid-July with a draft plan and received comments from the public. After receiving the comments, we made minor changes and released the final draft plan in August 2023. On August 22, 2023, the notice for today's public hearing was published in the Appeal Democrat. During this process, Yuba-Sutter Transit did extensive public outreach through our newsletters, press releases, email blasts, website, social media, and staff riding the routes.

Mauk stated that the NextGen Transit Plan recommendation to remove one AM schedule and one PM schedule was estimated to decrease operating cost by \$165,000 in FY 2024 and \$198,000 in the first full fiscal year of FY 2025. Assuming the implementation of the Roseville service in FY 2025, it would offset some of that cost savings.

The final draft plan was summarized as follows:

1. Permanent elimination of the six suspended schedules.
2. Elimination of the existing 2nd morning and 3rd afternoon Highway 99 schedules.
3. Elimination of the existing 3rd Midday schedule.
4. Schedule changes and realignment of the 1st and 2nd Midday schedules to provide service from Yuba City and the Highway 70 corridor, with return service to all stops upon request.

5. Minor time changes (and some name changes) for the remaining schedules, including a slight push of the last afternoon Highway 99 bus to depart Sacramento 10 minutes later than it does now.

2. Open/Close hearing

The Public Hearing opened at 6:09 pm.

Ms. Heather Esterman stated that she works for the Department of Education at the East End complex in Sacramento, and she is happy with the change for the 2nd midday schedule, adding the extra five minutes will make it much easier for employees who work until noon to catch this bus. Ms. Esterman appreciated that Yuba-Sutter Transit didn't take away more trips because this service is not just used by state workers but used by all kinds of passengers to get to Sacramento.

A public comment was made online that we should keep the 3rd 99 schedule so passengers can catch the stop at P & 9th at 4:22 pm or change the times on the 1st 99 so it would leave downtown Sacramento at 4:00 pm.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:24 pm.

3. Board Discussion and Action

Director Fuhrer inquired as to the potential cost of the requested extra 3rd 99 run. Mauk stated that the route could be maintained in keeping with the original recommendation, but the direct annual costs for one commuter schedule would be approximately \$65,000.

Director Hudson asked if Yuba-Sutter Transit is getting a return on the investment of \$65,000 for that one schedule with our current ridership on 3rd 99 PM. Mauk stated that for the calendar year 2023 through August, the average on this schedule was 10.2 riders per day, with the top day in August was 17 riders. He also noted that the combined Sacramento fare box ratio was 16.7% for all of FY 2023.

Director Fuhrer made a motion to approve the Sacramento schedule and policy changes as proposed, effective November 1, 2023. Director Kirchner seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

III. Public Business from the Floor

Ms. Heather Esterman commented that the Dial-A-Ride program is cumbersome, stating that calling and actual reaching someone in dispatch is hard, and having to schedule two weeks in advance makes it hard to get trips a few days in advance because at that time there is nothing available.

Ms. Esterman also stated that Yuba-Sutter Transit should work with Sutter Yuba Behavioral Health to help fix the bus stop at the Live Oak Behavioral Health building because the parking lot is gravel, and it is hard to navigate.

IV. Consent Calendar

Director Kirchner made a motion to approve the consent calendar. Director Hudson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

VI. Reports

A. Request for Proposals (RFP) for Ongoing Information Technology (IT) Support Services – Implementation of the NextGen Transit Plan.

Mauk stated that the NextGen Transit Plan recommended hiring a full-time, in-house Information Technology (IT) employee. The recommendation was based on our current IT support needs and consideration of the increase in IT needs to support the launch of on-demand services, as well as the design and construction of the new transit facility.

Mauk stated that at this time, most of the equipment vendors for IT systems such as the Connect Card fare cards and automatic vehicle location provide support for repair. Yuba-Sutter Transit currently contracts for routine IT support service through Alliant Networking Services, including hardware purchases and maintaining desktops. Mauk stated that our Planning Manager works closely with our vendors on IT issues.

