



# County of Tulare

## 2021-2022 Extension to

## 2015-2020 Transit Development Plan

Adopted  
June 23, 2020



# COUNTY OF TULARE TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**Final Report: November 2015**

Resolution No. 2015-1065

**Extension: June 2020**

Resolution No. 2020-0351

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*This document is an extension (the TDP Extension) of the 2015-2020 Transit Development Plan (the TDP), adopted by Tulare County under Resolution 2015-1065, for the years 2021-2022. New information included as part of the Extension is added to the previous sections of the report in a blue, italic font to distinguish from the original content of the Plan, while tables and figures use blue shading or blue fill and labeling to distinguish new information.*

*It was prepared by the Tulare County Resource Management Agency with input and review by the Tulare County Association of Governments. The Extension reproduces key sections from the TDP and provides additional data, projections, goals, and other information to update the report as to data from 2015-2020 and create new projections and goals for 2021-2022. The Extension will also provide an update and context for plans and proposals from the Plan that were or were not implemented during this period. Section numbers, figure numbers, and pagination in this report are intended to match the Plan to the extent possible. The Extension should be reviewed in the context of the Plan and sections that were not reproduced as part of the Extension are intended to be adopted and incorporated into the Extension.*

*The preparation of the TDP was financed through a Federal Highway Administration planning grant and prepared by the Tulare County Association of Governments in conjunction with the Tulare County Resource Management Agency which operates Tulare County Area Transit. The content of the TDP did not necessarily reflect the views of the Federal Transit Administration, Federal Highway Administration or the California Department of Transportation.*

*The TDP Extension does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation.*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) prepared this five-year Transit Development Plan (TDP) for the County of Tulare, as an update to the existing TDP that was developed for the County in 2008. This TDP covers fiscal years (FY) 2015/16 through 2019/20.

*Tulare County Area Transit (TCaT) staff prepared this two-year Transit Development Plan Extension (TDP Extension) for the County of Tulare, as an update to the existing TDP that was developed for the County by TCAG in 2015. This TDP extension covers Fiscal Year 2020/2021 through 2021/22. The extension will focus primarily on updating the financial and capital plans.*

The County of Tulare operates the Tulare County Area Transit (TCaT) system. TCaT consists of a four intercity/community fixed routes, five local community circulator routes, and a general public dial-a-ride service that operates within four distinct service areas. This TDP presents a summary of the existing conditions related to the TCaT system, defines (or updates) goals, objectives and service standards for the system, and presents a five-year service, capital, and financial plan for the system.

*TCaT now consists of four intercity/community fixed routes, four local community circulator routes, one flex-route serving the City of Lindsay, and a general public dial-a-ride service that operates within four distinct service areas. The TDP extension will primarily focus on four areas: a summary of existing conditions, an update to the financial and capital plans, an update to the operations plan, and an update to the implementation plan.*

## PLAN OBJECTIVES

This TDP serves as the primary planning document for the County's transit services. This TDP was developed to:

1. Evaluate current TCaT operations;
2. Elicit input from TCaT riders and the community;
3. Identify and resolve service issues;
4. Recommend strategies for the delivery of public transportation within the County's service area over the next five years; and,
5. Identify the capital needs and funding sources needed to operate the recommended TCaT services.

## PLAN APPROACH

The development of the TDP focused on seeking input and data related to the County's transit system that would provide a solid base from which to plan the most efficient use of TCaT services. Efforts centered on garnering input from those people directly involved in the day-to-day operations of the service (both County transit staff and riders), as well as potential riders. Information was collected in a variety of ways, including:

- A review of current and past operational and financial data;
- An assessment of current and planned County transit projects;
- Discussions with County transit staff;
- Public meetings; and,
- Passenger and surveys.

Public involvement is key to the success of transit planning within any community. On-board passenger surveys were administered to ascertain passenger perceptions about the TCaT system. The surveys revealed that the average TCaT user is transit-reliant, with no access to a vehicle. Furthermore, almost half of respondents indicated that Spanish is spoken in their homes, underscoring the need for all transit information to be made available in both English and Spanish. Overall, public awareness and support of TCaT services is very high.

In addition, two separate regional transit studies directly related to TCaT services were being conducted during development of this TDP (the *Tulare County Regional Long Range Transit Plan (LRTP)* and the *Southeast Tulare County Mobility Plan*). Public comments received about TCaT through the outreach process conducted for these studies were included in this plan.

## **SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

Several issues were identified during the preparation of this TDP that will have an effect on future service decisions. Following are summaries of the key issues that need to be addressed over the five-year planning horizon of this TDP:

### **Blended Farebox Recovery Ratio**

The California Transportation Development Act (TDA) mandates a farebox recovery ratio of 10% for fixed route and demand-response operators that provide service within non-urbanized areas as a requirement for receiving TDA funding. Historically, TCaT has been held to the 10% rural farebox recovery ratio requirement, meaning that 10% of the system's annual operating costs must be covered by fare revenues. However, the last TDA performance audit completed for TCaT (in June of 2014) recommended that the County adhere to a "blended" farebox ratio that takes into account both the urban and rural farebox ratios, since TCaT's service area includes both urbanized and non-urbanized areas. As the regional transportation planning agency, TCAG is responsible for developing this blended farebox recovery ratio.

Working with TCaT staff, TCAG has developed a methodology for calculating a blended farebox ratio based on route miles and service areas. Fixed route costs were apportioned to urbanized areas and non-urbanized areas in proportion to the route miles included in both, and dial-a-ride costs were apportioned entirely to non-urbanized areas. This methodology resulted in a blended farebox ratio of 12% for TCaT. This blended farebox ratio will take effect in FY 2016/17.

*The blended farebox ratio of 12% began in Fiscal Year 2016/17 and remains in effect since. The actual farebox ratio achieved was 16.03% in FY 2018/19 per the Transportation Development Act (TDA) report.*

### Low Fixed Route Fares

TCaT's fixed route fares are comparable to other transit providers within Tulare County, but not in relation to the service provided. Regional systems that provide countywide service typically charge more for service than their intracity/local counterparts due to the additional costs they incur through longer routes/additional service miles, but TCaT fixed route general fares have not been increased in over seventeen years, and the general fixed route fares of the local providers have caught up to it. Additionally, the TCaT fixed route system has experienced a significant increase in overall ridership since the infusion of Measure R (local sales tax) revenues in 2007, but fare revenues have not been adjusted to account for increased service levels.

*A new fare structure was approved on April 6, 2016, which took effect August 2016.*

## SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS

Service recommendations were developed to address the issues and service constraints identified through the development of this TDP. Preliminary service scenarios were refined through discussions with County staff regarding current and near-future transit issues. Final recommendations focus on providing efficient services that meet the required (blended) farebox ratio, address service constraints, and maintain the County's vision for the TCaT services. The County of Tulare will be reviewing multiple options and scenarios regarding possible fare increases. In addition to financial and service considerations, consideration will be given to the compatibility with the types of fare media used, as TCaT currently uses punch passes and tokens in addition to traditional cash fares. The following recommendations should be implemented over the next five years:

### Fixed Route Service

- Consider increasing the fixed route general and discounted fares in 2016/17, to help align fares with the service provided, and to bring fare revenues in line with increasing operating expenses and inflation.

*Implemented; fixed route fares were raised from \$1.50 to \$2.00 in 2016.*

- Add additional weekend service to Route 30 (Northeast County) in January of 2016, by providing Saturday service to Lemon Cove and Three Rivers.

*Implemented; service to Three Rivers and Lemon Cove has been added for first run of the day and last run ending service in Visalia from Three Rivers.*

- Increase weekday service frequencies on Route 10 (North County) in FY 2016/17, through the addition of one bus.

*Not implemented; TCaT experienced a decrease in ridership over the period of the TDP, as did other transit agencies locally and nationwide. Staff continues to monitor ridership and farebox*

*recovery before such an increase is implemented. A tripper is often used for the first run of the day to accommodate the higher ridership during peak hours.*

- Increase weekday service frequencies on Route 40 (South County) in FY 2016/17, through the addition of one bus.

*Not implemented; TCaT experienced a decrease in ridership over the period of the TDP, as did other transit agencies locally and nationwide. Staff continues to monitor ridership and farebox recovery before such an increase is implemented.*

- Purchase and install electronic card readers to promote the use of regional electronic fare media.

*Not implemented; staff has applied and received grant funding for this part of the ITS project. Staff plans on implementing this by FY 2021.*

- Purchase buses annually to maintain peak service requirements and increase service reliability.

*Partially implemented; the County purchased two new El Dorado CNG buses on November 17, 2014 and two Ford F-550 CNG buses on August 1, 2018. The County also has grant funding to purchase three additional buses under the 5339 program which are expected in the winter of 2020. Funding has been awarded for two additional buses under the CMAQ program and one more under the 5339 program.*

### Dial-A-Ride Service

- Consider increasing the Dial-A-Ride general and discounted fares in 2016/17, to reflect farebox recovery and operational cost issues; demand-response service is more costly to operate than fixed route service, so a dial-a-ride fare increase may be warranted during the life of this plan to partially offset the cost of providing demand-response trips.

*Implemented; Dial-a-Ride standard fares were raised to \$3.00 in 2016.*

- Review and adjust service areas and trip scheduling techniques as needed, to reflect funding and service demands.

*Implemented; Service areas and scheduling were reviewed annually, which led to the increase in service for the Route 60 Lindsay Flex Route in 2019.*

- Purchase buses annually to maintain peak service requirements and increase service reliability.

*Partially implemented; staff has purchased two new El Dorado CNG buses November 17, 2014, and two Ford F-550 CNG buses on August 1, 2018. TCaT currently has five Dial-A-Ride buses that are still in good condition and within the useful life.*

### Other (General)

- Implement a blended farebox recovery ratio in 2016/17, as developed by TCAG and approved by Caltrans.

*Implemented; TCaT's fare recovery ratio has been 12% since FY 2016/17.*

- Amend monthly service summary reports to include all transit expenditures (not just expenses incurred by the service contractor) in order to be able to fully assess service performance by mode

*In progress; staff continues to work with fiscal to update monthly summary reports.*

- Require service contractor to report information related to the number of bus trips canceled, ADA trip denials, and dial-a-ride no-shows.

*Implemented as of 2016; Contractor provides monthly report for all canceled, ADA trip denials and dial-a-ride no-shows.*

- Update the TCaT color scheme (while maintaining the TCaT logo) to give the system a fresh look.

*Implemented; a newer, simplified TCaT logo has been adopted:*



- Focus marketing efforts to increase ridership and improve service efficiency.

*Implemented; staff continues to participate in various marketing efforts. Participation in local events such as Farmworkers Women Conference Event, Senior Day at the Park, Local town hall meeting, and Community outreach meetings. TCaT also contributes to the GreenLine call center a service that provides passengers route information for Visalia Transit, Porterville Transit, Tulare Transit, and Dinuba Transit.*

Note: Recommendations set forth in the *Southeast Tulare County Mobility Plan* and the *Tulare County Regional Long Range Transit Plan (LRTP)* (currently being developed) may require additions to the service, capital, and financial components of this TDP. Recommendations that affect TCaT's service will be included as an addendum to this TDP at a later date, if warranted. In addition, technological advances may also warrant revisiting the TDP sooner than 5 years.

## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

The 2014 Transit Development Plan (TDP) represents the primary planning document that will guide the decisions associated with administering the transit services operated by the County of Tulare, known as Tulare County Area Transit (TCaT), over the coming years. The previous TDP was completed in 2008 and covered FY 2008/09 through FY 2014/15. This TDP will evaluate current transit services provided by the County of Tulare, and provide recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of these services over the next five years (FY 2015/16 through FY 2019/20). Recommendations made within this document will supersede the previous TDP.

*The 2020 TDP Extension is intended as a document to update portions of the 2015 TDP and recommendations and context therein should be taken in context of other changes. This TDP extension will evaluate current transit services provided by the County of Tulare, and provide recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of these services over the next two years (FY 2020/21 through FY 2021/22).*

### PURPOSE OF THE TDP

A TDP is a blueprint for the delivery of transportation services provided to the general public. The County of Tulare TDP will serve as a guide for improving public transit services within the County's service area over a five-year planning horizon. The TDP will provide the public, policy makers, and county staff an opportunity to understand current transit conditions, define the future demand for service within the county, and establish an operational and capital plan to meet those demands.

A TDP also serves as the primary justification for receipt of federal, state and local funding for transit operations and capital projects. As such, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors and county staff will use this TDP to help guide the planning, policy making, programming, and budgeting of transit activities over the next five years. The Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) will use this document to provide the basis for inclusion of TCaT's transit operations and capital projects in programming documents such as the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP), as documentation to support projects included in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and as the basis for use of Measure R transit funds. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will use the TDP as documentation for supporting the use of federal and state funding.

*The TDP Extension is a way of continuing previous policies and goals established in the TDP for additional years while evaluating the status of previous goals and changed conditions during the elapsed time period.*

### CONTENTS OF THE TDP

Chapter 1 continues with a community profile of the TCaT service area.

*The demographic information within Chapter 1 is included for ease and reference.*

Chapter 2 describes the history and organizational structure of the TCaT system. It also provides a description of the current fixed route and dial-a-ride services, as well as a fleet inventory and financial profile.

*Chapter 2 has been updated to include new ridership data and changes made to the system during the TDP planning period.*

Chapter 3 presents a summary of public input garnered thorough on-board passenger surveys and stakeholder meetings.

*Chapter 3 is not included in the TDP extension.*

Chapter 4 provides an operational analysis of the existing system. This section also includes future ridership demand estimates, a fare analysis, and reviews of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Transportation Development Act.

*Chapter 4 is not included in the TDP extension.*

Chapter 5 outlines TCaT's system goals, objectives and service standards.

*Chapter 5 is not included in the TDP extension.*

Chapter 6 outlines the direction the system should take over the next five years. It includes a discussion of the proposed service strategies and associated fare structure. It also includes an administrative plan, marketing plan, and service implementation schedule.

*Certain sections of Chapter 6 have been partially included in the TDP extension in so far as it pertains to the Service Implementation Plan, and the Safety and Security Plan. In addition, the Additional Recommendations/Future Considerations and Key Issues sections are included in so far as they will be updated for the TDP Extension period.*

Chapter 7 outlines TCaT's five-year capital purchase program.

*Chapter 7 outlines TCaT's two-year extension to capital purchase program.*

Chapter 8 presents a five-year financial plan for the TCaT system, which includes estimates of operating and capital expenditures, and projections of revenue by source for the proposed services. This section also includes a discussion of potential funding sources.

*Chapter 8 outlines TCaT's two-year extension to financial plan.*

## COUNTY PROFILE/SERVICE AREA

### Geographic Area

Tulare County is centrally located within California (approximately 200 miles north of Los Angeles, and 250 miles south of Sacramento), in the heart of the Central San Joaquin Valley (see Figure 1 – Location Map). The San Joaquin Valley is a rich agricultural area, and Tulare County is recognized as one of the largest agricultural producers in the world. The County was formed from parts of Mariposa County, and named after the great Tulare Lake, a large freshwater lake that was drained for agricultural development in the 1800s.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Tulare County has a total land area of 4,824 square miles. The eastern half of the County is composed primarily of public lands included within Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Inyo and Sequoia National Forests, and several wilderness areas.

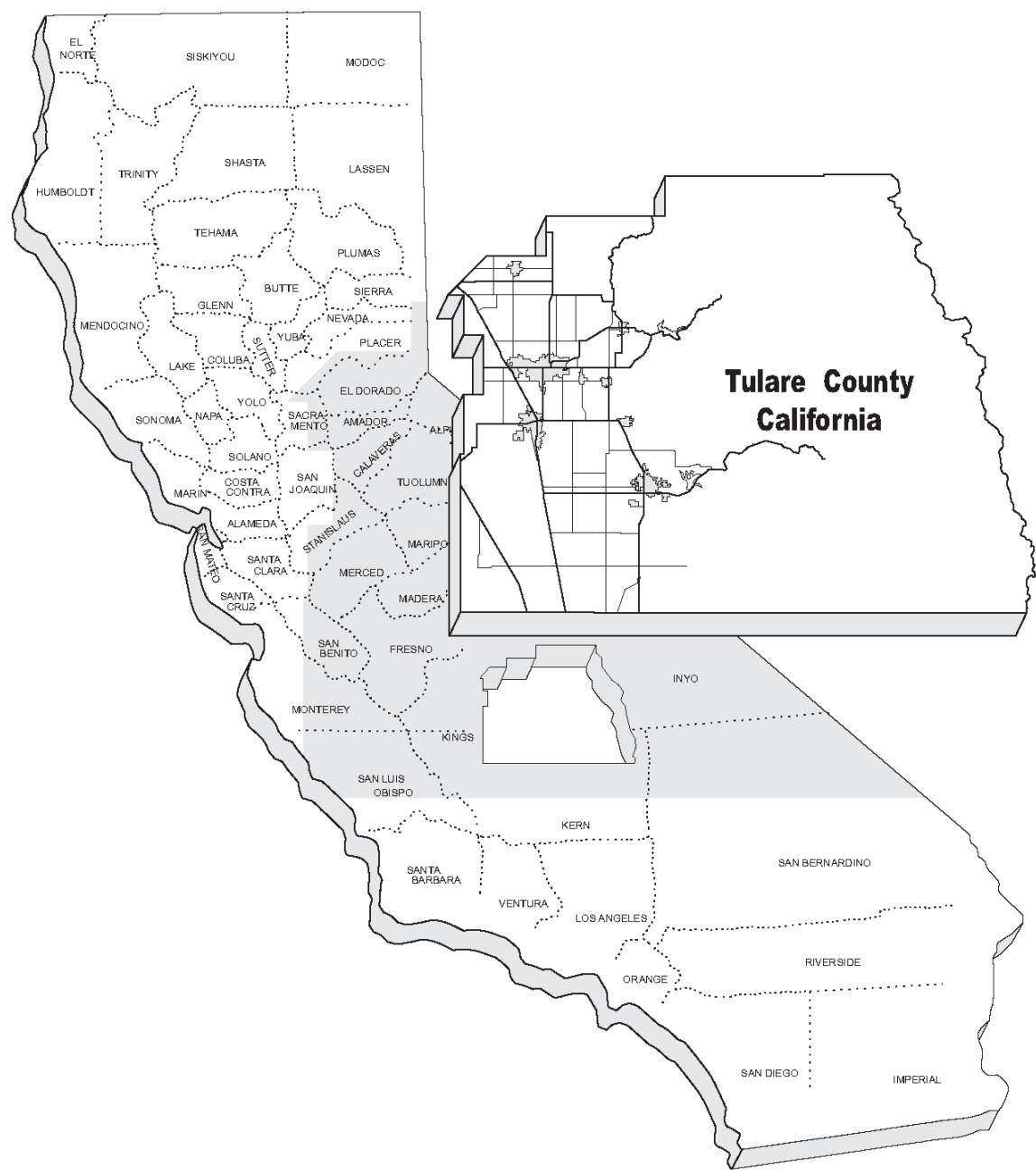
### **Government**

The County of Tulare is a General Law County created by the State Legislature in 1852. The County is governed by a five-member Board of Supervisors. Supervisors are elected to four-year terms, and represent Supervisorial Districts within the County. The Board meets every Tuesday to address business and public needs within its jurisdiction. The County provides municipal services to residents who live in unincorporated areas outside city boundaries, such as transit services. There are twenty-one unincorporated communities within Tulare County, spread out between agricultural lands (see Figure 2, page 1-6).

In addition to the unincorporated areas, Tulare County includes the eight incorporated cities of Dinuba, Exeter, Farmersville, Lindsay, Porterville, Tulare, Visalia, and Woodlake. The City of Visalia is the County Seat.



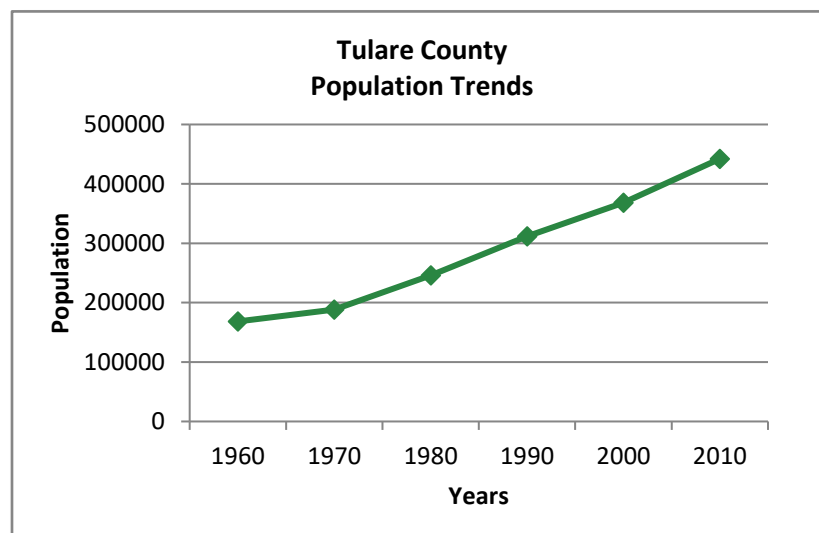
Figure 1 - Location Map



## Demographics

A detailed demographic profile helps to better understand the transportation needs of a region. The demographic data contained herein was taken from the 2010 U.S. Census, and the U.S. Census Bureau's 2009-2013 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates unless otherwise denoted.

At approximately 459,500 residents, the County of Tulare is one of the fastest growing counties in the state; in 2013 it was ranked the 6<sup>th</sup> fastest growing county in California, with a 10-year growth rate of 16.8%. Between 2000 and 2010 the population of Tulare County increased by 20.2% with an average annual growth rate of 1.8%. The highest population growth occurred in the cities of Porterville, Visalia and Tulare (see Table 1).



Source: California Department of Finance

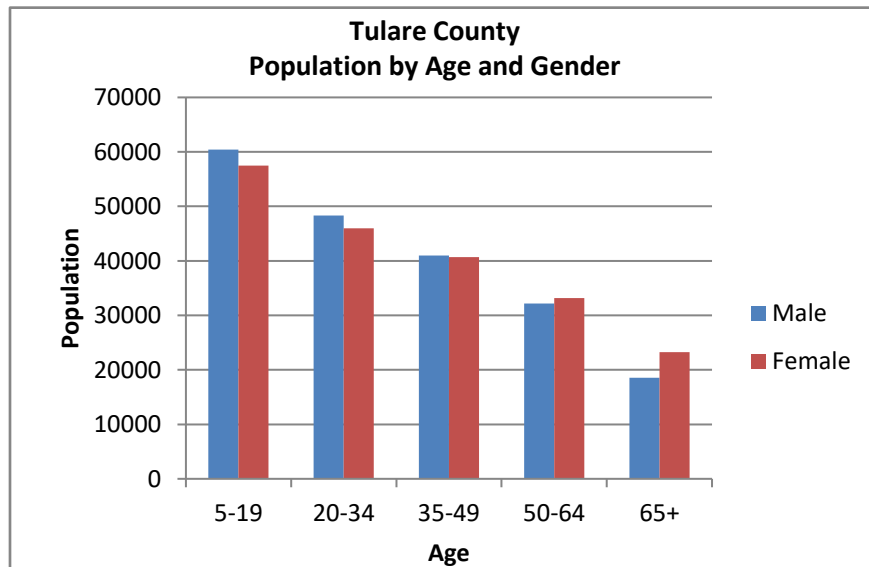
Table 1 – Total Population by City			
Area	2000	2010	% Change
Dinuba	16,844	21,453	27.3%
Exeter	9,168	10,334	12.7%
Farmersville	8,737	10,588	21.1%
Lindsay	10,297	11,768	14.2%
Porterville	39,615	54,165	36.7%
Tulare	43,994	59,278	34.7%
Visalia	91,877	124,442	35.4%
Woodlake	6,651	7,279	9.4%
<b>Total Incorporated</b>	<b>227,183</b>	<b>299,307</b>	<b>31.7%</b>
Unincorporated	140,838	142,872	1.4%
<b>County Total</b>	<b>368,021</b>	<b>442,179</b>	<b>20.2%</b>

Source: 2000 & 2010 U.S. Census

As of January 1, 2014, the California Department of Finance (DOF) estimated the County's population to be 459,446, which represents a 3.9% increase over the 2010 U.S. Census total of 442,179. According to DOF projections, the County is expected to reach a population of 722,838 by 2040.

Tulare County's population density is shown in Figure 2. The most populous areas are cities located in the western portion of the County; the County's General Plan directs growth towards urban populations. The most populous cities include Visalia, Tulare and Porterville. The most populous unincorporated communities include Cutler/Orosi, Earlimart and Ivanhoe.

The 2010 Census revealed that roughly 50% of the County's population is male (221,442) and roughly 50% is female (220,737). Of the total population, 27% are youth between the ages of 5 and 19, 21% are between the ages of 20 and 34, 19% are between the ages of 35 and 49, 15% are between the ages of 50 and 64, and 9% of the population is 65 years of age or older. The median age is 29.6 years. The following chart shows this distribution by gender.



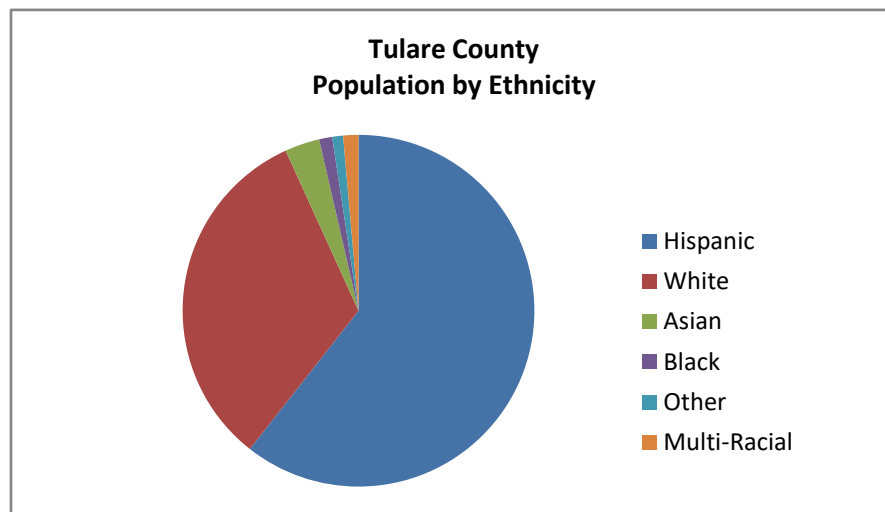
Source: 2010 U.S. Census

According to data contained within the *County of Tulare Recommended Budget (2014-2015)*, the fastest growing segment of the population is retirees over the age of 65, and the County's large population of youth under the age of 24 is above State averages.

Figure 2 – Tulare County Population Density



The majority of the population within the County is Hispanic (61%). Based on reported census counts, White (Non-Hispanic) persons make up 33% of the County's population. The following graph depicts the County's ethnic breakdown.



Source: 2010 U.S. Census

Youth (typically students over the age of 10) and seniors are less likely to have access to a vehicle making them more reliant on transit for their travel needs. Tulare County has a relatively youthful population, making primary school and college students a target market for transit ridership. Census data from the ACS indicates that approximately 138,307 residents (age three years or older) were enrolled in school during the survey period (2009-2013).

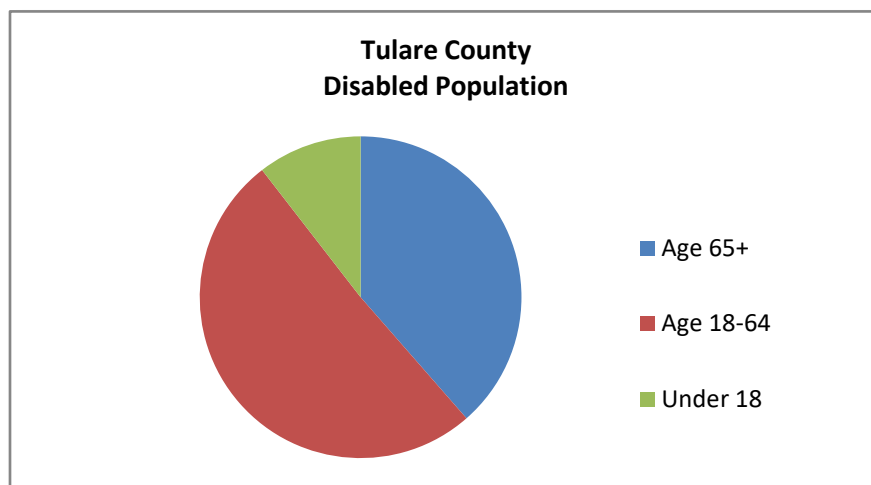
During the ACS survey period 69% of County residents twenty-five years of age or older had at least a high school diploma; 8% had an Associate's degree, 9% had a Bachelor's degree, and 5% had a Graduate or professional degree. Conversely, 32% of residents twenty-five years of age or older did not have a high school diploma, with 21% having less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education.

The median household income in Tulare County during the ACS survey period was \$42,708, while the per capita income was \$17,894. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of total households earned less than \$25,000 annually. Thirteen percent (13%) of households earned between \$25,000 and \$34,999, 15% fell into the \$35,000 to \$49,999 range, and 43% of households earned more than \$50,000 annually. In 2013 the official poverty level was an annual income of \$11,888; approximately 26% of the County's population lived below the poverty level in 2013. The State average is 16%. According to current census data, approximately 42% of single mothers and 12% of seniors (over the age of 65) residing in Tulare County live below the poverty level.

*During the 2018 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2018 ACS), the median household income was updated to \$47,518.*

Along with age and income, mobility and access to a vehicle are key population characteristics to explore when determining transit-reliant populations within an area. These characteristics produce physical, financial, legal, and self-imposed limitations that generally preclude individuals from driving, leaving public transit as an essential mode of transportation. According to the 2009-2013 ACS survey, 47,392 residents, or 11% of the County's non-institutionalized population has a disability. Thirty-eight percent 38% of the County's disabled population is sixty-five years of age or older.

*According to the 2018 ACS, 12.1% of the County's population has a disability. Of this, approximately 39% of the County's disabled population is sixty-five years of age or older, as shown in the table below:*



*Source: U.S. Census, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

Of the 131,642 reported occupied households within Tulare County during the ACS survey period, roughly 7% had no vehicle available for use, while 32% of households had only one vehicle. According to the Caltrans *2014 Tulare County Economic Forecast*, the expected population growth for Tulare County between 2014 and 2019 (6.7%) will outpace the expected growth in number of vehicles (5.8%), indicating that many residents of within the County will continue to be transit-reliant. The following table sums up the transit-reliant populations living within Tulare County.

*The following table has been updated based on the 2018 ACS.*

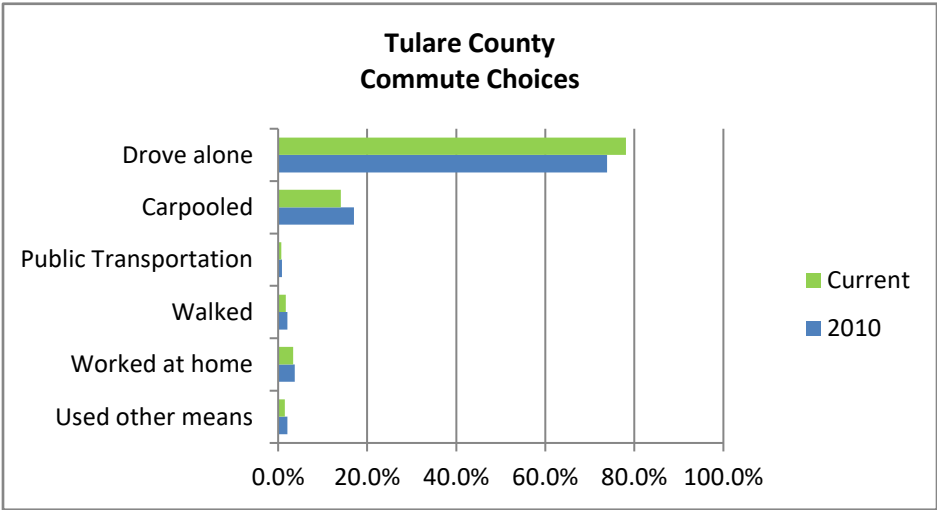
Table 2 – Transit-Reliant Populations (Updated 2020)		
Transit-Reliant Populations	Population	%
Total Population in Tulare County	460,477	100%
Age 10-24 (student age)	112,051	24%
Age 65 or older (seniors)	50,391	11%
Low-income residents (living below poverty level)	115,786	26%
Households without an automobile	8,274	6%
Individuals with a disability	55,228	12%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Economy and Employment

According to California Employment Development Department (EDD), Labor Market Information Division, approximately 197,700 Tulare County residents were part of the labor force in December of 2014. Of these eligible workers 172,600 were employed, and 25,100 were unemployed, resulting in a 12.7% unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted). The County’s current unemployment rate is the lowest it has been since 2008, but it is higher than California’s average rate, which is one of the highest in the nation. During the recent recession, the County’s unemployment peaked at 17% (during 2010).

According to the 2009-2013 ACS survey, 97% of Tulare County workers commute to work; 3% of the population works from home. Seventy-six percent (76%) of the working population drive alone to work, 16% carpool, and 2% walk to work. Less than 1% of the County’s workforce uses public transportation to commute to work. The median travel time to work is 21 minutes. The following chart shows that commute choices within Tulare County did not significantly change between 2000 and 2010, except for a slight shift from carpooling to solo driving. This shift makes sense in light of the improving economy.



Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*The chart above has been updated based upon the 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, which do not show a substantial change from the 2009-2013 data.*

Tulare County is one of the most productive counties in the U.S. in terms of agricultural revenues. With over 1.7 million acres in agricultural production, the County produces a variety of crops, including citrus, grapes and nuts. The dairy and beef industries are also important components of the County’s economy. The County’s centralized location within California and access to major shipping routes provides easy access to both national and world markets for a variety of products. Tulare County is also California’s only Targeted Tax Area, offering tax incentives to businesses locating and operating within the targeted zone.

According to the 2009-2013 ACS, 21% of employed County residents over the age of 16 are employed in education or the health care industry, 11% are employed in the retail industry, and 8% in manufacturing. Agriculture employs roughly 18% of the County’s population.

Twenty-four percent (24%) of Tulare County’s employed population works in management, business, science, or the arts. Service occupations account for another 19% of regional jobs. The remainder of the County’s employed residents work in natural resources, construction, and maintenance (21%), in sales and office occupations (21%), or in production, transportation, and material moving occupations (17%). Table 3 lists Tulare County’s largest employers.

Table 3 - Major Employers in Tulare County		
Employer	Type of Business	Number of Employees (2014 data)
County of Tulare	Government	4,800
Kaweah Delta Health Care District	Health Services	2,000
Ruiz Food Products	Food Processing	1,800
Walmart Distribution Center	Distribution	1,692
Porterville Development Center	Health Services	1,300
College of the Sequoias	Education	1,160
Sierra View District Hospital	Health Services	725
Jostens	Manufacturing	720
CIGNA HealthCare	Health Services	700
Land O’Lakes	Food Processing	600

*Source: County of Tulare 2014 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)*

Transportation System Overview

Highways

State Route 99 (SR-99), a major north-south corridor in California, provides direct access to Los Angeles and Sacramento and the numerous cities located throughout the San Joaquin Valley.



State Route 198 (SR-198) provides an east-west connection between Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and Interstate 5 in Fresno County. Various other state highway corridors within Tulare County provide connections to California's primary road network, including State Route 137 (SR-137), which runs east and west through Tulare to Lindsay, State Route 190 (SR-190), which runs east and west between Tipton and Porterville, and State Route 65 (SR-65), which runs north and south through Exeter and Porterville.

### ***Rail***

Three major rail companies provide freight service within Tulare County: Union Pacific (UP), Burlington Northern & Santa Fe (BN&SF), and San Joaquin Valley Railroad (SJVRR). The SJVRR provides short-haul service. The rail lines connect the County to all major west coast markets and destinations. In addition, there are rail service spurs and freight terminals throughout the County to serve specific industries.

There is no direct passenger rail service within Tulare County, but Amtrak provides bus service linking the Visalia Transit Center and Goshen Junction to the Amtrak station in Hanford (Kings County).

### ***Air***

Five publicly-owned airports are in operation within Tulare County. Tulare County owns and maintains Sequoia Field, while the cities of Tulare (Mefford Field), Porterville, Woodlake, and Visalia each operate a municipal airport. Visalia Municipal Airport is the only airport in the County that provides regularly scheduled commercial passenger service.

There are two privately owned airports within the County. Eckert Field is located half a mile north of the community of Strathmore, and Thunderhawk (Exeter Airport) is located three miles south of Exeter and three miles northwest of Lindsay. Both airports are open to public use.

Various private "special use" airfields and airstrips are located throughout the County. These airstrips are used for agriculture and other private aviation activities.

### ***Bus***

Along with TCaT, which provides countywide service linking the population centers, Tulare County residents are served by local service operators. The cities of Dinuba, Tulare, Porterville and Visalia each provide fixed route and dial-a-ride service within their city limits, while the cities of Exeter and Woodlake provide dial-a-ride service only.

Regional service is provided by Dinuba Area Regional Transit (to Reedley in Fresno County), TCaT (to Delano in Kern County), Kings Area Regional Transit (between Visalia and Kings County), Greyhound (to Fresno, Bakersfield, and Hanford) and Orange Belt Stages (to communities throughout the Valley, the State, and Nevada).

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## CHAPTER 2 – SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

### HISTORY

The transit services under the jurisdiction of the County of Tulare operate collectively as Tulare County Area Transit (TCaT). TCaT provides both regional and intercity public transit services throughout Tulare County and to the City of Delano in neighboring Kern County, as well as subsidies to residents using Orange Belt Stages' common carrier routes.

The County of Tulare has been providing public transit service since 1981. TCaT has evolved from a lifeline service to a connector service, providing connections to urban transit services in Dinuba, Porterville, Tulare, Visalia and Delano. Early services, provided under the name of Tulare County Transit (TCT), included rural intercity fixed route services (COACH), commuter service (STAGE) that brought Tulare County residents from outlying communities into Visalia, and local demand response (dial-a-ride) within and around various communities. The STAGE and COACH services were merged into a single regional fixed route network during FY 2000/01, and the system was rebranded to the current TCaT name in 2006.

The County currently operates four intercity/community fixed routes and five local community circulator routes. TCaT also offers a general public dial-a-ride service within four distinct service areas. The County contracts with the Cities of Lindsay, Woodlake, Porterville, Tulare and Visalia to provide extended service to County residents in surrounding unincorporated areas.

### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors is the policy making body for the TCaT system. The five-member Board adopts the Transit Development Plan, and through the County's annual budgetary process establishes operational and funding levels for the system. The Board also sets operational policies and parameters for the TCaT services.

Management of TCaT is an integrated function of the County of Tulare. The County's transit division which administers the service is part of the Tulare County Resource Management Agency (RMA). The RMA's Public Works Branch oversees all transit functions through its Transit Division, which is part of its Management Group 3: Special Programs. Program management is provided by the Transit Coordinator with assistance from a Transit Technician. Together, they are responsible for the overall planning, monitoring, and marketing of the system. They also act as liaisons to TCAG, Caltrans and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The RMA fiscal division assists with accounting duties.

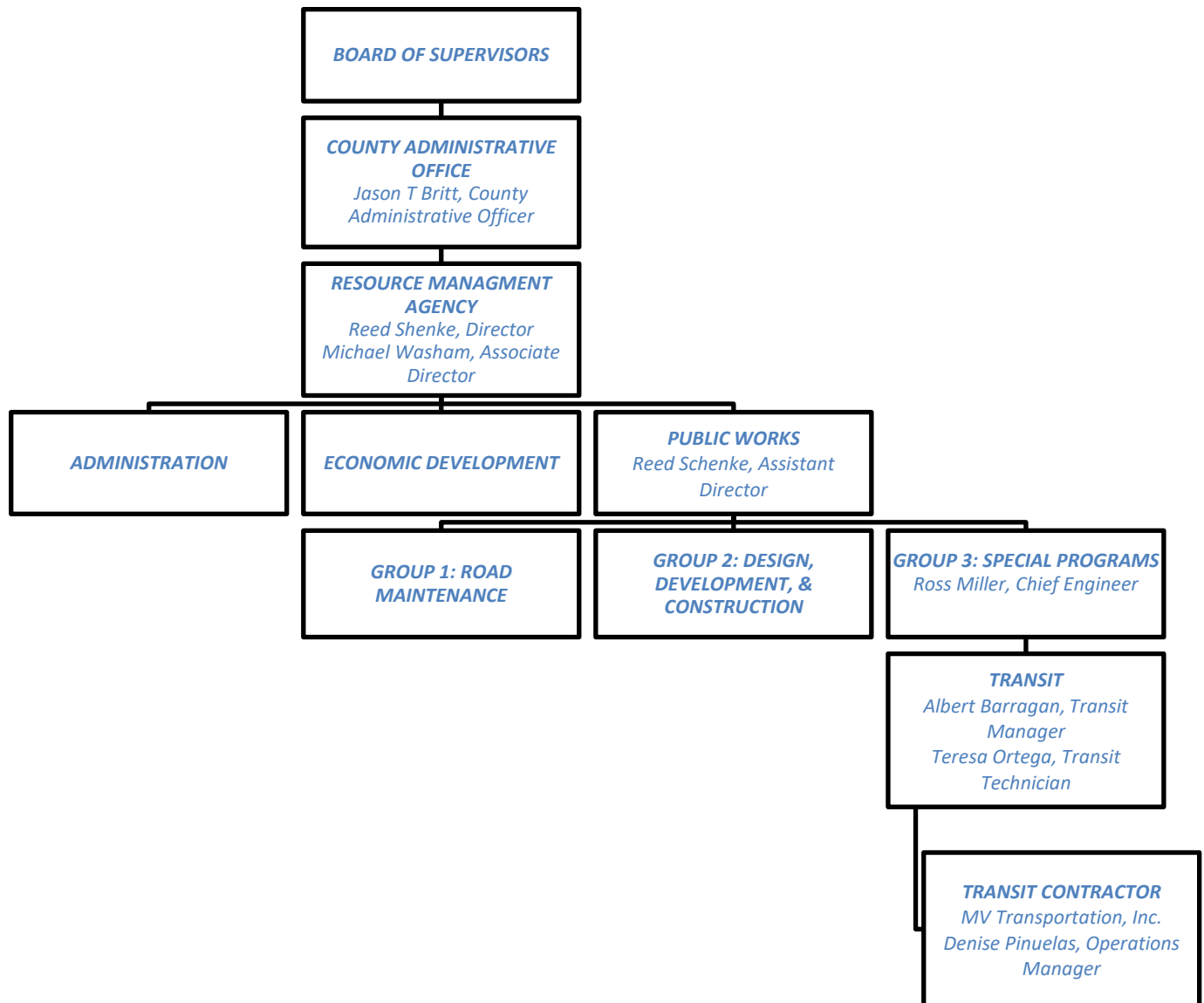
*TCaT has replaced the Transit Coordinator position with a Transit Manager position.*

The County has contracted with MV Transportation, Inc., a private contractor, to perform the daily operations of TCaT since 2006. MV is responsible for the provision and management of day-to-day operations, including the hiring, testing, training and supervision of all drivers and dispatch

staff; service data collection; and the operation of TCaT vehicles in accordance with County policies and all state and federal regulations. MV is also responsible for the maintenance and fueling of all transit vehicles. MV's current contract is in effect through June 30, 2018.

*MV's current contract began November 6, 2018 through June 30, 2022 after its previous contract was extended through November 6, 2018. Upon completion of the full term of this agreement the County at its sole discretion may extend the term of this agreement on a month to month basis up to a maximum of six (6) months.*

*An updated organizational chart for TCaT is as follows:*



## TCAT FIXED ROUTE SERVICE OVERVIEW

### Description of Current Fixed Route Service

The County of Tulare provides fixed route service to the general public through nine fixed routes; four intercity routes and five local circulator routes. Fixed routes are composed of the system of services for which a public transit vehicle is operated along a prescribed route according to a fixed schedule. TCaT fixed routes operate within both incorporated and unincorporated areas of Tulare County.

TCaT's intercity routes provide daily regional service between major cities within the county and beyond. These routes include:

Route 10 (North County) provides service between Visalia and Dinuba. Stops include the Visalia Transit Center, the Justice Complex, the Dinuba Health Center, the Dinuba Transit Center, and the communities of Cutler, Oroshi, Sultana, Yettem, and Seville. Bidirectional service is provided every 60 minutes Monday through Friday from 6:15 am to 7:05 pm between the two transit centers. Four round trips are provided on Saturday and Sunday between 9:30 am and 5:42 pm, beginning at the Dinuba Transit Center. Service to East Oroshi and Yettem/Seville is provided twice daily on weekdays only.

Route 20 (South County) provides service between Tulare and Delano (located within Kern County). Stops include the Tulare Transit Center, the Matheny Tract, the Delano Transit Center, the Delano Regional Medical Center, and the communities of Tipton, Pixley, Teviston, Earlimart, and Richgrove. Bidirectional service is provided every 60 to 90 minutes Monday through Friday between 5:45 am and 8:05 pm. Four round trips are provided on Saturday and Sunday between 8:30 am and 6:42 pm, beginning at the Tulare Transit Center. Service within Delano and to Richgrove is provided twice daily on weekdays only.

Route 30 (Northeast County) provides service between Visalia and Woodlake. Stops include the Visalia Transit Center, Golden West High School, the Whitney Transit Center (Woodlake), and the communities of Ivanhoe, Lemon Cove, and Three Rivers. Bidirectional service is provided every 35 to 70 minutes Monday through Friday between 5:15 am and 8:15 pm. Six route trips are provided on Saturday and Sunday between 9:40 am and 5:30 pm, beginning at the Whitney Transit Center. Service to Lemon Cove and Three Rivers is provided four times a day on weekdays only.

*Weekend service beginning in Lemon Cove and Three Rivers was added for the first run of the day at 8:50 am and last run of the day at 6:20 pm.*

Route 40 (Southeast County) provides service between Visalia, Tulare, Lindsay and Porterville. Stops include the Visalia Government Plaza, the College of the Sequoias (COS) – Tulare campus, the Lindsay Library and City Hall, the Porterville Transit Center, and the community of Strathmore. Bidirectional service is provided every 65 to 75 minutes Monday through Friday

between 5:45 am and 7:45 pm. Four round trips are provided on Saturday and Sunday between 9:45 am and 6:40 pm, beginning at the Porterville Transit Center.

*Weekday service changed for start of service from 5:45 AM to 5:25 AM to satisfy an unmet needs request.*

TCaT's local routes provide circulation within and between many Tulare County communities. These routes include:

Route 50 (Dinuba-London-Traver-Delft Colony) provides service between Dinuba and the communities of London, Traver, and Delft Colony. Four daily trips (two am and two pm) are provided Monday through Friday between 8:20 am and 6:16 pm, and on Saturday between 9:30 am and 3:20 pm.

Route 60 (Lindsay-Plainview-Woodville) provides weekday service between Lindsay, Porterville and the communities of Plainview and Woodville. Four daily trips (two am and two pm) are provided Monday through Friday between 6:20 am and 6:30 pm. Three trips daily operate as express routes between Lindsay and Porterville, via SR 65. This route serves as a circulator service for the City of Lindsay, stopping at the local Save Mart/McDonalds shopping center, Lindsay Wellness Center, and the Lindsay High School.

*Route 60 (Lindsay Flex Route) has been reconfigured as the new Lindsay Flex Route using the Lindsay Dial-A-Ride bus during non-peak Dial-A-Ride hours. This route serves as a circulator service for the City of Lindsay, stopping at various stops throughout the City and connecting to Routes 40 and 90. Parts of the old Route 60 outside of Lindsay are now included in Route 90.*

Route 70 (Porterville-Springville) provides weekday service between Porterville and the community of Springville. Five southbound and four northbound trips are provided daily Monday through Friday between 8:45 am and 4:00 pm.

*Morning service on Route 70 changed by less than 2 minutes and afternoon service by no more than 30 minutes to accommodate the changes in Routes 60, 80, and 90.*

Route 80 (Porterville-Terra Bella) provides weekday service between Porterville and the community of Terra Bella. Two daily round trips (one am and one pm) are provided Monday through Friday between 9:55 am and 4:45 pm.

*Route 80 (Porterville-Terra Bella-Ducor) now provides service to the community of Ducor, south of Terra Bella. Service was added in response to Orange Belt no longer providing service to Ducor and to comply with an unmet needs request. Morning service to Terra Bella on Route 80 has changed by less than 2 minutes and afternoon service by no more than 30 minutes to accommodate the changes in Routes 60 through 90.*

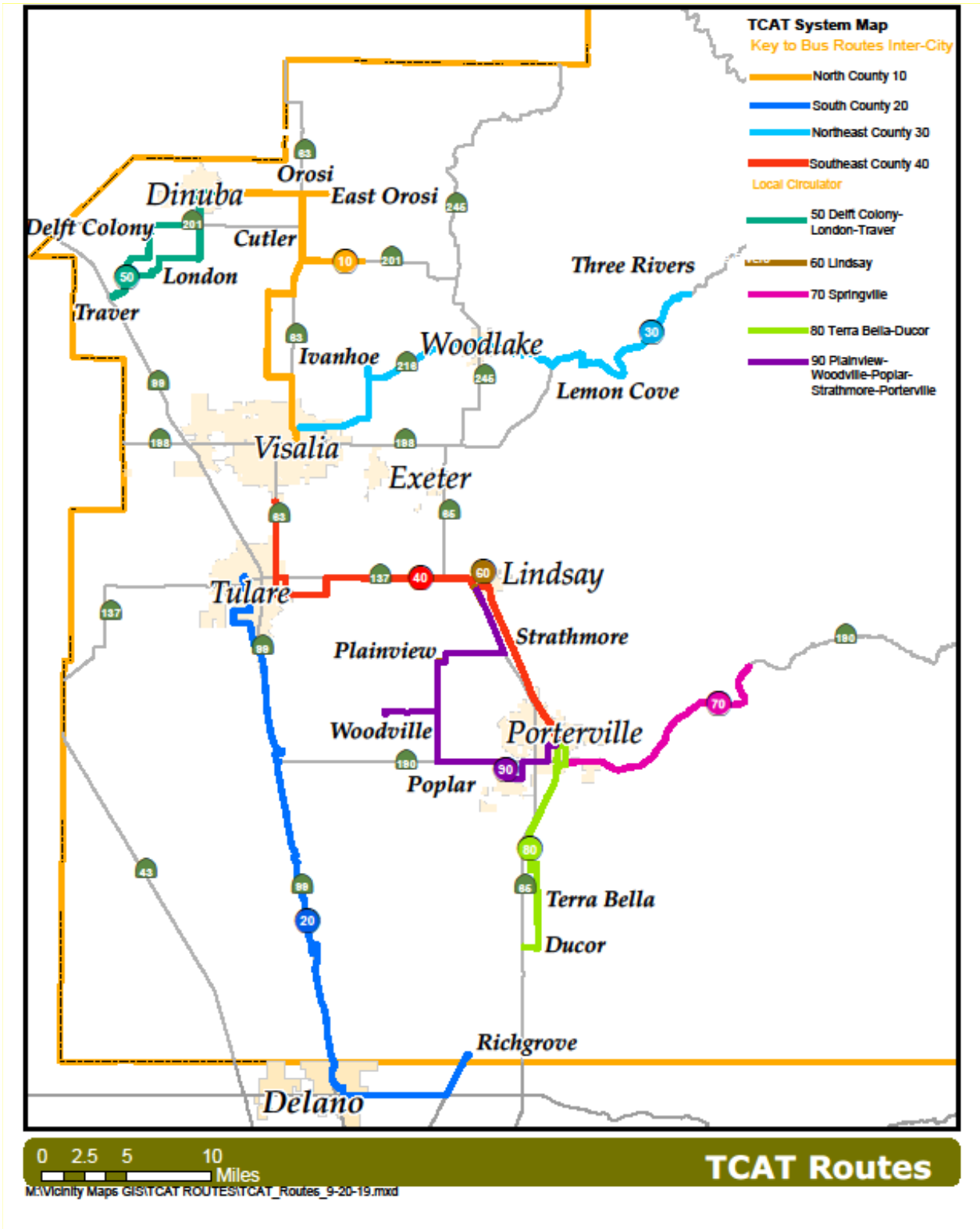
Route 90 (Woodville-Poplar-Porterville) provides weekday service between Porterville and the communities of Woodville, Poplar and Cotton Center. Four eastbound and five westbound trips are provided daily Monday through Friday between 6:30 am and 6:30 pm.

*Route 90 now provides service to the new South County Detention Center as well as Strathmore, as well as portions of the old Route 60 between Woodville and Lindsay.*

Routes 60, 70, 80 and 90 are interlined, meaning that their schedules are designed such that one bus is used to service all four routes. Riders may request a route deviation from posted stops on all TCaT fixed routes by calling at least one day in advance of service. Figure 3 depicts TCaT's current fixed route service.

*Route 60 is now an independent route connected to the Lindsay Dial-A-Ride. Routes 70, 80, and 90 remain interlined.*

Figure 3 – TCaT Fixed Route Service (Updated 2020)





### Fixed Route Service Days and Hours

TCaT provides intercity service seven days a week. Service hours vary by route. Local circulator service is generally provided weekdays (Monday through Friday), but Route 50 (Dinuba-London-Traver-Delft Colony) also runs on Saturday.

TCaT does not operate on New Year's Day, Easter Sunday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day or Christmas Day. Saturday service level is provided on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Veterans' Day, the day after Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve (routes 10, 20, 30, 40, and 50 only).

*Holidays which previously had service levels at the Saturday service level now have service at the Sunday-service level. This action eliminated the service provided by Route 50 on these holidays but does not otherwise change service on these holidays.*

### Fixed Route Fare Structure

The current TCaT fixed route fare structure is as follows:

Fixed- Route Fare Structure	2015	2020
General Public (age 7+)	\$1.50/one-way trip	<i>\$2.00/one-way trip</i>
Children (age 6 and under; first two)	Free	<i>Free</i>
Each additional child	\$1.50/one-way trip	<i>\$2.00/one-way trip</i>
Seniors (age 60+)/Disabled/Medicare	\$1.50/one-way trip	
Seniors (age 65+)/Disabled/Medicare/Military		<i>\$1.00/one-way trip</i>

Children must be at least 7 years of age to ride the bus without adult supervision. Personal care attendants are allowed to ride for free when accompanying a disabled passenger (ADA registrant) to or from the same origin or destination. Transfers to and from Visalia Transit Route 1 are free to continue a trip. Mutual transfers are available between TCaT Route 20 and Tulare InterModal Express (TIME). Some mutual transfers are also available between TCaT Route 40 and TIME. A reciprocal transfer agreement between TCaT and Porterville is expected to be implemented in January 2016.

*To provide a more uniform discount policy between transit agencies in the County, the age for the senior discount was increased from 60+ to 65+. In addition, TCAG has instituted a program for members of the military and veterans and their families to receive the discounted fare with TCAG providing funds to make up the difference. Transfers are also available from TCaT to Tulare InterModal Express, Visalia Transit, and Porterville Transit, or transfers from these agencies to TCaT are available with an additional fare of \$0.50 for general fare riders and \$0.25 for discounted fare riders.*

*Further, TCaT has passed a policy allowing it to participate in free ride programs in conjunction with TCAG. These free rides are typically offered to celebrate Earth Day but may be offered for other purposes.*

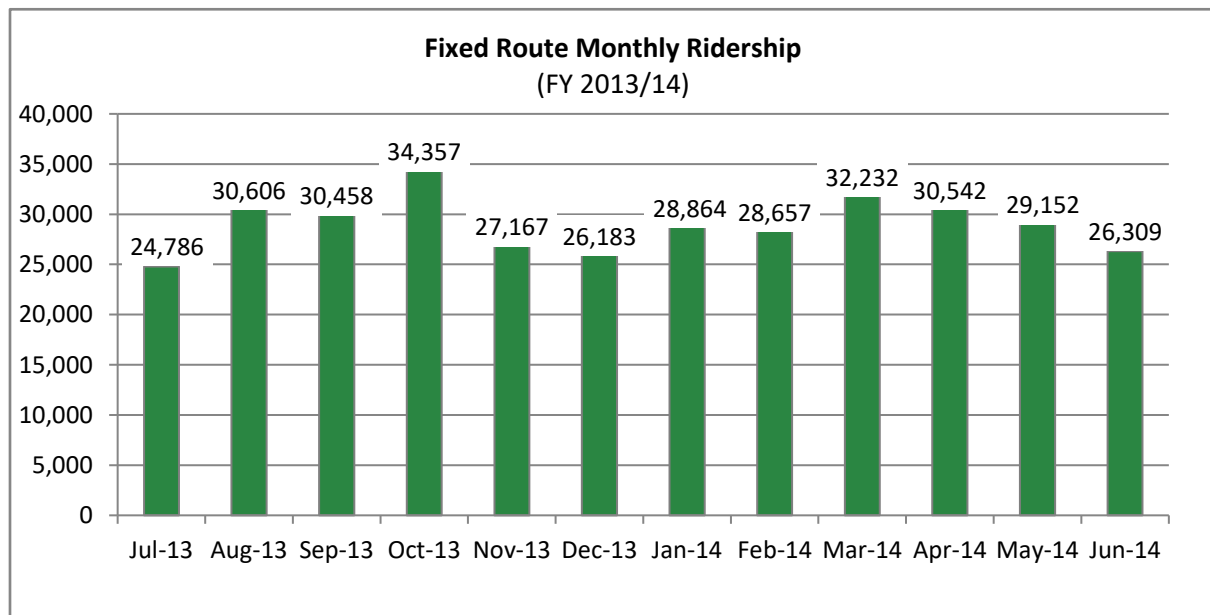
*In conjunction with other transit providers in Tulare County, TCaT has suspended fare collection as a result of COVID-19. This suspension will likely extend through the beginning of FY 2020/21. This was done in an effort to protect drivers by limiting passenger interaction and enforcement for fair collection, as well as to protect those employees who collect fare vault and those who count the money.*

### Fixed Route Ridership Profile

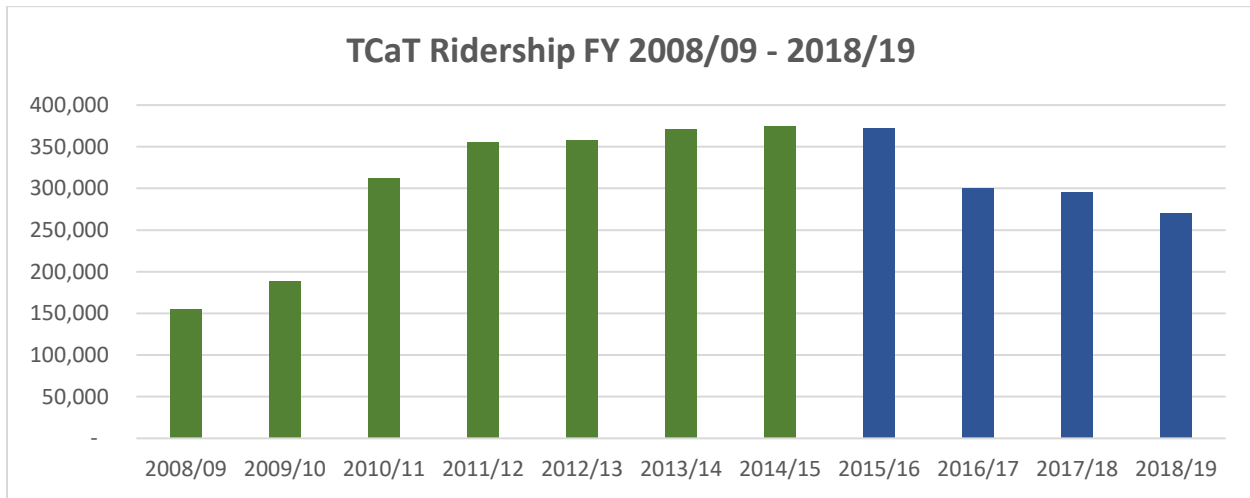
In FY 2013/14, ridership on TCaT fixed routes totaled 349,313 passengers. This is roughly a 2% increase from the FY 2012/13 total of 343,425 passengers. Monthly ridership in FY 2013/14 peaked during the month of October 2013, with a reported 34,357 passengers. The month of July 2013 saw the lowest reported ridership for the fiscal year, with 24,786 passengers. The average monthly fixed route ridership for FY 2013/14 was 29,109 passengers. The following chart shows monthly ridership totals on the TCaT fixed route system over the last reported fiscal year.

There has been a decline in ridership since FY 2014/15. This has affected various agencies in Tulare County and surrounding areas but has been part of a national trend during this time period. The highest ridership numbers were in FY 2014/15 at 363,595 and the lowest was FY 2018/19 at 270,260 passengers, a loss of over 25% of passengers across five years, as demonstrated by the charts below. Staff continues to monitor ridership needs.

In FY 2019/20, ridership began to show increases as compared to the same month in the previous year through the early part of the fiscal year before the shelter-in-place order for COVID-19 was passed. After the shelter-in-place order, ridership dropped by approximately 30%. As a result of these drops, ridership levels are not fully expected to recover in FY 2020/21. It is unclear at this time if COVID-19 will continue to impact ridership into FY 2021/22.



Source: TCaT System Performance Report (Fiscal Year 2013/2014)



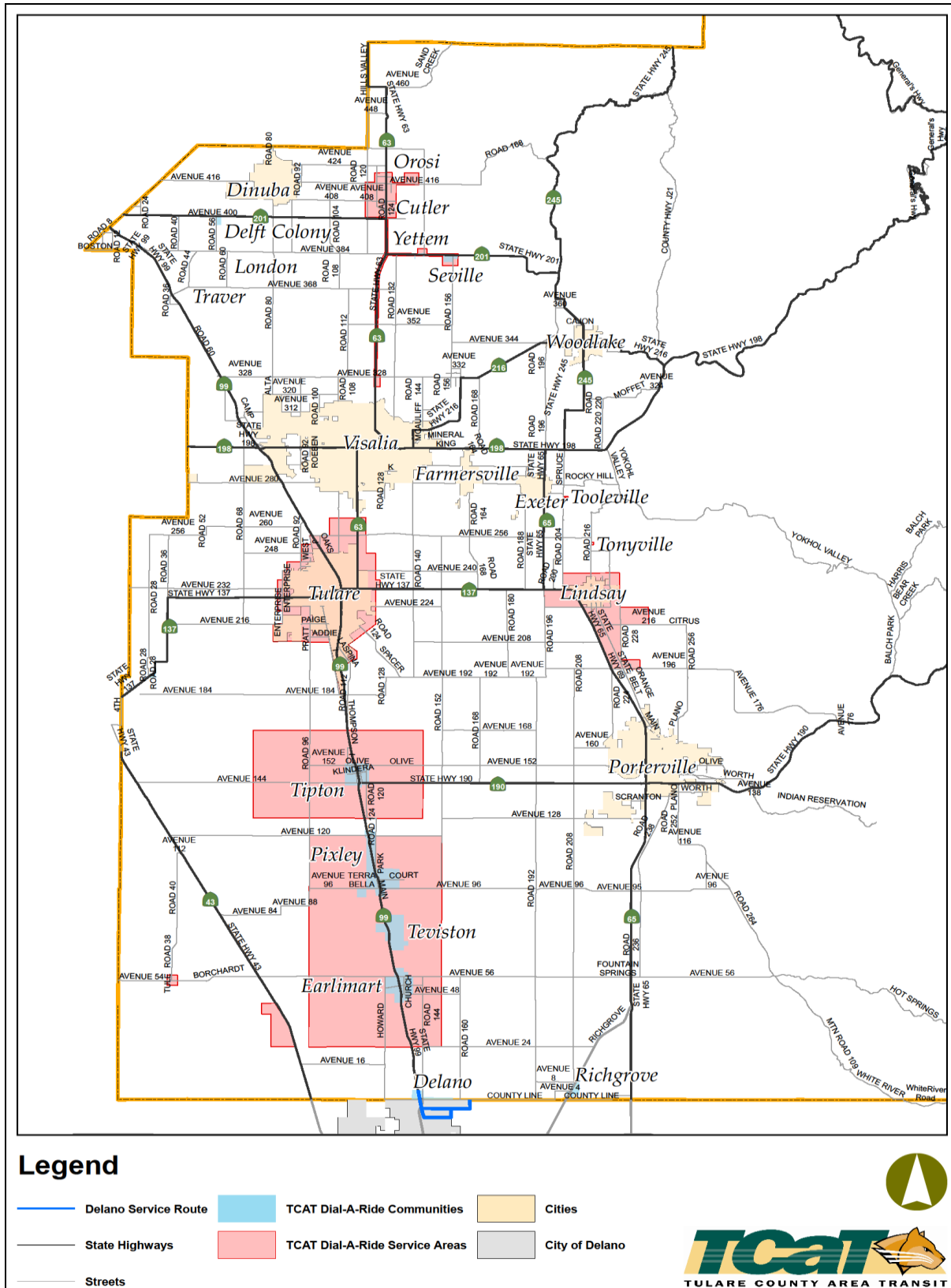
*FY 2019/20 is not available as the year is still in progress.*

## TCAT DEMAND-RESPONSE SERVICE OVERVIEW

### Description of Current Demand-Response Service

The County of Tulare provides demand-response, or dial-a-ride service, within unincorporated areas of the county (see Figure 4). TCaT Dial-A-Ride is an accessible curb-to-curb service designed to provide complementary paratransit service in response to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as specified in 49CFR37. In addition, TCaT Dial-A-Ride provides same day service to the general public on a space-available basis. Table 4 describes TCaT's current dial-a-ride service areas.

Figure 4 –TCaT Dial-A-Ride Service Areas (Updated 2020)



**Table 4 – TCaT Dial-A-Ride Service Areas**

Service Area	Hours of Operation (Monday - Friday)	
	2015	2020
Rural Dinuba, Sultana, Monson, Cutler, Orosi, East Orosi, Yettem, Seville, North Patterson Tract, <i>Kingsburg*</i>	10:45 am - 12:30 pm & 2:15 pm - 4:30 pm	10:45 am - 12:30 pm & 2:15 pm - 4:30 pm
Lindsay, Toneyville, Toooleville	7:00 am – 3:00 pm	7:00 am - 9:00 am & 11:30 am - 1:30 pm
Pixley, Tipton, Teviston, Earlimart, Alpaugh, Allensworth, Richgove, <i>Delano*</i>	6:30 am - 4:30 pm	6:30 am - 4:30 pm
Rural City of Tulare, Waukena	7:00 am - 1100 pm & 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	7:00 am - 1100 pm & 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

*\*Note: All trips to/from Delano and Kingsburg must start or end in Tulare County. Limited drop off sites are available.*

### Demand-Response Service Days and Hours

TCaT provides demand-response service Monday through Friday. Service hours vary by service area (see Table 4). Reservations must be made at least one day in advance for all dial-a-ride trips, except those within Lindsay, Toneyville, and rural Tulare. Next-day reservations are taken seven days a week.

Dial-A-Ride does not operate on New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Easter Sunday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

### Demand-Response Fare Structure

The current TCaT demand-response fare structure is as follows:

<b>Demand-Response Fare Structure</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>
General Public (age 7+)	\$2.25/one-way trip	<i>\$3.00/one-way trip</i>
Children (age 6 and under; first two)	Free	<i>Free</i>
Each additional child	\$2.25/one-way trip	<i>\$3.00/one-way trip</i>
Seniors (age 60+)/Disabled/Medicare	\$1.50/one-way trip	
Seniors (age 65+)/Disabled/Medicare/Military		<i>\$2.00/one-way trip</i>
ADA Cardholders		<i>\$1.00/one-way trip</i>

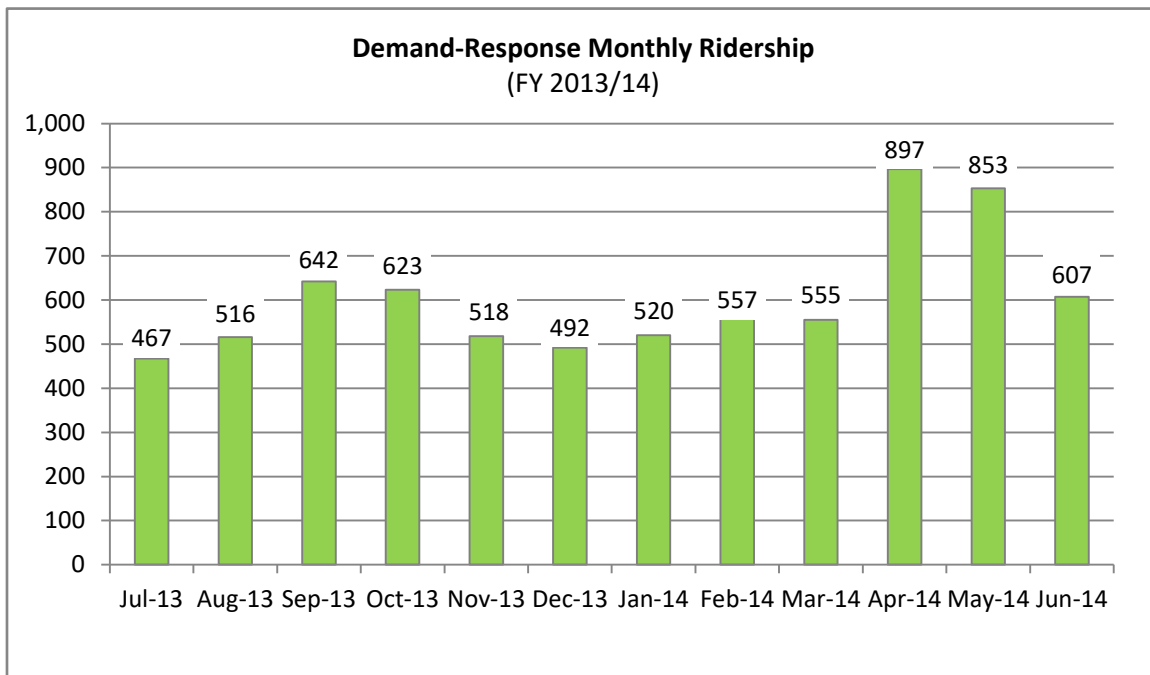
A punch pass is worth 20, 75¢ punches (a \$15 value), and is good for all fare categories. Punch passes can be purchased at the Tulare County Government Plaza, at the Dinuba, Porterville, Tulare and Visalia Transit Centers, and at Lindsay City Hall.

*The punch pass is currently worth 20, \$1.00 punches (a \$20 value), and is good for all fare categories. Punch passes can be purchased at Tulare County Government Plaza, at the Dinuba, Porterville, Tulare and Visalia Transit Centers, and at Lindsay City Hall.*

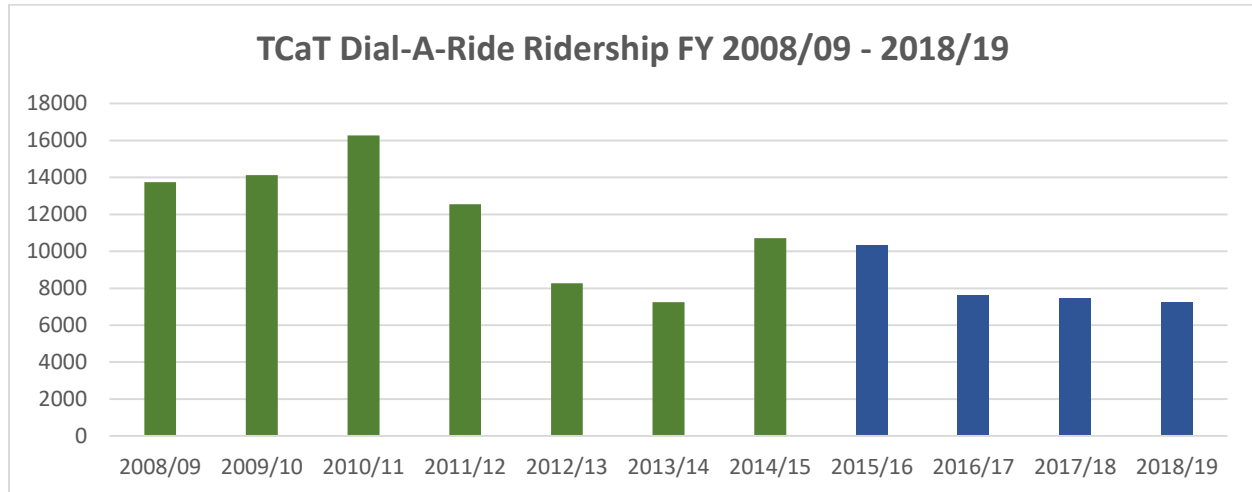
Children must be at least 7 years of age to ride the bus without adult supervision. Personal care attendants are allowed to ride for free when accompanying a disabled passenger (ADA registrant) to or from the same origin or destination.

### **Demand-Response Ridership Profile**

In FY 2013/14, ridership on TCaT's demand-response service totaled 7,247 passengers. This is roughly a 12% decrease from the FY 2012/13 total of 8,272 passengers. Monthly ridership in FY 2013/14 peaked during the month of April 2014, with a reported 897 passengers. The month of July 2013 saw the lowest reported ridership for the fiscal year, with 467 passengers. The average monthly fixed route ridership for FY 2013/14 was 603 passengers. The following chart shows monthly ridership totals on the TCaT demand-response system over the last reported fiscal year.



Source: TCaT System Performance Report (Fiscal Year 2013/2014)



## FARE MEDIA FOR TCAT SERVICES

In addition to cash fares, tokens, T-Passes, and punch passes may be used for service on fixed route and dial-a-ride.

<b>Demand-Response Fare Structure</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>
Punch Pass	\$17	\$20
T-Pass (countywide monthly pass)	\$50	\$55
Mid-month T-Pass (sold after the 16th of the month)	\$30	\$30
Punch Pass	\$17	\$20
Tokens	Primarily provided by Partner Agencies	

A punch pass has 20 punches, each worth 75¢ (a \$15 value), and is good for all fare categories. The T-Pass allows for unlimited fixed route rides in Tulare County for the month printed on the pass. Punch passes and the T-Pass can be purchased at the Tulare County Government Plaza, and at the Dinuba, Porterville, Tulare and Visalia Transit Centers.

*A punch pass has 20 punches, each worth \$1 (a \$20 value), and is good for all fare categories. The T-Pass allows for unlimited fixed route rides in Tulare County for the month printed on the pass. Punch passes and the T-Pass can be purchased at Tulare County Government Plaza, at the Dinuba, Porterville, Tulare and Visalia Transit Centers, and at Lindsay City Hall. T-Passes are also frequently purchased by social services agencies for distribution to clients, including Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency.*

Tokens are worth 75¢ each and can be used to pay for any fare by using the appropriate number of tokens. Most tokens are sold to agencies and institutions, such as the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency, hospitals, senior centers, and school districts.

*Tokens are now worth \$1 each and can be used to pay for any fare by using the appropriate number of tokens. Tokens are only sold to agencies and institutions, primarily the Tulare County Sheriff's Office.*

## THE LOOP BUS SERVICE

The County's Transit Division operates the LOOP Bus. The Tulare County Local Organizations Outreach Program (LOOP) is a free bus service that provides at-risk youth with transportation to free activities that connect them to mentoring and gang prevention programs throughout Tulare County. The service targets grade-school students who do not have access to or money to use public transit.

The program began in November 2006, in response to requests from local officials, law enforcement and community center advocates to provide safe access to after-school activities. The program is administered by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors and the Tulare County RMA. Funding for the program comes from the Board of Supervisors and Measure R, a ½ cent transportation sales tax.

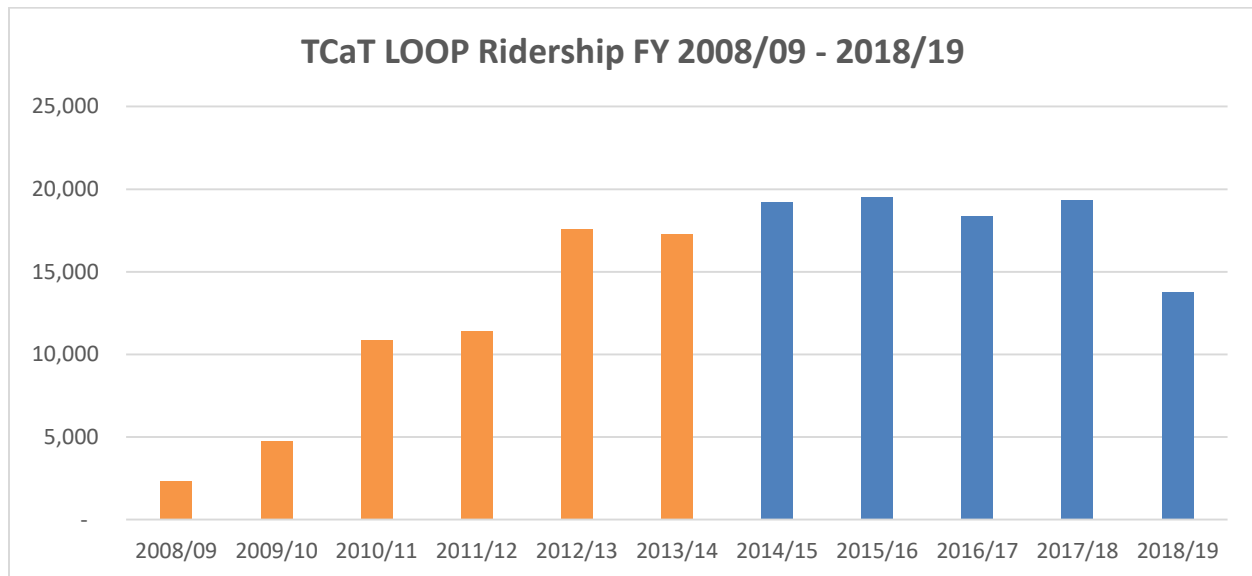
The LOOP service is available to community and faith-based organizations, school districts (for after-school, non-school-related programs only) and local government entities. The program currently has four LOOP buses available for service seven days a week, but requests must be submitted two weeks prior to service. The LOOP Bus service does not operate on New Year's Day, Easter Sunday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day or Christmas Day.

During the first year of service (FY 2007/08), the LOOP Bus carried 1,553 passengers. In FY 2013/14 the LOOP Bus served 17,299 passengers. The following chart shows annual ridership totals on the LOOP Bus service since its inception.

*A new set of policies and procedures for the Loop Bus were implemented in June 2018. Applications may be submitted no more than three months in advance, any changes to a confirmed Loop Bus trip must be made at least two weeks ahead of the requested date of service. Trips shall have at least twelve passengers. Overnight trips will not be permitted. The pick-up and drop off dates must be the same day. The Loop Bus may be requested for use within the following hours of operation: Weekdays – 6:00 am-8:00 pm and Weekends – 8:00 am-5:30 pm; however, during the school academic year, the Loop Bus may not be used during normal school instructional hours.*

Note: The LOOP Bus service is not a public transit service. Information about the LOOP service is provided for informational purposes only. LOOP Bus data is not included within the TCaT financial and operating totals presented in this TDP.





Source: County of Tulare LOOP Bus Statistics

## TCaT VEHICLE PROFILE

The TCaT fleet consists of twenty-five (25) vehicles, including five (5) LOOP buses. A minimum of thirteen (13) TCaT vehicles are needed on weekdays to achieve full service requirements on the fixed route and dial-a-ride services, five (5) on Saturdays and four (4) on Sundays. All TCaT vehicles are equipped with a wheelchair lift and securement system in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All buses are also equipped with bike racks to serve multimodal passengers. The following table shows the TCaT fleet inventory as of January 2015.

*The TCaT fleet consists of twenty-four (24) vehicles after one was destroyed in a collision but not replaced.*

*Since the adoption of the 2015 TDP, the FTA has created a new requirement for agencies to prepare and update Transit Asset Management Plans (TAM). The information portrayed in this section and throughout this report is consistent with the TAM.*

**Table 5 - TCaT Fleet Inventory (January 2015)**

Quantity	Year	Make/Model	Capacity*	Fuel Type	Service
2	2004	El Dorado MST II	32 (+2)	Diesel	LOOP
1	2008	GMC Aerotech	26 (+2)	CNG	Fixed Route
2	2008	GMC Aerotech	30 (+2)	Gas	LOOP
1	2009	GMC Aerotech	26 (+2)	CNG	Fixed Route
7	2009	GMC Aerotech	30 (+2)	CNG	Fixed Route
4	2011	GMC ARBOC	17 (+2)	CNG	Fixed Route/Dial-A-Ride
2	2011	Ford Glaval	16 (+2)	CNG	Fixed Route/Dial-A-Ride
4	2013	Ford Aero Elite	30 (+2)	CNG	Fixed Route
2	2014	Ford Aero Elite	30 (+2)	CNG	1 Fixed Route/1 LOOP

\*Includes wheelchair capacity (+#)

Source: TCaT

*The following table shows the TCaT fleet inventory as of June 2020. Additional buses are on order and/or have received grant funding as described in Chapter 7.*

**Table 5R - TCaT Fleet Inventory (June 2020)**

Quantity	Year	Make/Model	Capacity*	Fuel Type	Service
1	2008	GMC Aerotech	26 (+2)	CNG	Fixed Route
2	2008	GMC Aerotech	30 (+2)	Gas	LOOP
1	2009	GMC Aerotech	26 (+2)	CNG	Fixed Route
7	2009	GMC Aerotech	30 (+2)	CNG	Fixed Route
3	2011	GMC ARBOC	17 (+2)	CNG	Fixed Route/Dial-A-Ride
2	2011	Ford Glaval	16 (+2)	CNG	Fixed Route/Dial-A-Ride
4	2013	Ford Aero Elite	30 (+2)	CNG	Fixed Route
2	2014	El Dorado	30 (+2)	CNG	1 Fixed Route/1 LOOP
2	2018	Ford F-550	29 (+2)	CNG	Fixed Route

\*Includes wheelchair capacity (+#)

## TCaT FINANCIAL PROFILE

TCaT cost a total of \$2,597,500 to operate in FY 2013/14. Passenger fare revenues totaled \$459,363 during the same time period, which equates to 18% of total operating costs. FTA Section 5311 (non-urbanized area funding), Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds, Tulare County Measure R funds, farebox revenues, and other state grants are the main sources of revenue for TCaT.

*TCaT cost a total of \$3,907,348 to operate in FY 2018/19. Passenger fare revenues totaled \$626,662 during the same period, which equates to 16.04% of total operating costs.*

*It is unclear if TCaT will be able to meet a 12% farebox ratio in FY 2019/20 and the remainder of the TDP Extension years, as COVID-19 has had significant impacts on both the operations of TCaT as well as fare collection. TCaT discontinued fare collection in May 2020 to help limit the spread of the virus, as did many other transit agencies locally and throughout the state and country. Various fund sources have been made available to TCaT and other agencies in response to COVID-19, some of which provide funding which may be used to replace lost fares.*

## **TCaT OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE**

As a regional provider, TCaT provides service from many service points throughout Tulare County, including Dinuba, Lindsay, Porterville, Tulare, Visalia and Woodlake. As a result, TCaT buses are stored at various County road yards located throughout the county, and vehicles are fueled at their staging locations during scheduled service gaps.

TCaT vehicles are currently maintained at the City of Visalia Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility, located at the City's Corporation Yard. TCaT and Visalia Transit both contract with MV Transportation for service and maintenance of their transit systems, and the County maintains an agreement with the City of Visalia for use of their maintenance facility. The facility contains five service bays, four lifts, one bus wash and one undercarriage wash. There are two mechanics on site that are dedicated to the County vehicles, of the ten MV mechanics on staff. The County is currently in the process of developing its own dedicated transit operations and maintenance facility at the County Road Yard located southeast of Visalia. The facility will include CNG fueling stations. This project will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

*TCaT vehicles are currently maintained at the City of Tulare Maintenance Facility, located at the City's Corporation Yard located at 3989 S. K St Tulare CA 93274. TCAT and Tulare both contract with MV Transportation for service and maintenance of their transit systems, and the County maintains an agreement with the City of Tulare for use of the maintenance facility. The County's Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility (TOMF) is currently under construction and is scheduled to be completed in Summer 2020. Upon completion, TCaT will relocate operations and maintenance by MV Transportation to the new TOMF.*

## **EXISTING INTERFACE BETWEEN TRANSIT SYSTEMS**

TCaT services provide connections to other Tulare County transit providers, and to other regional providers. TCaT passengers can access city transit services via the Dinuba, Tulare, Porterville, Visalia and Woodlake transit centers. Separate fares are required to transfer between most services, except to/from Visalia Transit Route 1, and to/from TIME (on TCaT Routes 20 and 40).

TCaT's regional service to Delano provides transfer opportunities to destinations within Kern County via Kern Transit. Orange Belt Stages and Greyhound services to destinations outside of the County can be accessed at the Tulare and Visalia transit centers.

*Orange Belt Stages has discontinued most of its services throughout Tulare County and TCaT no longer has an agreement with them to provide supplemental services for trips starting and ending within the County.*

## CHAPTER 6 – SERVICE PLAN

The service plan was developed to respond to current system constraints and transportation needs within the TCaT service area. This service plan identifies key service issues and recommends strategies to address those issues over the next five years. This section also includes administrative and marketing recommendations.

*The TDP Extension does not include the Administrative and Marketing sections, as those are outside the scope and will be reevaluated on the next full TDP. In addition, two new key issues have been identified for consideration in service changes through the TDP Extension: the Consolidated Transit JPA and COVID-19 Impacts to Transit.*

### KEY ISSUES

Since the passage of Measure R (a ½ cent sales tax collected locally for the primary purpose of funding transit and transportation projects) in 2006, TCaT has successfully increased its service throughout Tulare County. Ridership and fare revenues have surged with the infusion of Measure R funds, and the County has been able to expand its transit system from a lifeline service to a regional connector service. Moving forward (over the next five years), TCaT service changes will be aimed at increasing existing service levels, and/or revising route configurations to increase accessibility within Tulare County. Several issues were identified during an analysis of existing conditions that will have an effect on future service decisions. Following are summaries of the key issues impacting future TCaT planning decisions.

#### Blended Farebox Recovery Ratio

The Transportation Development Act (TDA) mandates a combined (system-wide) farebox recovery ratio of 10% for fixed route and demand-response operators that provide service within non-urbanized (rural) areas, and 20% for operators that provide service within urbanized areas, as a requirement for receiving TDA funding. Historically, TCaT has been held to the 10% rural farebox recovery ratio requirement, meaning that 10% of the system's annual operating costs must be covered by fare revenues. However (as discussed in Chapter 4 of this TDP), the last TDA performance audit completed for TCaT in June of 2014 (*FY 2010-2012 Triennial Performance Audit of Tulare County Area Transit*) recommended that the County adhere to a "blended" farebox ratio that takes into account both the urban and rural farebox ratios, since TCaT's service area includes both urbanized and non-urbanized areas. The audit recommended that the County work with TCAG to develop a blended farebox recovery ratio for the TCaT system, in order to maintain full compliance with the TDA statute (PUC 99270.1). Public Utilities Code, Section 99270.1 states:

*If an operator serves urbanized and non-urbanized areas in the area of jurisdiction of a transportation planning agency, the transportation planning agency shall adopt rules and regulations to determine what portion of the public transportation services of the operator serves urbanized areas and what portion serves non-urbanized areas to determine its*

*required ratio of fare revenues to operating costs, as defined by subdivision (a) of Section 99247, or its required ratio of the sum of fare revenues and local support to operating cost, or both. The transportation planning agency shall submit the rules and regulations to the department for approval.*

As the transportation planning agency, TCAG is responsible for developing a blended farebox recovery ratio methodology that accounts for the amount of service provided in rural and urban areas. The formula, approved by TCAG and then by Caltrans, has been approved and is included as Appendix B of this TDP.

After discussions with TCaT staff, a methodology based on route miles was deemed most appropriate. Using a geographic information system (GIS), TCaT fixed routes were mapped out in relation to the two 2010 census-defined urbanized areas (UZAs) located within Tulare County (Visalia UZA and Porterville UZA) to determine the number of route miles contained within the UZAs. Fixed route costs were then apportioned to the urbanized area costs and non-urbanized area costs in proportion to the route miles in the urbanized areas and the route miles in the non-urbanized areas. This methodology resulted in a blended farebox ratio of 12%. This calculation assumes that all dial-a-ride costs are apportioned to non-urbanized areas. The TCaT dial-a-ride service area only overlaps the urbanized areas in the Matheny Tract (Visalia UZA) and Strathmore (Porterville UZA), and there is not enough passenger activity to affect a farebox recovery ratio change when applied to the calculation.

This 12% blended farebox ratio will not constrain the operations of the County's transit system, and will in fact provide a more accurate performance measure for the entire TCaT system. As of FY 2013/14, TCaT's combined farebox recovery ratio was 17.7%. TDA funding currently accounts for almost a quarter of TCaT's annual operating budget; TDA funds accounted for approximately 22% of TCaT's annual operating budget in FY 2013/14.

TCaT's blended farebox ratio requirement will take effect in FY 2016/17. TCAG will review TCaT's blended farebox ratio annually, and may adopt amendments to the formula and policies based on service changes, if warranted. The adopted blended farebox recovery ratio formula and policies will be included in TCAG's TDA Claims Manual.

*The blended farebox ratio was implemented as intended.*

*Many transit agencies throughout the state have seen significant drops in ridership as a result of COVID-19 and many have also stopped collecting fares as a safety precaution, including TCaT. As such, many expect the state to review farebox recovery requirements, as the state may temporarily relax or suspend the requirements for FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21 or institute permanent changes to the program.*

### Low Fixed Route Fares

As shown in the fare analysis included in Chapter 4, TCaT fares are comparable to other transit providers within Tulare County, but not in relation to the service provided. Regional systems that provide countywide service typically charge more for service than their intracity/local counterparts due to the additional costs they incur through longer routes/additional service miles. Longer trip lengths warrant higher fares than local services, and higher regional fares effectively discourage local residents from using the regional system for local trips. However, TCaT fixed route general fares have not been increased in over seventeen years (sometime prior to 1998), and the general fixed route fares of the local providers have caught up to it; currently all fixed route general fares in Tulare County are at \$1.50, with the exception of Dinuba's, which is incrementally being raised and will be \$1.00 as of July 1, 2015. For comparison, Kings County regional service costs riders 50% more than local service.

Additionally, the TCaT fixed route system has experienced a significant increase in overall ridership since the infusion of Measure R (local sales tax) revenues in 2007, but fare revenues have not been adjusted to account for increased service levels. The rider survey conducted for this TDP concluded that 48% of respondents were agreeable to a fixed route general fare increase even when provided with an option for "no change." TCaT fixed route fares should be adjusted regionally to ensure an equitable distribution of fare revenues to service provided.

*Fare increases were implemented. Current fares are as follows:*

Fare Structure	Fixed Route	Dial-A-Ride
General Public (age 7+)	\$2.00/one-way trip	\$3.00/one-way trip
Children (age 6 and under; first two)	Free	Free
Each additional child	\$2.00/one-way trip	\$3.00/one-way trip
Seniors (age 65+)/Disabled/Medicare/Military	\$1.00/one-way trip	\$2.00/one-way trip
ADA Cardholders	\$2.00/one-way trip	\$1.00/one-way trip

### Consolidated Transit JPA

*The Tulare County cities and the County itself are currently considering a joint powers agreement (JPA) to create a new transit agency to operate most or all transit services in the County. The County and other agencies may choose to join this JPA, which would ultimately have decisions about service changes. Under the currently proposed JPA, the new consolidated transit agency would have authority over service changes, fare changes, planning, budget, and other policy decisions. As it was determined during the planning and negotiation phases that these decisions would be delayed until after formation, it is beyond the scope of this document to consider what changes may be enacted to TCaT's services as part of a future JPA.*

### COVID-19 Impacts to Transit

*COVID-19 has created significant unforeseeable issues for transit operators. Many transit agencies around the state and country have modified operations, such as reducing service levels, eliminating fare collection. Additional funding for transit operations has been made available at*

*the federal level under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), with additional funds being considered as part of other legislation.*

*TCaT has not modified service levels, as have other transit agencies in the County. TCaT has discontinued fare collection to protect drivers and other individuals involved in the fare counting process, as have other transit agencies in the County. The CARES Act allows for reimbursement for loss of fare collection in these circumstances. In addition, many in the transit industry expect the state to relax requirements under the various transit laws, which may be temporary or permanent. This may include reducing or eliminating farebox recovery requirements under the TDA for FY 2019/20, FY 2020/21, or permanently. As this is a constantly developing situation as recovery plans are implemented, it is difficult to foresee what may happen. Nonetheless, TCaT should prepare to apply for any state or federal funds that may be made available for transit agencies as economic stimulus or for pandemic relief.*

## **SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

This section presents an action plan for implementing the TCaT services proposed in this chapter. The implementation plan outlines service parameters for each of the five years covered by this document. This schedule assumes the availability of all projected funding, but should be reviewed annually to reflect current funding scenarios. Capital and financial plans are included in Chapters 7 and 8.

The TCaT fare structure should be reviewed annually and recalibrated (if necessary) to reflect farebox recovery and operational cost issues. Given that demand-response service is more costly to operate than fixed route service, a dial-a-ride fare increase may be warranted during the life of this plan to partially offset the cost of providing demand-response trips.

Additionally, an annual route performance review should be conducted, and when appropriate, corrective action taken to modify route alignments, and/or service schedules to adjust to changes in service demand and service area needs.

### **Year One (FY 2015/16)**

- Add additional weekend service to Route 10 (provide service to Seville and Yettem) in January of 2016.  
*Implemented.*
- Add additional weekend service to Route 30 (provide service to Lemon Cove and Three Rivers) in January of 2016.  
*Implemented.*

### **Year Two (FY 2016/17)**

- Increase weekday service frequencies on Route 10 through the addition of one bus.  
*Not implemented due to declining ridership.*



- Increase weekday service frequencies on Route 40 through the addition of one bus.  
*Not implemented due to declining ridership.*
- Increased fixed route general fare to \$2.00, and the discounted fare to \$1.00.  
*Implemented.*
- Increase the dial-a-ride general fare to \$3.00, the discounted fare to \$2.00, and add an additional discounted fare of \$1.00 for ADA Cardholders.  
*Implemented.*

**Year Three (FY 2017/18)**

- Review and adjust fare structure and services as needed to reflect funding and service demands.  
*Reviewed, no significant changes deemed appropriate at the time.*

**Year Four (FY 2018/19)**

- Review and adjust services as needed to reflect funding and service demands.  
*Reviewed, no significant changes deemed appropriate at the time.*

**Year Five (FY 2019/20)**

- Review and adjust fare structure and services as needed to reflect funding and service demands.  
*Reviewed, the changes on Routes 60, 70, 80 and 90 were implemented to increase service levels in Lindsay, provide service to Ducor, and other changes without significant increases in cost.*

***Extension Year One (FY 2020/21)***

- *Review and adjust fare structure and services as needed to reflect funding and service demands.*
- *Monitor impacts due to COVID-19 on ridership and governing rules and regulations, and adjust services and fare structures as necessary to comply with new or modified requirements.*
- *Enter into a service agreement with the City of Visalia to provide transit services in North Visalia.*
- *Continue participating in discussions on transit coordination or consolidation to create a regional agency, which may include joining the proposed JPA. If a consolidated transit agency is formed, participate in service planning and policy discussions with the new agency.*

***Extension Year Two (FY 2021/22)***

- *Monitor impacts due to COVID-19 on ridership and governing rules and regulations, and adjust services and fare structures as necessary to comply with new or modified requirements.*

- *Review and, if appropriate, implement increased weekday frequencies on Route 10 and 40 through the addition of one bus to each route.*
- *Review and adjust fare structure and services as needed to reflect funding and service demands.*
- *If a consolidated transit agency is formed, participate in service planning and policy discussions with the new agency.*

Note: Recommendations set forth in the *Southeast Tulare County Mobility Plan* and the *Tulare County Regional Long Range Transit Plan (LRTP)* (currently being developed) may require additions to this service plan. Recommendations that affect TCaT's service will be included as an addendum to this TDP at a later date, if warranted.

*Other planning documents by TCAG may require consideration of other service changes to implement during the TDP Extension period, including the 2019 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan.*

## CHAPTER 7 – CAPITAL PLAN

The capital plan has been developed to be consistent with the County’s vehicle acquisition needs. The five-year program for replacement of TCaT vehicles is designed to provide adequate equipment to meet the projected service demands, and to comply with California Air Resources Board (CARB) requirements, and all other applicable state and federal requirements. Funding for the listed projects will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8 (Financial Plan).

### CURRENT CAPITAL PROJECTS

#### Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility (TOMF)

The County is currently in the process of building a transit operations and maintenance facility on an undeveloped parcel of land at the County’s Visalia Road Yard, located at the southeast corner of Avenue 256 (Sierra Avenue) and Avenue 140 (south Lover’s Lane). This project is one component of a larger project that includes County Fire Facilities, additional parking and storage at the Road Yard.

The transit component will ensure sufficient future operational and maintenance capacity for TCaT services, and will include the installation of a compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling station on site. The County currently leases space from the City of Visalia (at the Visalia Transit Maintenance Facility) for maintenance of TCaT buses, and utilizes the City’s CNG facilities. With the current conversion of the TCaT fleet to CNG buses, the County needs additional fueling capacity for its transit fleet. The completed project will include a Bus Operations, Maintenance and Administration building, with maintenance bays and a dispatch center, approximately twenty-two bus covered parking spaces with solar panels, a bus wash facility, employee and public parking, and a CNG fueling facility with two fast-fill and twenty-two slow-fill pumps. The slow-fill stations will be restricted solely for the use of County buses. The fast-fill stations will be open to the general public and will include a card billing system.

Environmental clearance for the project was obtained in 2013, and a request for proposals for architectural and engineering design services was circulated in late 2013. The project is currently in the design phase, with construction scheduled to begin in 2016. The project is expected to be completed in FY 2017/18.

The TOMF project is being funded through a variety of federal, state, and local funding sources, including Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ), Proposition 1B – the Public Transportation, Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement Account Program (PTMISEA), Transportation Development Act (TDA) – Local Transportation Funds (LTF) and State Transit Assistance Funds (STA), and Measure R (local sales tax).

*The construction of the Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility is substantially complete, with the Notice of Completion expected to be filed in the summer of 2020. TCaT’s transit contractor, MV Transportation, will move in at that time.*

## Security Enhancements

Using funds allocated through the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) the County is in the process of seeking a contractor to upgrade the Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL)/GPS system on its fleet. AVL is a fleet tracking system that uses GPS to determine and transmit the location of a vehicle. The ability to locate a transit vehicle along a route helps to improve passenger safety, allows for on-time performance tracking, and provides the capacity for providing real-time service information (TCaT's current AVL system doesn't allow for real-time tracking).

Updating TCaT's wireless tracking system will also allow the County to look into offering public Wi-Fi onboard TCaT buses. The addition of Wi-Fi is a common request of public transit users. More than half (56%) of the riders surveyed for this TDP indicated that they own/use a smartphone with internet access. The City of Visalia successfully implemented Wi-Fi on-board its fixed route system in 2014, and the City of Porterville is currently upgrading the modems on-board the Porterville Transit fleet to allow for Wi-Fi connectivity.

*The installation of the Wi-Fi and AVL/GPS system was completed in early 2020. The system is currently in use by transit staff, however the launch of the system to the public was delayed so as not to encourage or increase ridership during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*During the TDP Extension, TCaT should add additional security enhancements, including real-time video cameras with remote access.*

## FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAM

### Vehicle Replacement

The proposed vehicle replacement schedule for the period from FY 2015/16 to FY 2019/20 is based upon planned services and current fleet specifications. There are currently twenty (20) vehicles in the TCaT fleet: twenty medium-duty buses, ranging in age between one and seven years. A minimum of thirteen buses are required for peak weekday service, and the additional fleet (up to seven vehicles) is used as back-up, providing a spare ratio of up to 53%. Although not a mandate of rural (5311) operators, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recommends a spare ratio no greater than 20%, in order to minimize costs associated with maintaining and insuring parked vehicles. However, several factors may necessitate higher spare ratios, including aging fleets with higher maintenance downtimes, and the cost of retiring vehicles that have not reached the end of their useful life. The County also requires a higher than normal spare ratio due to widely scattered service points that require buses to be stored at various road yards throughout the county; spare buses must be readily available at each County park-out location. The County's high spare ratio can be attributed to the large procurement of buses made possible with the availability of funds through the Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement Account Program (PTMISEA) that was created through the passage of Proposition 1B, the Highway Safety, Traffic Reduction, Air Quality, and Port Security Bond Act of 2006, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. With a large percentage

of the fleet near retirement age, additional vehicles are necessary to ensure coverage during maintenance downtimes.

The FTA recommends a seven-year/200,000 mile service life for the types of vehicles that comprise the TCaT fleet. The County has adopted a fleet replacement schedule based upon this federal threshold. Under these parameters, nine vehicles are scheduled to be retired in the next year, and six more in the next three years. However, TCAG recommends the County spread out the purchase of replacement vehicles over several years to avoid a similar scenario in the future.

Under the proposed five-year service plan, fifteen vehicles will be needed to meet peak weekday pullout requirements in FY 2016/17. Seventeen vehicles should be cycled out of service within the parameters of this plan, and replaced with medium-duty buses to increase service reliability and maintain service requirements.

During the TDP period, the FTA instituted a new requirement that transit agencies must prepare and submit a Transit Asset Management Plan (TAM Plan). TCaT has prepared and submitted the TAM Plan, which is a separate and complete plan. All considerations for capital replacement of rolling stock in this TDP Extension are done to correspond with TCaT's TAM Plan and remain consistent with all guidelines for TAM Plans.

### Bus Stop Amenities and Improvements

The capital plan includes funds to pay for stop amenities, including bus stop signs, shelters and benches. A signage upgrade project was completed in FY 2013/14 at all major bus stops, but funds will be needed to cover the replacement of damaged or worn signs, and the installation of signs at new stops and along new routes (if implemented). Funds have also been budgeted for the installation of passenger shelters and/or benches. Shelters and benches should be placed at key passenger activity points along fixed routes. All shelters and benches will be placed in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) specifications.



*Bus signs were replaced along Route 10; however, the replacement of additional stops was paused pending the County's decision to join the JPA, which would potentially rebrand the system and require new signs. Solar lights on the shelters were installed at all shelter locations along Routes 10, 20, 30, and 40 which have evening service so as to improve rider safety and security. Several new shelters were placed during the TDP period and a few are kept as spares to minimize costs if one is damaged or requires replacement.*

*TCaT should continue to improve bus stop amenities as necessary, which may include providing information signage with real time bus tracking at the transit centers and other major bus stops. Shelters and benches should be maintained and replaced as necessary, with additional shelters added at new or popular stops as dictated by ridership levels.*

### **Electronic Card Readers/Fareboxes**

The implementation of electronic fareboxes is a proven technique for increasing fare revenues. These fare collection systems collect fares, read passes, display information, print transfers, and collect and store information about riders by route and time. Electronic fareboxes increase fare collection accuracy, thus increasing farebox revenues by alleviating farebox abuse. They also help increase service productivity by refocusing driver efforts.

In addition, TCAG supports the coordination of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies between transit agencies through the adoption of the *2014-2019 Regional Transportation Plan & Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP & SCS)*. Policies were incorporated within the RTP to ensure system compatibility between systems and to enable the use of uniform regional passes (such as the T-Pass).

In researching the possibility of installing electronic fareboxes on the TCaT fleet, County transit staff found that the GFI-Genfare electronic fareboxes currently being used by both Visalia Transit and Porterville Transit do not physically fit on TCaT's current cutaway buses without the removal of passenger seating. TCaT's current fareboxes will still be used for cash-paying passengers, but the card reader will allow for the use of an electronic T-Pass and reloadable fare cards. TCAG also recommends that all new bus purchases take into consideration the spatial needs of electronic farebox installation.

*GFI-Genfare now offers electronic card readers which are pole mounted and could easily and efficiently be incorporated into the existing TCaT fleet. These card readers are compatible with those used by Porterville Transit and Visalia Transit and would be connected to the onboard Wi-Fi system. By installing the card readers, the system could have electronic fare media options compatible with partner transit agencies. These card readers would be used in conjunction with the existing cash fare boxes. These card readers should be installed during FY 2020/21 utilizing a Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP); the cost will be estimated at \$170,000. Alternative systems which are compatible with the card readers used by Visalia Transit and Porterville Transit should also be considered.*

### **On-board Security Cameras**

The County will outfit or upgrade each TCaT bus with security cameras. The installation of on-board security cameras will provide increased safety for passenger and bus operators by providing video surveillance for criminal, safety and security investigations.

This project is anticipated to cost approximately \$75,000 and was originally scheduled to be completed with CalOES funds under Proposition 1B. However, bond sales revenues for the funding program fell short of initial projections, so the project may be delayed if an alternative source of funding is not obtained.

*This project is anticipated to cost approximately \$100,000 and was originally scheduled to be completed with CalOES funds under Proposition 1B. However, bond sales revenues for the funding program fell short of initial projections, so the project was delayed; TCaT has applied for a grant for LCTOP for onboard security cameras and for Automatic Passenger Counters (APCs). The system should be implemented in FY 2020/21 and would cost \$200,000 for both the cameras and APCs.*

### Capital Program

Following is TCaT's capital program for FY 2015/16 through FY 2019/20.

<b>Table 18 – Capital Program</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Cost</b>
FY 2015/16	4 30-Passenger CNG Buses	\$659,400
FY 2015/16	Bus Stop Amenities	\$20,000
FY 2016/17	4 30-Passenger CNG Buses	\$692,400
FY 2016/17	Bus Stop Amenities	\$20,000
FY 2017/18	3 30-Passenger CNG Buses	\$545,200
FY 2017/18	On-board Security Cameras	\$75,000
FY 2017/18	Bus Stop Amenities	\$25,000
FY 2018/19	3 30-Passenger CNG Buses	\$572,500
FY 2018/19	Electronic Card Readers	\$175,000
FY 2018/19	Bus Stop Amenities	\$25,000
FY 2019/20	3 30-Passenger CNG Buses	\$601,100
FY 2019/20	Bus Stop Amenities	\$25,000
		<b>Total \$3,435,600</b>

*The County has also acquired FTA 5339 funding to purchase four new large model CNG buses; and CMAQ grant funding to purchase two additional large model CNG buses. Three of the 5339 buses are currently on order and expected during FY 2020/21. The two CMAQ buses are anticipated for delivery in FY 2021/22. The remaining 5339 bus is expected to be ordered during FY 2021/22 with delivery in FY 2022/23. With a large percentage of the fleet near retirement age, additional vehicles are necessary to ensure coverage during maintenance downtimes.*



**Table 18R – Capital Program (FY20/21 - FY 21/22)**

Year	Project	Cost
FY 2020/21	3 30-Passenger CNG Buses	\$1,520,000
FY 2020/21	Security Cameras, APCs	\$200,000
FY 2020/21	Bus Stop Enhancements	\$65,000
FY 2020/21	Electronic Fare Readers	\$170,000
FY 2021/22	2 30-Passenger CNG Buses	\$1,050,000
FY 2021/22	Bus Stop Amenities	\$10,000
		<b>Total \$3,015,000</b>

Note: Recommendations set forth in the *Southeast Tulare County Mobility Plan* and the *Tulare County Regional Long Range Transit Plan (LRTP)* (currently being developed) may require additions to this capital plan. Recommendations that affect TCaT's service will be included as an addendum to this TDP at a later date, if warranted. In addition, technological advances may also warrant revisiting the TDP sooner than 5 years.

*In 2023, TCaT will be required to submit a Zero Emissions Bus (ZEB) rollout plan to the California Air Resources Board. This plan will require TCaT to determine how to transition to ZEBs, such as electric buses, but would not require the County to purchase ZEBs until at least 2026. As such, staff should begin to consider a transition plan and should seek grant funding as available and appropriate to shift the County towards ZEBs, such as electric buses. In addition, staff should continue to monitor the development ZEBs to determine if they are technologically capable of meeting the demands of TCaT's services.*



## CHAPTER 8 – FINANCIAL PLAN

This financial plan includes estimates of operating and equipment expenditures and projections of revenues by source for the proposed service. Estimates are for the purposes of this study only, and represent approximations of the costs of operations and equipment. Actual values for annual operation and equipment will vary and will be determined through the County's annual budgeting process. The purpose of this data is to provide comparative information for the review of this TDP.

### FUNDING SOURCES

Successful transit systems develop broad funding strategies to implement planned services and projects. Currently, the County's primary revenue sources include Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 funds, Transportation Development Act funds, local sales tax revenues (Measure R). Following is a brief description of these and other funding sources available to TCaT over the next five years.

*In addition to the above funding sources, the State of Good Repair (SGR) program is available to TCaT, which is funded by a new gas tax passed during the TDP period.*

*Additional funding sources may be added in response to COVID-19 and other emergencies, such as the CARES Act funding available under the FTA 5311 program.*

### Fare Revenues

Fare revenue collection is a necessary source of transit funding, but typically only accounts for 10-20% of the costs of transit operations. Fare collection incurs costs for farebox maintenance, cash management, and auditing.

*Farebox revenue has drastically dropped, in part because TCaT stopped collecting fares as part of the COVID-19 response and in part because ridership has declined during the TDP period. Funding under the CARES Act through the 5311 Program or other sources may be used to make up the difference attributable to COVID-19 until fares are collected in full again.*

### Local Funding Sources

#### **Measure R (sales tax)**

In November of 2006, Tulare County voters approved Measure R, allowing TCAG to impose a ½ cent retail transaction and use tax between 2007 and 2037 (30 years). This tax will provide an estimated \$652 million in new revenues for transportation improvements within Tulare County over its 30-year lifespan. The *Measure R Expenditure Plan* sets aside 50% of generated revenues for regional projects, 35% for city and county local transportation systems, 14% for transit, bicycle, and environmental projects, and 1% for administration and planning purposes.

According to the *Final 2006 ½ Cent Transportation Sales Tax Measure Expenditure Plan*, the goal of Measure R's Multi-Modal Transportation Program (Transit/Bicycle/Environmental Program) is to expand or enhance public transit programs that address the transit dependent population, improve mobility through the construction of bike lanes and have a demonstrated ability to get people out of their cars and improve air quality and the environment. Funds can be used for all needed phases of project development and implementation. This funding program requires matching funds from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and the Active Transportation Program (ATP), which are both administered locally through TCAG.

To accomplish this important goal, funding is provided to transit agencies within the County to expand transit services. Other uses include:

- New routes to enhance existing transit service
- Low emission buses
- Night and weekend service
- Bus shelters and other capital improvements
- Safer access to public transit services

According to the *2007 Measure R Policies and Procedures*, priority will be given to Annual Transit Service Expansion projects listed on page 10 of the *Measure R Expenditure Plan*. The County's funds are listed for use as service expansion. In addition, all projects must be adopted by the local agency and presented to the Measure R Authority in an implementation plan, and included as part of the Measure R biennial Strategic Work Plan, a five-year plan that will coincide with the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).

The County of Tulare is programmed to receive approximately \$16,200,000 in Measure R Transit revenues over the life of the tax, plus an additional \$1,560,000 (\$65,000 a year) in supplemental funding as of FY 2013/14. Measure R funds are currently being used for route expansion and to operate the LOOP Bus service. As additional Measure R revenues are needed, the County will amend its Measure R Supplemental Agreement to include additional projects.

*The County receives \$525,000 per year of Measure R Tier 1 Funding for transit expansion. Of this, \$375,000 is used for TCaT services while \$150,000 is used for the LOOP Bus. The County has not claimed the additional \$65,000 of Measure R Tier 2 Funding in all years but should plan to claim this money in FY 2021/22 if available.*

*The TCAG Board voted to suspend distribution of Measure R Transit Funds for FY 2020/21, so additional funds from the CARES Act or LTF may be required to offset this.*

## **State Funding Sources**

### ***Transportation Development Act (TDA)***

The Transportation Development Act (TDA) provides two major sources of funding for public transportation: the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and the State Transit Assistance fund (STA).

These funds are for the development and support of public transportation needs that exist in California and are allocated to areas of each county based on population, taxable sales and transit performance.

The availability of TDA funds is of critical importance to the County. Historically, a significant share of these funds has been used for street projects; the County currently claims about 40% of its annual TDA funds for streets and roads. State law requires that each year TDA funds first be made available for transit purposes. If no transit needs exist that can reasonably be met, the funds can then be used for street projects. TCaT's expenditure plan for the next five years assumes that TDA funds will continue to be available for both transit and street/road projects.

***Cap-and-Trade: Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP)***

Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, took a long-term, comprehensive approach to addressing climate change and its effects on the environment and natural resources. AB 32 required California to reduce greenhouse gases to 1990 levels by 2020, and to maintain and continue reductions beyond 2020. The Air Resources Board (ARB) was directed to be the lead agency to implement the law. ARB has adopted a Scoping Plan and, together with other State and local agencies, has developed and implemented numerous regulations and programs to reduce emissions to meet these goals. The Cap-and-Trade program is a key element of the Scoping Plan. In the Cap-and-Trade program, ARB places a limit, or cap, on GHG emissions by issuing a limited number of tradable permits (called allowances) equal to the cap. A portion of these allowances can be purchased from the State at a quarterly auction, thereby generating auction proceeds. The State portion of these proceeds is deposited in the Fund where it is available for appropriation by the Legislature to further the purposes of AB 32.

As one of the programs established in the Transit, Affordable Housing, and Sustainable Communities Program by SB 862 in 2014, the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) will draw funds from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to support transit agencies in their efforts to increase transit ridership and further the greenhouse gas reduction goals of AB 32 and the associated regional greenhouse gas reduction goals of SB 375. The LCTOP was created to provide operating and capital assistance for transit agencies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve mobility, with a priority on serving disadvantaged communities. Approved projects in LCTOP will support new or expanded bus or rail services, expand intermodal transit facilities, and may include equipment acquisition, fueling, maintenance and other costs to operate those services or facilities, with each project required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. For agencies whose service area includes disadvantaged communities, at least 50 percent of the total moneys received shall be expended on projects that will benefit disadvantaged communities. Senate Bill 852 (Statutes of 2014) appropriated \$25 million for LCTOP for 2014-15 and Senate Bill 862 continuously appropriates five percent of the annual auction proceeds in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (Fund) for LCTOP beginning in 2015-16. The Tulare County region (all providers combined) received \$167,000 in FY 2014/15.

*Funds available under LCTOP have grown substantially through the TDP period. LCTOP funds for the Tulare County regional (all providers combined) have increased to approximately \$952,000 of which TCaT may receive approximately \$305,000.*

### ***State of Good Repair (SGR)/SB1***

*Senate Bill 1 (SB1), also known as the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017, will provide over \$50 billion in new transportation funding over the next decade to repair highways, bridges and local roads, to make strategic investments in congested commute and freight corridors, and to improve transit service. The program will provide an additional \$105 million annually to transit operators for projects deemed eligible for transit maintenance, rehabilitation and capital projects. The additional funds will be sourced from the new Transportation Improvement Fee (TIF) on registrations which began on January 1, 2018. The program will be allocated under the State Transit Assistance (STA) Program formula. Funds are allocated half according to population and half according to transit operator revenue.*

*Due to the economic impacts of COVID-19, SGR is expected to have a significant decrease due to the impacts of the COVID-19 shelter-in-place order on driving. As such, staff have planned for a 25% drop in the FY 2021/22 funding though the actual distribution may be higher or lower.*

### **Federal Funding Sources**

On July 6, 2012 President Obama signed into law a new two-year transportation authorization, entitled Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21). MAP-21 replaced the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). MAP-21 put new emphasis on strengthening the safety of our public transportation systems. MAP-21 funds are directed towards transit projects through several funding programs, including the following:

#### ***Section 5311 – Rural Area Formula Grants***

The Section 5311 program provides capital, operating, and planning assistance for operators of public transportation in non-urbanized areas with populations less than 50,000. Activities previously eligible under the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program, which provided services to low-income individual to access jobs, are now available under this program. In California, the 5311 program is administered by Caltrans on behalf of the FTA. Section 5311 funds must be matched by state and local funds. Capital projects require a 20% local match. Operating projects require a 50% local match. Local match funds can be cash or cash-equivalent, depending upon the expenditure. Non-Department of Transportation (DOT) federal funds may be used as a match.

*The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides \$25 billion to transit agencies to help to prevent, prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The total available amount for each program is based on funding appropriated under the Act. TCaT is eligible for CARES Act funding through the 5311 Program. A first round of funding, which is approximately 30% of the total available to transit agencies under the CARES Act, will provide*

*TCaT an amount of approximately \$413,637 in FY 2020/21. The remainder of these funds may have additional obligations or may be used for more regional focused projects, however TCaT may expect to receive additional operating funds under this program of approximately \$950,000 total. As such, this plan anticipates TCaT will claim approximately \$450,000 in FY 2021/22 with the rest to follow in later years.*

### **Section 5339 – Bus and Bus Facilities Program**

The Section 5339 program provides funding to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment, and to construct bus-related facilities. In California, the 5339 program is administered by Caltrans on behalf of the FTA. Funds are eligible to be transferred by the state to supplement urban and rural formula grant programs (5307 and 5311, respectively). Funding under this program requires a 20% local match.

### **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ)**

CMAQ program funds are directed to projects and programs which improve or maintain National Ambient Air Quality Standards in non-attainment areas for ozone and particulate matter (PM), such as the San Joaquin Valley, under the 1990 Clean Air Act. All CMAQ projects are coordinated and administered through TCAG. A diverse variety of projects and programs are eligible for CMAQ funds, including transit vehicles and CNG/LNG stations. All CMAQ projects must be included in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

## **PROJECTED EXPENDITURES**

The expenditure plan shown below anticipates an outlay of \$19,139,300 for operating and capital over the next five years, based on the service plan presented in this TDP. Annual expenditures range between approximately \$3,400,000 and \$4,100,000. Buses account for the majority of capital expenditures. Operating expenses assume a 3% annual inflation rate.

Implementation of the previously outlined service plan (Chapter 6) and the capital plan outlined in Chapter 7 will result in the following five-year expenditure plan.

<b>Table 19 – TCaT Expenditures</b>						
<b>Expense</b>	<b>FY 2015/16</b>	<b>FY 2016/17</b>	<b>FY 2017/18</b>	<b>FY 2018/19</b>	<b>FY 2019/20</b>	<b>Total</b>
Operating	\$2,759,600	\$3,105,700	\$3,190,900	\$3,278,600	\$3,368,900	\$15,703,700
Capital						
Buses	\$659,400	\$692,400	\$545,200	\$572,500	\$601,100	\$3,070,600
Stop Amenities	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$115,000
Cameras	\$0	\$0	\$75,000	\$0	\$0	\$75,000
Card Readers	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$175,000	\$175,000
Subtotal	\$679,400	\$712,400	\$645,200	\$597,500	\$801,100	\$3,435,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,439,000</b>	<b>\$3,818,100</b>	<b>\$3,836,100</b>	<b>\$4,051,100</b>	<b>\$3,995,000</b>	<b>\$19,139,300</b>

**Table 19R – TCaT Expenditures (FY20/21 - FY 21/22)**

<b>Expense</b>	<b>FY 2020/21</b>	<b>FY 2021/22</b>	<b>Total</b>
Operating	\$3,411,333	\$3,582,326	\$6,993,659
Capital			
Buses	\$1,520,000	\$1,050,000	\$2,570,000
Stop Amenities	\$65,000	\$10,000	\$75,000
Cameras/APC's	\$200,000		\$200,000
Card Readers	\$170,000		\$170,000
Subtotal	\$1,955,000	\$1,060,000	\$3,015,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,366,333</b>	<b>\$4,642,326</b>	<b>\$10,008,659</b>

## PROJECTED REVENUES

The five-year expenditure plan outlined in the previous section will require a mix of funding revenues, as shown in the table below. Federal funds are projected to cover approximately 11% of total system costs over the next five years, while state funds will cover approximately 57%. These funds will be used for both operating and capital expenditures. Other funding sources, such as CMAQ, will be used for capital purchases as available. Local match funds for capital projects are currently show as coming from TDA and Cap and Trade funds.

Passenger fares are projected to contribute approximately 19% of the total operating costs of the proposed TCaT services over the next five years. Approximately 18% of TCaT's overall operating expenses are expected to be covered by annual Measure R allocations. TDA funds are projected to account for approximately 55% of all operating costs, unless additional FTA funds are acquired.

The following table is intended to show that the County will have adequate funds to account for the service plan and capital purchases proposed in this TDP. Actual revenue amounts and funding sources are subject to availability, and will be determined by the County's annual budgeting process. New funding sources will be sought if and when they become available.

Table 20 – TCaT Revenues

Revenue	FY 2015/16	FY 2016/17	FY 2017/18	FY 2018/19	FY 2019/20	Total
FTA (5311)						
Operating	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$1,000,000
Capital	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$1,000,000
TDA (LTF/STA)						
Operating	\$1,457,300	\$1,657,500	\$1,831,900	\$1,810,300	\$1,888,400	\$8,645,400
Capital	\$580,100	\$99,400	\$470,900	\$166,300	\$526,800	\$1,843,500
Subtotal	\$2,037,400	\$1,756,900	\$2,302,800	\$1,976,600	\$2,415,200	\$10,488,900
Fares	\$512,300	\$558,900	\$569,000	\$678,300	\$690,500	\$3,009,000
Measure R	\$590,000	\$590,000	\$590,000	\$590,000	\$590,000	\$2,950,000
Unknown*	\$0	\$0	\$75,000	\$0	\$0	\$75,000
Cap & Trade	\$99,300	\$99,300	\$99,300	\$99,300	\$99,300	\$496,500
CMAQ	\$0	\$613,000	\$0	\$506,900	\$0	\$1,119,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,439,000</b>	<b>\$3,818,100</b>	<b>\$3,836,100</b>	<b>\$4,051,100</b>	<b>\$3,995,000</b>	<b>\$19,139,300</b>

\*The County is seeking an alternate funding source to cover the cost of security cameras. This project was originally scheduled to be funded through CalOES funds under Proposition 1B (see Chapter 7).



Table 20R – TCaT Revenues (FY20/21 - FY 21/22)			
Revenue	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22	Total
FTA (5311/5339/CMAQ)			
5311 Operating	\$384,600	\$384,600	\$769,200
5311 CARES Act	\$413,637	\$450,000	\$863,637
5311 Capital	\$0	\$0	\$0
5339 Capital	\$857,000	\$0	\$857,000
CMAQ Capital	\$0	\$900,000	\$900,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$1,655,237</i>	<i>\$1,734,600</i>	<i>\$3,389,837</i>
TDA (LTF/STA/SGR)			
Operating	\$2,169,783	\$1,464,726	\$3,634,509
SGR Capital	\$264,000	\$198,000	\$462,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$2,433,783</i>	<i>\$1,662,726</i>	<i>\$4,096,509</i>
Fares	\$300,000	\$500,000	\$800,000
Measure R Expansion	\$0	\$440,000	\$440,000
Measure R Capital	\$672,000	\$0	\$672,000
LCTOP (Cap & Trade)	\$305,313	\$305,000	\$610,313
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,366,333</b>	<b>\$4,642,326</b>	<b>\$10,008,659</b>

*Due to the economic impacts of COVID-19, all revenue sources are predicted to have zero growth unless otherwise noted in this chapter, though these funds are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars for FY 2021/22.*

*Fare revenues are difficult to anticipate during the TDP Extension period. For FY 2019/20, farebox revenue prior to COVID-19 was expected to be approximately \$500,000. However, the loss of ridership and subsequent decision to stop collecting fares significantly impacted this income. Staff anticipate collecting approximately 60% of this original projection during FY 2020/21 assuming there is no fare collection for a few months and it takes several months for ridership levels to stabilize. The full collection of \$500,000 is anticipated in FY 2020/21 as ridership normalizes.*

Note: Recommendations set forth in the *Southeast Tulare County Mobility Plan* and the *Tulare County Regional Long Range Transit Plan (LRTP)* (currently being developed) may require additions to this financial plan. Recommendations that affect TCaT's service will be included as an addendum to this TDP at a later date, if warranted.

*Other planning documents by TCAG may require consideration of other service changes to implement during the TDP Extension period, including the 2019 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan.*