

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the recommended comprehensive Routing Plan for the B-Line transit system. This discussion builds upon the detailed evaluation of alternatives presented in previous chapters; the reader is encouraged to refer to these previous chapters for additional detail on the service elements.

An important basis of this plan is the public input provided in the course of this study. Key public input opportunities to date consist of the following:

- A virtual community workshop on July 14<sup>th</sup> with 16 participants. A summary of the workshops is provided in Appendix G.
- A second virtual community workshop on October 22, 2022, also with 16 participants.
- An onboard survey, which provided input from 280 participants.
- Development of a project webpage throughout the study process.

In addition, a third Public Workshop will be held along with community pop-up events to gain input on this Draft Plan.

## **NEAR-TERM PLAN**

The Near-Term Routing Plan is designed to improve the near-term effectiveness of the overall transit program within financial constraints and shift services to better meet current demands and needs.

### **Chico Service Modifications**

The existing route network in general is serving the transit needs of Chico well. The system provides good coverage of the urban area and the route structure provides good service to downtown Chico and the college campus, with transfers in downtown Chico as well as secondary transfer points at the North Valley Plaza and Forest Avenue in the south. There are some areas (notably in the eastern and northern portions of the service area) with low ridership that merit revisions. In addition, there is the need to revise routes to improve on-time performance. This plan has been developed to address those issues and improve the system overall. The guiding principles to redesign the services in Chico include:

- Retain key services in downtown Chico
- Reflect community unmet needs
- Address on-time performance issues on existing Chico routes
- Replace low performing routes with microtransit service
- Add direct service in the southeast of the City and to new destinations such as the Jesus Center
- Emphasize North Valley Plaza as the secondary transit center

Figure 34 presents the recommended Routing Plan for the Chico service area. As shown, two microtransit service areas are planned. These will consist of an app-based service (similar to Uber or Lyft) by which passengers can request immediate rides either through the app or by phone, and are provided with a curb-to-curb ride anywhere within the individual zones or to nearby fixed route hubs. Additional detail on microtransit can be found in Chapter 7, above.

The following describes the recommended changes for each route.

### ***Route 2 Mangrove***

Route 2 will continue to operate from downtown Chico to northeast Chico primarily by the Mangrove Avenue and Cohasset Road corridors. There are two changes to Route 2 under this plan. First, the route will no longer serve the DMV loop on Rio Lindo Avenue and Parmac Road. The change will allow for faster travel times and more reliable service. In addition, the north end of the route is revised to better serve the Social Security office and shorten the travel time. The route will no longer operate on Ceres Avenue and Eaton Road south of Lassen Avenue. The new routing will travel north on Ridgewood Drive, south on Ceres Avenue and west on Lassen Avenue. The overall revised route is 9.0 miles in length compared with the current 11.1 miles in length. This reduction in length will significantly improve the ability for this route to stay on schedule.

### ***Route 3 Nord/East***

There are no service changes proposed for Route 3. It is recommended to implement a transit signal priority (TSP) program to improve the travel time and reliability of the service. Potential locations for TSP could include Nord Avenue and West Sacramento Avenue, Nord Avenue and West 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, East Avenue and Esplanade, and East Avenue at the SR 99 interchange.

### ***Route 4 First/East***

No changes are proposed for Route 4.

### ***Route 5 East 8<sup>th</sup> Street***

Under this plan there are two proposed changes to the route. First, the Springfield Drive loop will be operated in both the inbound and outbound directions, rather than the current route which only travels on the loop in the inbound direction. This will provide more convenient service to the Chico Marketplace Mall and Kohl's, as well as the residential neighborhoods. The second change is to shorten the southern terminus loop to operate south on Forest Avenue, east on Parkway Village Drive and north on Huntington Drive. This new routing shortens the travel time while still making the connection to Walmart and to other routes at the Forest Avenue Transit Center. The Notre Dame Boulevard loop will be discontinued on Route 5 but will be served by a new microtransit zone, as discussed below. The revised route will be 11.2 miles in length, 0.3 miles less than at present. This will reduce running time by several minutes, improving on-time performance.



### ***Route 8 Nord***

No routing changes are proposed for Route 8. However, it is recommended that service times be expanded to include Friday evening service until 9:34 PM as well as providing service on Saturdays from 8:20 AM to 9:34 PM, when CSUC is in session. This will enhance service to the busy neighborhood northwest of the CSUC campus, which generates strong ridership.

### ***Route 9 Orange/Warner/Cedar***

Route 9 will continue to operate the existing route in the CSUC area, with two modifications. First, the southern loop will be shifted to Orange Street instead of Oak Street to provide additional coverage in the neighborhood and to serve the Amtrak station. Only one existing stop (on Oak Street just north of West Seventh Street) will need to be moved. Secondly, service will be extended during the CSUC sessions to provide Friday evening service until 10:01 PM, as well as Saturday service from 8:14 AM to 10:01 PM. This will replace the existing 9C service on Friday evenings and Saturdays during the CSUC sessions.

### ***Route 14 Park/Forest/MLK***

No changes are proposed for Route 14.

### ***Route 15 Esplanade/Lassen***

Route 15 will continue to provide service from downtown Chico to north Chico via the Esplanade corridor. Under this plan, Route 15 will take over the Rio Lindo Avenue / Cohasset Road loop to serve the DMV. In addition, the northern terminus routing will shift north to Ridgewood Drive to better serve the Social Security office and to offset some of the additional running time needed to serve the Rio Linda / Cohasset Road loop.

### ***Route 16 Esplanade/ Hwy 99***

Route 16 will be eliminated under this plan. This addresses the inefficient overlap between Routes 15 and 16 on Esplanade south of Lassen Boulevard (with Route 15 continuing to provide service). North of Lassen Avenue, service will be provided by the North Microtransit service, as discussed below.

### ***Route 17 Park/Fair/Forest***

Route 17 provides service from the Downtown Transit Center to the Walmart and Butte College Chico Campus on Forest Avenue. The route will be revised to shift the service from MLK Jr. Parkway to Fair Street in the outbound direction to provide direct service to the Jesus Center and Fairgrounds. Stops along MLK Jr. Parkway will continue to be served by Route 14.

### ***Route 52 Chico Airport Express***

Route 52 operates limited express service to the airport (five runs per weekday). This service will be discontinued and replaced by the North Microtransit.

## ***North Microtransit Zone***

The zone is designed to replace the low-performing Routes 16 and 52 that are currently serving the community in northwest Chico. It consists of the area north of Lassen Avenue as far west as Alamo Avenue and as far east as Cohasset Road, extending as far north as the airport terminal on the northeast and the SR 99 / Wilson Landing Road intersection on the northwest. The microtransit van will also serve the key stops at North Valley Plaza and at the Social Security office on Lassen Avenue to connect the on-demand service with the fixed route system.

The Northwest Zone will utilize the revenue hours from the existing Route 16 to operate weekdays and Saturdays. One vehicle will be sufficient to provide service in the zone. Fares will be identical with the fixed route fares (for all microtransit zones).

## ***East Microtransit Zone***

The East Zone is designed to replace the existing poorly performing Route 7. It will serve the areas on the east side of Chico between Forest Avenue and Bruce Road/Manzanita Avenue, as well as the area north of East Avenue and east of Cohasset Road. Route 7 currently has the lowest ridership in the system. The area is made up of lower density land uses that can be better served by microtransit than fixed route. The vehicle will also serve transfer points at North Valley Plaza, Social Security office and Forest Avenue Transfer Point to provide connections with fixed routes and will also serve the existing bus stops at Pleasant Valley High School.

The zone will utilize the revenue hours from the existing Routes 7 and 52 to operate weekday service. One vehicle will be sufficient to provide service in the zone.

## ***Plan Benefits***

Overall, this plan has the following benefits in the Chico Area:

- Travel times are reduced on Routes 2 and 5, improving the on-time performance.
- Lower performing routes have been replaced with microtransit to better align the service with the market it serves and to expand the effective transit service area.
- Transit coverage is extended with microtransit in the east and north areas, with continued connection points at Downtown Chico, North Valley Plaza and Forest Avenue.
- Direct fixed route local service is provided on Fair Street to the Jesus Center.
- Friday evening service and Saturday service is provided on Routes 8 and 9 when CSUC is in session.

## **Oroville Service**

The existing service in Oroville operates four routes at 60-minute headways using two buses. This plan reallocates the service hours to improve on-time performance and coverage in the area. The service plan introduces three microtransit zones and three fixed routes to expand the service to more areas. The key components of the services in Oroville include:

- Retain high ridership route segment
- Replace low ridership segments with microtransit

- Commingle paratransit and general public demand response extend coverage

Figure 35 presents the near-term routing plan for the Oroville service area. The following provides an overview of the recommended changes for each route.

### ***Route 25 Feather River Boulevard***

Route 25 provides service from the Oroville Transit Center to Walmart and the retail area along Feather River Boulevard in the southwest part of the city. Under this plan, the route will operate in a bi-directional manner along the existing service on Feather River, Mitchell Avenue to the DMV, north on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Robinson Street and Lincoln Street to the Transit Center. The route will follow the same routing in the outbound direction back to Feather River and Walmart. The route will no longer serve the Oro Dam corridor (which will be served by Route 27). Table 40 provides an example schedule for Routes 25, 26 and 27, indicating how one bus operates the three routes over the course of each hour.

### ***Route 26 Orange Avenue***

The revised Route 26 extends the existing loop along Orange Avenue, Canyon Highlands Drive, and Bridge Street to service the Oroville High School, as well as the retail and residential in that area. The route connects to other routes at the transit center. It is interlined with the Route 25 and 27.

### ***Route 27 Oro Dam/Veatch***

Route 27 will serve the segment of Oro Dam Boulevard between the Transit Center and Veatch Street, including FoodMaxx and Las Plumas Plaza. The route will travel in a small loop to provide service along Oro Dam and connect back to the Transit Center for connections to other routes. The route will be interlined with Routes 25 and 26.

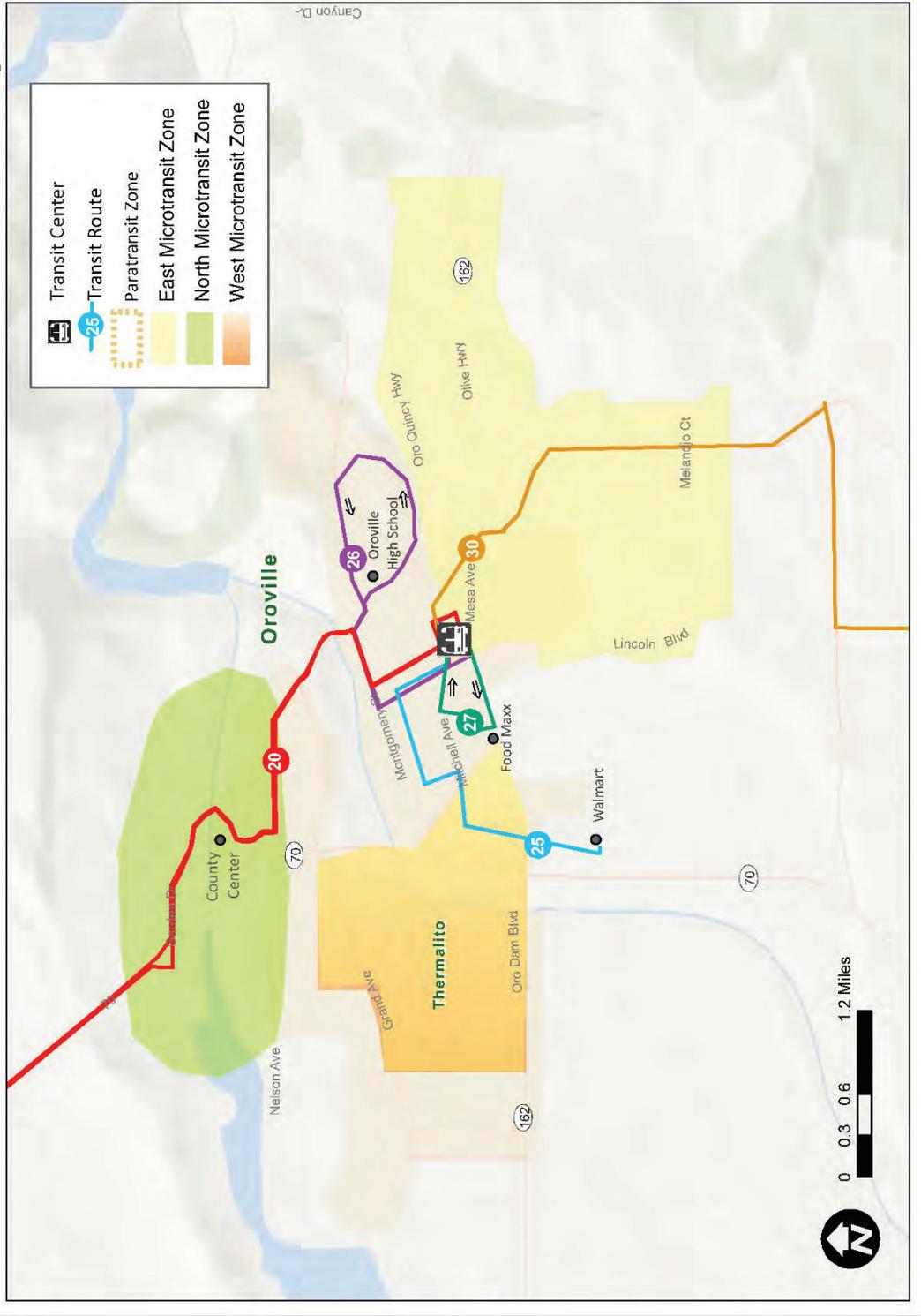
### ***West Microtransit Zone***

The existing Route 24 which serves the Thermalito area has very low ridership and productivity. Under this plan a West Zone encompassing the Thermalito area will be operated as a combined paratransit and general public demand response service. The service in the zone will connect riders from Thermalito to areas in central Oroville for transfer opportunities to other routes and zones. Fares for all microtransit zones will be consistent with the fixed route fares.

### ***Southeast Microtransit Zone***

The Southeast Zone provides service to the areas along Olive Highway (as far east as Gold Country Casino) and along Lincoln Street and Lower Wyandotte Road as far south as Monte Vista Avenue, serving the areas currently served by Route 27 and Route 26 (that will no longer operate on Olive Highway). The zone will also cover Las Plumas High School, Gold Country Casino and connect to the Transit Center for transfer opportunities. Passengers will also be able to travel to/from the Oroville Transit center to connect with fixed routes or other microtransit zones. Route 30 will also continue to serve the southern portion of this zone.

**Figure 35:  
Oroville Routing Plan**



**Table 40: Example Schedule - Oroville Fixed Routes**

Route 25 Feather		Route 26			Route 27		
Transit Center	River Cinema	Transit Center	Bridge & Acacia	Orange & Acacia	Transit Center	Food Maxx	Transit Center
6:10 AM	6:21 AM	6:31 AM	6:39 AM	6:42 AM	6:50 AM	6:54 AM	7:00 AM
7:10 AM	7:21 AM	7:31 AM	7:39 AM	7:42 AM	7:50 AM	7:54 AM	8:00 AM
8:10 AM	8:21 AM	8:31 AM	8:39 AM	8:42 AM	8:50 AM	8:54 AM	9:00 AM
9:10 AM	9:21 AM	9:31 AM	9:39 AM	9:42 AM	9:50 AM	9:54 AM	10:00 AM
10:10 AM	10:21 AM	10:31 AM	10:39 AM	10:42 AM	10:50 AM	10:54 AM	11:00 AM
11:10 AM	11:21 AM	11:31 AM	11:39 AM	11:42 AM	11:50 AM	11:54 AM	12:00 PM
12:10 PM	12:21 PM	12:31 PM	12:39 PM	12:42 PM	12:50 PM	12:54 PM	1:00 PM
1:10 PM	1:21 PM	1:31 PM	1:39 PM	1:42 PM	1:50 PM	1:54 PM	2:00 PM
2:10 PM	2:21 PM	2:31 PM	2:39 PM	2:42 PM	2:50 PM	2:54 PM	3:00 PM
3:10 PM	3:21 PM	3:31 PM	3:39 PM	3:42 PM	3:50 PM	3:54 PM	4:00 PM
4:10 PM	4:21 PM	4:31 PM	4:39 PM	4:42 PM	4:50 PM	4:54 PM	5:00 PM
5:10 PM	5:21 PM	5:31 PM	5:39 PM	5:42 PM	5:50 PM	5:54 PM	6:00 PM

**North Microtransit Zone**

The North Microtransit Zone will share a vehicle with the Southeast Microtransit Zone. The zone will provide microtransit service to County Center Road and Grand Avenue area. This will take over for the discontinued portion of the existing Route 24. Trips to and from the Oroville Transit Center will also be accommodated to allow transfers to the fixed routes. Note that Route 20 will continue to serve this area on a more direct route (as discussed below).

**Benefits of Plan in Oroville**

This plan will have the following benefits in Oroville:

- Improved on-time performance for fixed routes
- Lower performing routes have been replaced with microtransit to better align the service with the market it serves. This has the potential to expand ridership in the future.
- Extended transit coverage with microtransit in the southeast and north areas
- No additional revenue hours

**Paradise/Magalia Service**

**Route 40**

The plan will combine Routes 40 and 41 and provide a consistent and more direct service connecting Magalia, Paradise and Chico. As shown in Figure 36, the route operates along most of the segment of the existing Route 40 to Wagstaff Road / Clark Road and continues north on Clark Road to the Lakeridge loop in Magalia. The Paradise Transit Center will be served in both directions. Note that the existing Route 41 service along Fair Street in Chico will be eliminated (all service will be along the

existing Route 40 in Chico), but the revisions to Route 17 will replace and expand service along Fair Street. Reflecting current ridership levels, the number of runs on weekdays will be five in the westbound direction and four in the eastbound direction, with three runs in each direction on Saturdays. As shown in Table 41, these runs are scheduled to allow commuting in both directions on weekdays, as well as mid-day services to allow a variety of trip lengths for other purposes. Note that if demand increases in the future, additional runs (particularly on weekdays) could be added.

### ***Paradise/Magalia Microtransit***

Outlying areas of Paradise and Magalia will be served by a microtransit zone. This will replace the various low-ridership loops operated currently by Route 41 and also substantially expand the transit service area to encompass new developments in Paradise that are part of rebuilding the community. (These new development sites are also shown in Figure 36.) To provide connections with the fixed route, service will operate from 6:30 AM – 6:00 PM on weekdays and 9:30 AM – 5:30 PM on Saturdays. This service should initially be operated using a single van. If ridership grows to the point where average wait times consistently exceed 30 minutes, a second van could be added during peak times. Fares will be consistent with the local fixed route fares.

### ***Benefits of Plan in Paradise/Magalia***

This plan will have the following benefits in Paradise and Magalia:

- Improved on-time performance for fixed route.
- Lower performing route segments have been replaced with microtransit to better align the service with the market it serves.
- Microtransit significantly expands the portions of the Ridge communities that have transit service. Importantly, this includes scattered multifamily residential developments that cannot be efficiently served by fixed routes. Overall, it provides service that better fits the development pattern as the area continues to recover from the Camp Fire. It also provides service for trips within the local area at the lower local fare rate rather than the current regional fare rate.

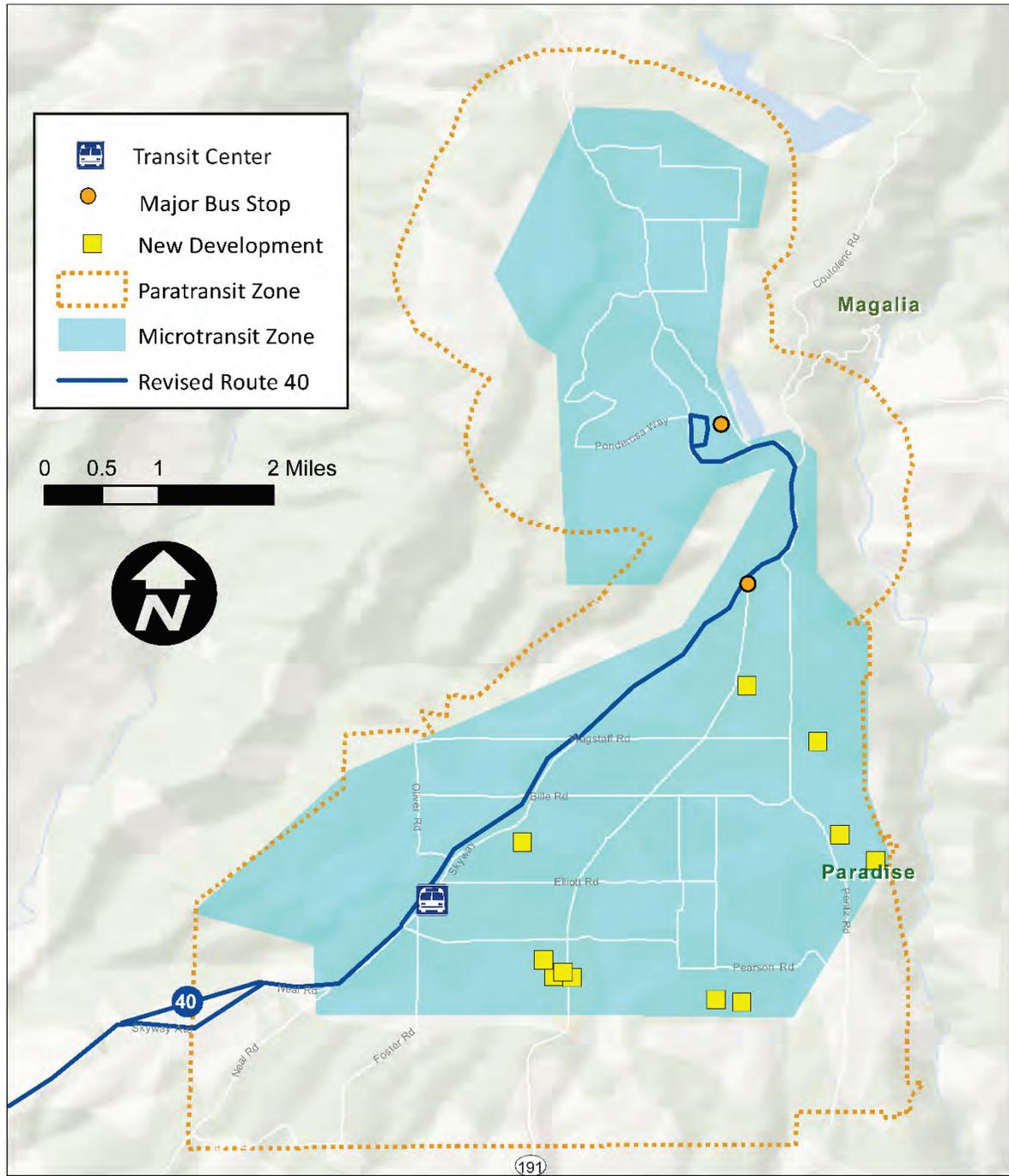
### **Other Intercity Services**

Beyond the Paradise/Magalia service, the intercity routes will be revised as discussed below and shown in Figure 37.

### ***Route 20***

Route 20 is currently providing critical connections between the most populous areas within Butte County – Chico and Oroville. In this plan most of the routing of Route 20 will remain the same. The proposed rerouting will be focused on the County public service complex in Oroville as illustrated in Figure 24. The proposed new Route 20 will be bidirectional along SR 70, Garden Dr, Table Mountain Blvd, County Center Dr, Nelson Ave, and back to Table Mountain Blvd. This will reduce running time by 1 to 2 minutes and improve on-time performance.

**Figure 36:  
Paradise/Magalia Routing Plan**



**Table 41: Revised Route 40 Schedule**

<b>Eastbound Weekday</b>					
<b>Chico</b>		<b>Paradise</b>		<b>Magalia</b>	
Chico Transit Center	Forest Xfer (Walmart)	Paradise Transit Center	Skyway & Wagstaff	Lakeridge (Sav Mor Mkt)	<i>Continues On To</i>
7:20 AM	7:32 AM	7:54 AM	8:01 AM	8:13 AM	40 West
10:50 AM	11:02 AM	11:24 AM	11:31 AM	11:43 AM	40 West
12:50 PM	1:02 PM	1:24 PM	1:31 PM	1:43 PM	40 West
4:50 PM	5:02 PM	5:24 PM	5:31 PM	5:43 PM	40 West
<b>Westbound Weekday</b>					
<b>Magalia</b>	<b>Paradise</b>		<b>Chico</b>		
Lakeridge (Sav Mor Mkt)	Skyway & Wagstaff	Paradise Transit Center	Forest Xfer (Walmart)	Chico Transit Center	<i>Continues On To</i>
6:45 AM	6:58 AM	7:05 AM	7:27 AM	7:40 AM	
8:15 AM	8:28 AM	8:35 AM	8:57 AM	9:10 AM	
11:45 AM	11:58 AM	12:05 PM	12:27 PM	12:40 PM	40 East
1:45 PM	1:58 PM	2:05 PM	2:27 PM	2:40 PM	
5:45 PM	5:58 PM	6:05 PM	6:27 PM	6:40 PM	
<b>Eastbound Saturday</b>					
<b>Chico</b>		<b>Paradise</b>		<b>Magalia</b>	
Chico Transit Center	Forest Xfer (Walmart)	Paradise Transit Center	Skyway & Wagstaff	Lakeridge (Sav Mor Mkt)	<i>Continues On To</i>
9:50 AM	10:02 AM	10:24 AM	10:31 AM	10:43 AM	40 West
12:50 PM	1:02 PM	1:24 PM	1:31 PM	1:43 PM	40 West
4:10 PM	4:22 PM	4:44 PM	4:51 PM	5:03 PM	40 West
<b>Westbound Saturday</b>					
<b>Magalia</b>	<b>Paradise</b>		<b>Chico</b>		
Lakeridge (Sav Mor Mkt)	Skyway & Wagstaff	Paradise Transit Center	Forest Xfer (Walmart)	Chico Transit Center	<i>Continues On To</i>
10:45 AM	10:58 AM	11:05 AM	11:27 AM	11:40 AM	
1:45 PM	1:58 PM	2:05 PM	2:27 PM	2:40 PM	
5:05 PM	5:18 PM	5:25 PM	5:47 PM	6:00 PM	

**Route 30**

No changes are planned for Route 30.

**Route 32**

No changes are considered for Route 32. While ridership is low, it is an important lifeline service, and serves disadvantaged communities.

**Route 31**

Prior to the Camp Fire, Route 31 provided service between Paradise and Oroville. Even before the pandemic and fire, ridership on this route was very low. Given that the bulk of the need for a transit connection to Paradise/Magalia is to/from Chico, available transit resources are better used in expanding that service (as discussed above) and reinstatement of Route 31 is not part of this plan.

**Figure 37:**  
**Intercity Routing Plan**  
 Excluding Paradise/Magalia Routes



## ***Benefits to Intercity Services***

- Improved on-time performance for intercity routes
- Maintain key service areas of the intercity routes
- Improve regional service efficiency

## **Paratransit Services**

Under this plan, fixed routes will be reduced. As the minimum paratransit service area required under the Americans with Disabilities Act is a ¼ mile distance from a fixed route, this provides the potential to reduce paratransit service areas. However, no reductions in existing paratransit services are proposed.

Also, as detailed in Chapter 8, expansion of paratransit services is not warranted under current ridership demands. Instead, B-Line should focus on continuing to provide a high quality of paratransit service.

## **Total Systemwide Operations Impacts**

This plan will require 76,572 annual vehicle-hours of revenue service to operate the B-Line System, as shown in Table 42. This is 408 or 1 percent more than the total services under the existing service plan for FY 2021-22. As shown in this table, this reflects a slight increase in services for Paradise/Magalia, a slight increase in Chico service, and no change in other services. This plan will result in a 13 percent decrease in vehicle-hours of revenue service compared to FY 2022-23.

## **Ridership Impacts**

Table 43 presents the ridership forecast for the near-term Routing Plan. Overall, systemwide ridership is forecast to increase by 9 percent, or 43,900 boardings per year. (Note that this does not reflect any changes from external factors such as the continued rebound from the impacts of the pandemic.) By service area, this consists of the following:

- Chico: 10 percent increase
- Oroville: 2 percent increase
- Paradise/Magalia: 16 percent increase
- Other Intercity: 3 percent increase

Fixed route ridership estimates were calculated using an elasticity of demand model which measures the demand shift based on demographic and operational changes. Microtransit ridership was calculated based on the total population and jobs in each zone, as well as the microtransit ridership rates per person/job seen in other similar area providing microtransit service. As a new service to the region, however, the ridership estimates for the microtransit services have a relatively high level of uncertainty. These should be considered to have a possible error range of + or – 50 percent. Of note, under this Routing Plan overall ridership is forecast to increase by 9 percent while service levels will increase by 1 percent. This indicates that the Plan as a whole will improve the effectiveness of the B-Line services.

**Table 42: Near Term Routing Plan Impact on Service Revenue Hours**

Route/Service	Vehicle Revenue-Hours of Service			
	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Annual
2	15.5	11.0	0	4,556
3	15.8	10.0	0	4,581
4	17.8	10.0	0	5,082
5	14.3	11.0	0	4,252
East Chico Microtransit	11.8	10.0	0	3,540
8	14.4	0.0	0	3,711
9	15.1	13.8	0	4,594
14	23.0	11.0	0	6,483
15	22.5	11.0	0	6,355
North Chico Microtransit	11.5	10.0	0	3,476
17	10.5	9.5	0	3,193
25	6.3	0.0	0	1,606
26	6.0	0.0	0	1,542
27	6.0	0.0	0	1,542
Southeast Microtransit	3.0	0.0	0	868
North Microtransit	3.0	0.0	0	868
Thermalito Microtransit <sup>1</sup>	0.0	0.0	0	0
40	8.1	5.4	0	2,366
Paradise/Magalia Microtransit	11.5	8.0	0	3,367
20	24.9	9.8	9.84	7,405
30	5.4	5.6	0	1,671
32	2.0	0.0	0	516

**Summary by Service Area**

	Annual Vehicle Revenue-Hours of Service			
	Existing	Plan	Change	% Change
Chico	49,605	49,821	216	0%
Oroville	6,426	6,426	0	0%
Paradise/Magalia	5,541	5,733	192	3%
Other Intercity	9,592	9,592	0	0%
<b>Total Systemwide</b>	<b>71,164</b>	<b>71,572</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>1%</b>

Note 1: Served by existing paratransit vans.

**Table 43: Ridership Impacts of Near-Term Routing Plan**

Route	Annual Ridership			
	Existing - Factored 2022 Estimated	Factored 2022 Estimated With Plan	Change	% Change
<b>Chico Area</b>				
2 Mangrove	34,200	36,500	2,300	7%
3 North/East	58,400	61,400	3,000	5%
4 First/East	37,900	37,900	0	0%
5 East 8th St	27,000	30,400	3,400	13%
7 Bruce/Manzanita	6,700	0	-6,700	-100%
8 Nord	30,400	35,300	4,900	0%
9 Warner/Oak	47,800	55,500	7,700	0%
14 Park/Forest/MLK CW	29,600	29,600	0	0%
15 Esplanade/Lassen	44,000	64,900	20,900	48%
16 Espanade/99	25,900	0	-25,900	-100%
17 Park/Fair/Forest CCW	14,100	23,000	8,900	63%
52 Chico Airport Express	1,800	0	-1,800	-100%
Chico East Microtransit Zone	0	9,800	9,800	--
Chico North Microtransit Zone	0	7,500	7,500	--
<i>Subtotal: Chico Area</i>	<i>357,800</i>	<i>391,800</i>	<i>34,000</i>	<i>10%</i>
<b>Oroville</b>				
24 Thermalito	5,300	0	-5,300	-100%
25 Feather River	4,400	4,700	300	7%
26 Orange/Bridge St	3,800	3,100	-700	-18%
27 Oro Dam/Foodmaxx	4,300	1,700	-2,600	0%
Oroville Microtransit Zones	--	8,600	8,580	--
<i>Subtotal: Oroville</i>	<i>17,800</i>	<i>18,100</i>	<i>280</i>	<i>2%</i>
<b>Paradise/Magalia</b>				
40 Paradise/Magalia-Chico	26,600	41,600	15,000	56%
41 Magalia-Chico	19,300	0	-19,300	-100%
Paradise/Magalia Microtransit Zone	0	11,700	11,700	--
<i>Subtotal: Paradise/Magalia</i>	<i>45,900</i>	<i>53,300</i>	<i>7,400</i>	<i>16%</i>
<b>Intercity (Excluding Paradise/Magalia)</b>				
20 Chico-Oroville	57,900	60,100	2,200	4%
30 Oroville-Biggs	5,700	5,700	0	0%
32 Gridley-Chico	1,500	1,500	0	0%
<i>Subtotal: Intercity</i>	<i>65,100</i>	<i>67,300</i>	<i>2,200</i>	<i>3%</i>
<b>TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE</b>	<b>486,600</b>	<b>530,500</b>	<b>43,900</b>	<b>9%</b>

## MID-TERM SERVICE PLAN

An additional service plan was developed for possible implementation in the mid-term (5 to 10 years) planning horizon. This assumes that future ridership warrants expansion. A potentially viable means of enhancing transit quality and generating increased ridership is to provide high frequency (every 15 minutes) on high ridership potential corridors connecting key activity centers. As shown in Figure 38, this consists of 15-minute weekday service on Routes 3 and 14 from approximately 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM. By providing high-frequency service along the key corridors connecting the commercial and Butte College (Chico) campus area on the south with downtown/CSUC and the North Valley Plaza, this will improve connections and reduce overall travel times throughout the city. It will also increase the potential for development along the high-frequency corridors that take advantage of the improved accessibility.

In addition, Transit Signal Priority should be installed at approximately 10 key signals along Route 14 (in addition to the TSP installations along Route 3 under the near-term plan). While specific locations will require a detailed traffic engineering analysis, a preliminary list is as follows:

- Broadway/8<sup>th</sup>
- Park/20<sup>th</sup>
- 20<sup>th</sup>/Martin Luther King, Jr.
- 20<sup>th</sup>/ SR 99 Southbound
- 20<sup>th</sup>/ SR 99 Northbound
- 20<sup>th</sup> / Forest
- Skyway / Notre Dame
- Skyway / SR 89 NB Off Ramp
- Skyway / SR SB Off Ramp
- Park / Martin Luther King, J

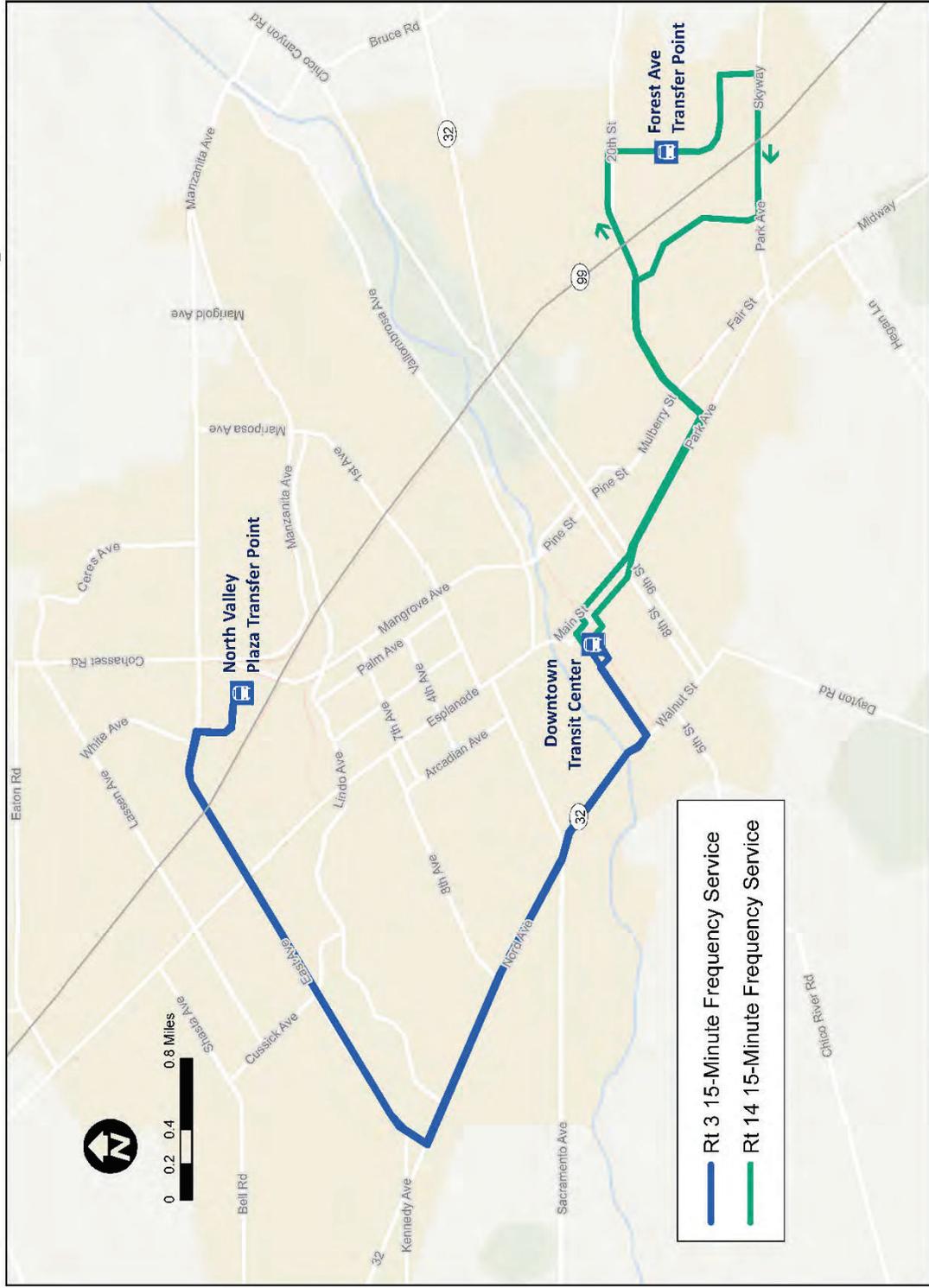
Over the course of a year, this service improvement will increase revenue vehicle-hours by 13,244. At current rates, this will increase annual operating costs by \$1.18 Million. Ridership is estimated to increase by approximately 56,000 boardings per year, or a 62 percent increase over the near-term plan ridership on the two key routes. Note that this ridership estimate does not assume any “background” increase in ridership (due to rebound from pandemic ridership patterns, for example) nor does it reflect ridership generated by any new development along the high frequency corridor.

## CAPITAL PLAN

As detailed in Chapter 9, the implementation of this Routing Plan will require some capital investments, as follows:

- The service modifications (and in particular the replacement of existing fixed routes with microtransit service) will allow a total of 112 existing stops to be removed (60 in Chico, 31 in Paradise/Magalia and 15 in Oroville). Of these, 23 currently have shelters. In addition, a total of 6 new stops will need to be installed, of which 4 will warrant shelters. Overall, bus stop modifications are forecast to cost a total of \$63,400.

**Figure 38:  
Mid-Term Routing Plan Enhancements**



- The Near-Term service modifications would reduce the peak number of buses required in fixed route operation by two. Including one spare, a total of six vehicles would be required for microtransit service. The current B-Line van fleet consists of 22 vans that could be used for paratransit or microtransit service. As 16 vans are required for peak paratransit service (including 3 for spares), there are six vans currently available, sufficient to support the microtransit service. It is worth noting, however, that 12 of these vans are 2013 models and may well warrant replacement in the near future, and that any growth in paratransit demand may necessitate additional vehicle purchases.
- The Mid Term service would require four additional buses to provide 15-minute headway service.
- Microtransit services use specific software programs and apps, designed to receive ride requests, schedule drivers, track services and generate reports. There are a variety of software providers with varying prices, capabilities and levels of customer support, that are offered on a subscription basis. At typical current prices, the software needed to support the four microtransit zones would cost approximately \$47,500 per year.
- The Transit Signal Priority (TSP) systems recommended for Route 3 (in the near-term) and for Route 14 (in the mid-term) would cost on the order of \$540,000 to implement. This includes \$50,000 for detailed system design and implementation, \$450,000 for signal modifications, and approximately \$40,000 for on-bus equipment. \$240,000 would be needed for the near-term improvements, and an additional \$300,000 for the mid-term.

## **FARE PLAN**

The following modifications to the existing fare policies are recommended, as discussed in Chapter 10:

- The 2-ride fare categories should be eliminated, in order to reduce the administrative costs and time required to handle fares on the buses and in recognition of the very low use of these fares. Instead, a new half-fare Day Pass should be implemented, and customers encouraged to make use of the Day Pass.
- Microtransit service should be provided at the Local Fare rates. This increases the equity of the general public transit services by making no difference in fares between areas close to fixed routes and those in other portions of the microtransit zones. Note that this will effectively reduce the fare rates in the Paradise/Magalia area.
- The types of passengers eligible for discounted fares should be expanded to include Veterans.

## **INTRODUCTION**

A key element in successfully implementing this Routing Study is to educate the public on the changes in services and prepare the transit riders for the new services. This is of particular importance given that the study introduces the new concept of microtransit to the service area. To ensure success of the service, this marketing plan develops a multifaceted approach educating existing riders about the new B-Line services while also aiming to reach new passengers as well.

The following Marketing Plan (Plan) was created based on goals and objectives, outlining the strategies and techniques necessary to meet these goals. Note that if the Routing Study modifications are implemented in an incremental fashion (such as in one community at a different time than another community), these marketing efforts would pertain to the specific elements being implemented.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The B-Line Routing Study introduces various changes to existing services, as well as an entire new service with the introduction of microtransit. The major goals and objectives driving the Marketing Plan include:

- Raising Awareness/Education – Creating awareness and improving local knowledge of the transit services B-Line provides.
- Shifting Image/Perception – Cultivating a positive and inclusive image around transit.
- Increasing Ridership – Encouraging ridership amongst new and existing riders.
- Building Relationships – Coordinating collaborative partnerships amongst various groups within the community.

## **OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIES**

The Plan offers major strategies when considering large-scale marketing efforts. The following strategies are described in further detail below followed by a proposed schedule for implementation.

- **Target Audiences:** In preparation for BCAG to develop marketing materials, radio ads, and/or TV commercials, we discuss the target audience and general messaging for such marketing materials and commercials.
- **Community Gatekeepers:** Building on the list of stakeholders and community members used during the Routing Study, a list of key gatekeepers will be identified, as well as appropriate means and timing for contacting them. These gatekeepers include educators, social service managers, housing advocates, cultural center directors, senior center leadership, large employers, government agencies, and other major community leaders.

- **Sample Marketing Materials:** Illustrative marketing materials have been developed for all forms of community outreach. These items are meant to serve as templates in which B-Line can use for rolling out its new services. The following materials will be included in English, Spanish, and Hmong.
  - Sample press releases
  - Sample flyers (in English, Spanish and Hmong)
  - Sample News Media Print and Web Ads (in standard sizing)
  - Sample social media posts
  - Sample email blast designs
- **Website Updates:** The B-Line website should be updated with clear information regarding each changed service, additional new services, and multiple ways to access more information. It should be the one-stop location for all Routing Study information (Promotion Events, Flyers, Social Media links, etc.)
- **Suggestions for Promotional Events:** Promotional events will be key to reaching both existing riders and potential new passengers. The marketing plan includes suggestions for such events, and ways in which to target both groups. In particular, there is a discussion on how to reach disadvantaged and/or multilingual communities.
- **Sample Marketing Timeline:** Chapter 12 concludes with a schedule in which to roll out the marketing outreach plan.

## RAISING COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Community engagement is the core emphasis in the rolling out of new transit services that impact a region. Identifying who needs to be notified of new services and improvements to existing routes is essential in creating an outreach effort that is effective and all-encompassing. The following section provides guidance on the first two strategies of narrowing in B-Line’s target audiences and determining community gatekeepers that are necessary in distributing information and being allies to the marketing effort overall.

### Target Audience

As mentioned in the previous section, the target audience includes current and potential B-Line riders who either need or desire transit services. The needs that riders and potential riders have for transit generally fall into three major categories: Ongoing, Temporary, or Discretionary.<sup>1</sup> In these terms, the ongoing transit rider typically has limited travel options and includes workers, students, people living below the poverty line, older adults, and people living with a disability.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nationalrtap.org/Toolkits/Marketing-Toolkit/How-To-Guide-For-Marketing-Transit/Marketing-in-the-Transit-Environment>

For the purpose of this Marketing Plan, a large focus will be placed on educating existing and potential riders that meet these demographics with clear information as to what B-Line routes have changed and how these changes affect travel choices. Temporary riders include visitors, tourists, and people who may need to use B Line under extenuating, and temporary, circumstances. While Butte County has a modest tourist economy, less effort should be placed on this group as they are not the core transit rider. Commuters make up large proportion of B Line’s discretionary rider population. Additional motivations for this group might be the ability to work as they commute while also providing benefits to the environment by reducing their commuting carbon footprint.

Here are some examples as to how marketing materials, such as flyers, social media posts, and email blasts should differ depending on which target audience you’re aiming to reach:

- *“Ongoing” Riders* – Language of materials should speak to this audience as if they are already familiar with the various routes and services B-Line provides. The materials should depict images of popular transit destinations and familiar drivers and/or B-Line staff. The content of materials should emphasize what has changed about existing routes and use well known community destinations to illustrate new routes and changes to service.
- *“New” or “Temporary” Riders* – Content of materials are very informational and written in a way to introduce B-Line’s transit services. Times of service and even how to ride information can also be included as this is considered to be a new demographic that hasn’t ridden B-Line before.
- *“Discretionary” Riders* – Marketing materials should emphasize the convenience and affordability of traveling longer distances by transit. Popular longer distance travel destinations should be represented visually and information about service times and how to ride can also be included as this group can often encompass both existing and new riders. This rider type is particularly important in attracting government agency and employees working at larger companies in the region.

Within these broad audience groups, we can focus on particular subgroups of potential riders within each community. These people may include students (both university and grade school), seniors, disabled persons, commuters, etc. Each marketing campaign should either aim to speak to a broad group or a very specific sub-group. For example, materials aimed to reach elderly passengers should use copy that encourages independence and the ability to run errands and make appointments. Another flyer could feature popular destinations that B-Line serves and copy that attracts new riders with an overview of places you can take B-Line to. Lastly, another campaign could feature general information on how transit routes and services have changed recently and where to learn more about these changes.

These different types of surveys aim to speak to various audiences within Butte County. Types of marketing materials to attract specific audiences are further discussed in the Sample Marketing Materials section below and included under Appendix H.