Rather than recruiting an IT manager, the staff recommendation is to instead release an RFP with an increased scope of work with various IT components of the NextGen Transit Plan which would be more cost effective than hiring a full-time in-house IT Manager. Based on the original plan recommendation, the FY 2024 budget included \$97,000 for the salary and benefits for an IT Manager and estimated a total cost of \$480,000 for salary and benefits through FY 2027. In comparison, the cost for the Alliant Networking Services contract for the last year was approximately \$25,000. That five-year contract has expired and continues on a month-to-month basis.

Mauk stated that if approved, staff would release the RFP immediately and anticipate an award recommendation coming back to the Board in December. The contract would likely be executed in January 2024, with a three-year term and two optional one-year extensions.

Director Fuhrer made a motion to release the RFP for IT Support Services as proposed. Director Kirchner seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

B. Special Service Authorization for the 2023 Sikh Parade Parking Shuttle.

Mauk discussed a request for special service for the 2023 Sikh Parade parking shuttle noting that this service has been provided for many years except in 2020 when the event was cancelled due to the pandemic. The Sikh Temple Gurdwara is requesting the service and committing to a contribution of \$22,000 toward passenger fares which is expected to cover the direct operating cost of the service. The parade will be on Sunday, November 5th and the service is expected to include up to 22 buses operating approximately 235 hours of service, consistent with previous service levels.

Director Fuhrer made a motion to authorize the operation of a parking lot shuttle service as proposed. Director Hudson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

C. Feather River Air Quality Management District (FRAQMD) Blue Sky Grant Application for FY 2024.

Mauk stated that the Feather River Air Quality Management District (FRAQMD) is now accepting proposals for the current round of Blue Sky Grants. Approximately \$120,000 is available this year which is up from \$100,000 last year. Yuba-Sutter Transit has long submitted grant applications to this program and most recently received funds to support the very successful Discount Monthly Pass Program for youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities. Under this program, regular \$15 discount monthly passes are sold for just \$5 using FRAQMD funds to cover the \$10 in lost fare on each pass. Based on current discount pass sales and

allowing for continued growth in the future, staff is currently projecting the sale of 10,000 passes over the 12-months of the program. With approval, the grant request will be for \$100,000.

Director Fuhrer made a motion to authorize the submittal of a FRAQMD Blue Sky grant application for continuation of the Discount Monthly Bus Pass Program for area youth, seniors, and person with disabilities as proposed. Director Kirchner seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

D. FY 2023 Annual Performance Report.

Mauk discussed the performance report for the annual period ending June 2023. He noted that there is a reference to the Oroville shuttle which was still in operation for the first three months of the previous reporting period.

Mauk stated that overall ridership is up 15% system wide from the previous year with vehicle service hours remaining flat, and that the 7% drop in fare box ratio is due to increased operating costs.

E. Project & Program Updates.

1. Binney Junction / State Route 70 (B Street) Highway Project

Caltrans started construction on July 31st. Per our temporary encroachment agreement, they fenced and secured a significant portion of our north yard. Due to the two-month delay from the original start date, staff is working with Caltrans to extend the temporary agreement to shift the ending date by two months. Shifting the agreement is contingent on a formal extension of the lease agreement with the Yuba County airport for bus overflow parking.

The temporary easement for phase two of the construction, which would take over significant portions of both the north and south yards, is planned for September 2024 through December 2026.

2. Yuba-Sutter Transit FY 2023 Fiscal Audit (Virtual Field Work September 25 – 29)

Mauk noted that field work for the annual fiscal audit will be conducted all next week.

3. Annual Sacramento Area Council Governments (SACOG) Unmet Transit Needs Hearings.

Mauk stated that the annual Unmet Transit Needs Hearings, as required by State Transportation Development Act funding regulations, will be held virtually at 6:00pm, Tuesday, October 23rd and in person locally at the Yuba County Government Center at 1:00pm, Monday, October 25th.

VI. Correspondence / Information

None.

VII. Other Business

Mauk stated that Yuba-Sutter Transit will operate full service on October 9th, Columbus Day.

Director Fuhrer stated that he hopes we are being responsive to the public comments when it comes to shifting a route by a few minutes or to meet the public's needs when there is a large demand or offering passengers an option.

Director Kirchner agreed with Director Fuhrer's comments.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 pm.

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY OCTOBER 19, 2023 AT 4:00 P.M. IN THE YUBA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CHAMBERS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTICED.