

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	February 23, 2021
SUBJECT:	Receive Presentation on the Draft 2040 Long-Range Transit Plan and Provide Comment
AGENDA ITEM:	14
STAFF CONTACT:	Daniel Wayne, Senior Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

The 2040 Long-Range Transit Plan is being developed in consultation with regional partners and the public to aid in the development of future public transportation services in the Shasta Region. The draft of the plan will be available for review and comment beginning in late-February. The final plan will be presented at the April SRTA Board of Directors meeting to consider for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. Receive a presentation on the Draft 2040 Long-Range Transit Plan; and
2. Provide comments and direction to staff for incorporation into the final plan.

DISCUSSION:

Background – Various public, non-profit, and private sector partners provide public transportation services in the Shasta Region, each of which plays a key role in meeting the region’s diverse mobility needs. SRTA is responsible for promoting coordination among providers and supporting more effective and efficient delivery of services. Efforts to date have focused on near-term needs and opportunities as they arise, without the benefit of a holistic, long-term vision. Recent examples include Sunday On-Demand, expanded Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA), express services, and deployment of vehicle technology and dispatching software. Development of a long-range transit plan was approved by the board of directors in 2019 to address the absence of a unified, long-range vision and to better define SRTA and partner roles when designing, funding, and delivering future public transportation services, infrastructure, and vehicles. As a high-level document, the plan sets the stage for future special studies, pilot projects, and ridership programs.

Draft Long-Range Transit Plan – The Draft 2040 Long-Range Transit Plan is currently undergoing administrative review by agency stakeholders and will be available on SRTA’s website beginning in late-February. The draft plan is based on community and stakeholder input received to date, including comments received during the Virtual Community Workshop held December 11, 2020, through January 8, 2021. Once the Draft 2040 Long-Range Transit Plan has been published, all interested parties will be invited to review and provide feedback on the findings and recommendations.

The Draft 2040 Long-Range Transit Plan is somewhat unconventional in that it does not offer a singular course of action. Due to the many known and unknown variables affecting the delivery and performance of public transportation services over the next 20 years, an adaptive approach was taken. As shown in the table below, three possible future scenarios have been identified (i.e., Current Trend, The Next Step, and A Giant Leap). Each scenario has different assumptions for three key areas (i.e., Funding, Land Use & Development, and Public Perspective).

FUTURE SCENARIOS TO 2040

	CURRENT TREND	THE NEXT STEP	A GIANT LEAP
Variable #1: Funding	- Funding will increase in relationship to the economy, but the relative share of funding expended to support alternative mobility options remains about the same as today. - As grant funds allow, temporary pilot projects are tested in response to unmet transit needs.	- New state and federal funding opportunities will allow for the expansion of creative and customized mobility options. - At the local/regional level, a change in funding reallocation among mobility options begins to occur, allowing for the limited but long-term provision of new mobility alternatives where feasible.	- New funding is not only available from state and federal sources, but also local funding decisions prioritize local funds for mobility options. - Most closely aligned with assumptions and performance outcomes in the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS).
Variable #2: Land Use & Development	Land use patterns and characteristics will continue as today with occasional higher-density residential developments.	- Urban centers, transit corridors, and rural town centers become more attractive and experience modest increases in population. - In these areas, market and policy factors begin to expand the number of living options, combined with some public investment in transit and other modes.	- Both market and policy factors strongly incentivize transportation-efficient development patterns. - Population growth in urban centers and corridors is substantially higher, but is still consistent with the region's growth rate and SCS assumptions.
Variable #3: Public Perspective	- General community attitude continues to be one of interest and willingness to experiment with alternatives to the automobile. - Mobility options improve for individuals who are transit dependent, but available options remain unattractive to those that are not transit dependent.	- People are actively looking for realistic options to driving an automobile. - Alternative modes are popular in certain areas where high-quality facilities and services are available.	- Access to alternative travel modes to autos is expected and demanded throughout the more urbanized areas. - Context-appropriate mobility options are expected and demanded in rural and low-density areas.

It is important to note that none of the above scenarios is more likely to occur or more recommended than another. The three scenarios reflect the range of possible futures. The one that most closely mirrors real world conditions in the region becomes the basis for determining the type, timing, and degree to which transit improvement strategies are deployed. The Draft 2040 Long-Range Transit Plan offers the following four categories of transit improvement strategies for consideration:

- Multi-modal accessibility strategies – Examples include first- and last-mile pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit. Also, micro-transit services such as electric bike share and neighborhood electric shuttles for trips that are not well-suited to fixed route service.
- Fixed-route transit strategies – Examples include realigning the fixed-route network to match current and future travel conditions and land use. Also, adding amenities at transit stops and transfer centers that enhance the customer experience.
- Policy improvement strategies – Examples include consolidation of services to reduce overlaps and reorganizing transit governance to be inclusive of all services and jurisdictions.
- Alternative mobility strategies – Examples include expanded on-demand service where conventional fixed-route service is underperforming and integrating public and private mobility options under one application and payment system.

A more detailed description of the planning process, findings, and recommendations will be provided in the Draft 2040 Long-Range Transit Plan, which will be posted online and advertised beginning in late-February. Comments received through the end of March 2021, will be addressed in the final draft, which will be presented to the board of directors at the April meeting for acceptance. Implementation of the plan will require effective communication, coordination, and collaboration with public, non-profit, and private sector partners throughout the region. Jointly-developed studies, projects, and programs will be presented for approval at key decision-making points in the future, such as the unmet transit needs process, grant allocations, and approval of short-range transit plan.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may extend the public review period to allow additional time for comment. This may affect the timing of when the final plan is presented to the board of directors for acceptance.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

SRTA's Technical Advisory Committee, including RABA, local agency partners, Dignity Health Connected Living, and the Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee were consulted during the planning process. The Draft 2040 Long-Range Transit Plan is also being provided to SRTA's partner agencies for review and comment prior to publishing the public review draft.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Draft and Final 2040 Long-Range Transit Plan has no direct fiscal impact to the agency. Fiscal impacts associated with the implementation of the final approved plan will be provided as part of future board of directors agendas for discussion and direction. These actions are typically in step with the annual unmet transit needs process.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Dan Little", is positioned above a solid black horizontal line.

Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director