## **Community Gatekeepers**

Another essential part of reaching these specific subgroups of riders is the coordination and inclusion of community gatekeepers throughout implementation of new services. BCAG should have two approaches when marketing new routes and services to the public: 1) sharing information when the public seeks it and 2) going to the public to share information. For the first approach, this will include updating all current means of providing information (rider guides, maps, website, etc.) For the second strategy, identifying and engaging community gatekeepers who have access to existing and potential passengers will be critical.

A list of gatekeepers was established for the most recent Routing Study and should be used as a basis to further educate and inform the public regarding changes to service, outreach events, social media campaigns, etcetera. This list is provided in Appendix I, with some key suggestions presented below about keeping them informed. It includes over 300 identified organizations and representatives from groups such as religious community leaders, social service providers, medical entities, city and county representatives, college community members, school districts, and other types of cultural group leaders. A coordinated effort in keeping these contacts aware of upcoming outreach events, changes to services, and updated marketing materials should continue to go on before, during, and after routing changes and new transit services have been implemented.

## **MARKETING STRATEGIES**

The following section deals with the other four marketing strategies: marketing materials, website updates, promotional events, and marketing timelines. Sample marketing materials are presented in Appendix H and described below. Three options for the overall graphic design are presented. These materials are meant to be illustrative and as discussed in the previous chapter, each marketing campaign should be tailored to reach specific audiences while maintaining B-Line’s branding colors and design. In addition to the roll out of these various marketing materials, possible events and outreach opportunities are discussed below for consideration next Spring and Summer 2024. This section concludes with a sample schedule for rolling out the new services campaign.

## **Marketing Materials**

### ***Photography***

It is important to have a library of high-resolution photography for use in press releases, print and web ads, and social media posts to help guide perception of transit services. In the early stages of large marketing efforts, a photographer should be hired for a photoshoot of existing buses, drivers, passengers, and anything else that makes B-Line unique. Having a library of high-resolution photography lends itself to having better marketing materials across all types of media.





## Print Advertising

Printed materials include flyers, posters, billboards, and newspaper print ads. They should appear related in general look and feel, however their content may differ slightly depending on the specific type of audience under consideration and where the content will be posted. They may feature either website links or QR codes for people to be directed to the website for the most up to date information.

## Online Advertising

Similar to print advertising, online ads may include very simple content that engages the audience to click on the ad to learn more about recent service changes. Ads may be various sizes depending on the online news media outlet that they are to be featured on. Ads will be clickable and direct viewers to the B-Line website to learn more. Online ads will be placed on local news media websites as well as Facebook.



## Social Media

Social media post samples are also included under Appendix H. Similar to other marketing materials, each post should be customized to attract and engage a particular audience. Featuring specific photography and language style that speaks to your primary rider demographics aids in pulling each individual into the post. An effort should be made to include several types of demographic populations in the photoshoot. As shown in the appendix, a scrolling “carousel” type post is helpful in getting more information articulated in a single post.



## Website Updates

The most important online material will include updates to the B-Line website. The schedule of services should be easy for someone to find when visiting the site. In addition, changes to service should be clear and concise with a schedule that is easily understood. For the new microtransit services, a brief informational animated video introducing the service should be featured on the B-Line website along with the microtransit schedule, its services areas, and instructions on how to use the service. A video of this type has already been created by AIM and can be shared with B-Line for use with credit to AIM as the creators. Other online materials may include online ads on news websites and Facebook.

## **Promotional Events**

While the distribution of marketing materials in both print and digital formats is paramount in launching new services county-wide, hosting a series of in-person events complements the effort and allows time to engage with the public on a personal level. The following is a list of potential events and activities aimed to spread the word regarding B-Line's new services:

- Downtown Chico's Thursday Night Market
- Farmer's Markets in Chico and Oroville
- Local concert series over the summer in Chico and Paradise
- CARD's Movie in the Park nights
- University events, such as job fairs and local informational days
- Feather Fiesta Days, Pioneer Days, and similar community events

To support these various events, B-Line could hold a contest or raffle drawing to further pique interest in new services. This contest or raffle should be advertised as a part of the other outreach efforts. It may include tickets to a local event (that one may take transit to), free bus passes, B-Line branded promotional items, or anything else that compliments public transit.

## **MARKETING TIMELINE**

The timing of marketing activities is crucial. All in-person events and supporting materials should be planned far enough in advance to allow people to plan to attend, but close enough to an impending change that the public will maintain focus and enthusiasm for the change. The following is a sample schedule for rolling out new services, assuming a launch in July 2024.

### **March (4 months to launch)**

- Set a target services launch date.
- Engage with graphic design and marketing consultant.
- Create a plan of deliverables.
- Engage with stakeholders to announce that change is coming to B Line.
- Hire photographer to capture transit ridership, staff, and buses for marketing materials.

### **April (3 months to launch)**

- Graphics designer to create posters, flyers, print and web ads, and any other visual marketing materials for launch events.
- Plan to attend Chico University events before summer break.
- Plan to attend other community events (farmers markets, concerts, cultural celebrations, etc.)
- Receive edited photography and share with graphic design consultant for marketing materials.

### **May (8 weeks to launch)**

- Attend planned community events in each major area (Chico, Oroville, Paradise/Magalia, Biggs/Gridley)
- Send follow up emails to stakeholders to inform them of the changes coming to B-Line with directions on how they may help spread the word to fellow employees, clients, and their communities. Ensure that B-Line is featured on their websites and materials if applicable.
- Schedule radio, web, and print ads announcing the new service coming soon.
- Print and produce all large format billboard/poster banners for distribution at various bus stops.

### **June (4 weeks to launch)**

- Run ads, follow up with stakeholders, and attend any other community events.
- Post print announcements
- Draft Press Release
- Begin posting to social media channels throughout each community.

### **July (launch month)**

- Announce services have changed
- Update website and schedule to reflect changes
- Email stakeholders of implemented changes
- Send Press Release to all local news outlets
- Hold media events in communities targeted for service changes, such as a ribbon cutting
- Post social media ads targeting specific communities in the region

### **August and Onwards**

- Maintain website information
- Monitor passenger comments and complaints to identify particular issues or areas of concern, and modify public information (website, posters) as appropriate.
- Follow up with stakeholders to receive any feedback and make sure that communities and clients have been made aware of service changes.

As outlined above, the outreach plan for rolling out new transit services should begin at least four months ahead of new service implementation. The marketing effort begins with hiring a photographer for a photoshoot. At this time, BCAG should coordinate with a graphic designer for all print and web materials, contacting news media, conducting stakeholder outreach, and planning promotional events. The process also includes posting large scale marketing materials such as bus stop boards or bus wraps, and planning social media posts leading up to the launch, as well as after.

Lastly, once the new transit services have been launched and the schedules and websites have been updated, a post effort that focuses on receiving additional input should be initiated. During this time outreach to stakeholders should be held to better understand how changes have been received and what can be done to make the changes clearer to the public.