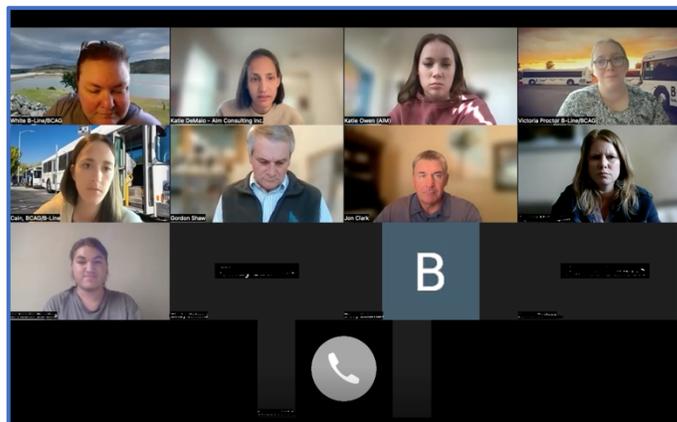


Introduction

On Tuesday, May 9, 2023, from 5:00 – 6:30 p.m., the Butte County Association of Governments (BCAG) held its third virtual community workshop about the B-Line Routing Study, wherein participants had a chance to learn about the draft plan and proposed services changes for Chico, Oroville, Magalia/Paradise, and Intercity areas following the feedback received at the previous community meetings. A total of 16 community members attended the meeting, which was hosted virtually through Zoom to create the most flexibility and accommodation for participants.

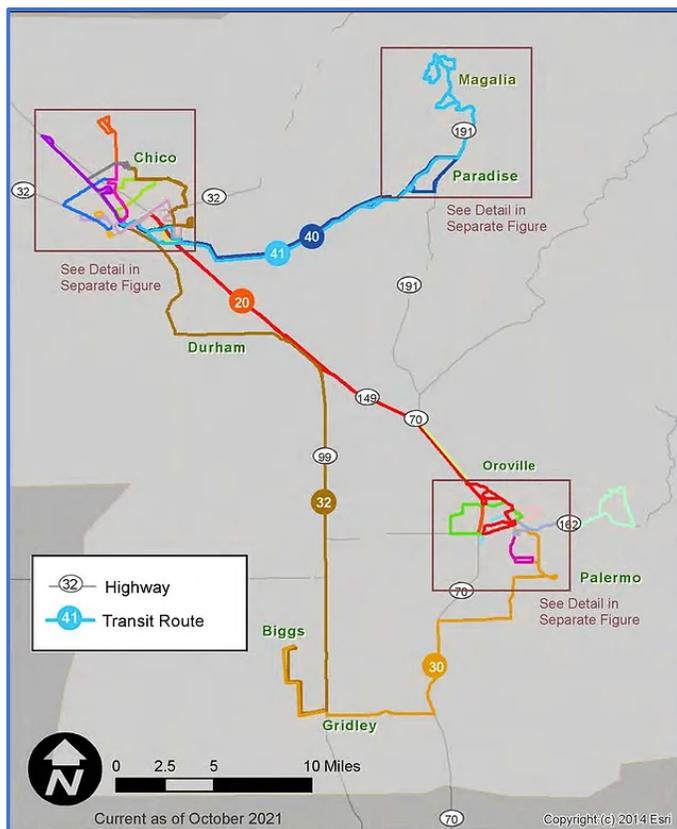


Meeting participants

Study Overview and Background

BCAG owns and operates the B-Line public transit system, which, like many transit systems across the nation, is facing critical changes to ridership due to several factors such as the Coronavirus pandemic, the Camp Fire, recent growth in the Butte region, and an increasing focus on providing transportation alternatives in the industry. Because of all these factors, BCAG is performing an in-depth study that evaluates ridership trends and defines the transit services, routes, and schedules that best meet the region’s future mobility needs.

The Routing Optimization Study will provide recommendations to improve ridership, identify alternative routing options, and develop innovative solutions that utilize B-Line's existing resources in the form of a Draft Routing Plan. The draft plan will also provide a thorough analysis of all aspects of B-Line operations to determine how to best improve the transit system within available resources. The Draft Routing Plan is available for review and comments at www.blinedraftplan.com.



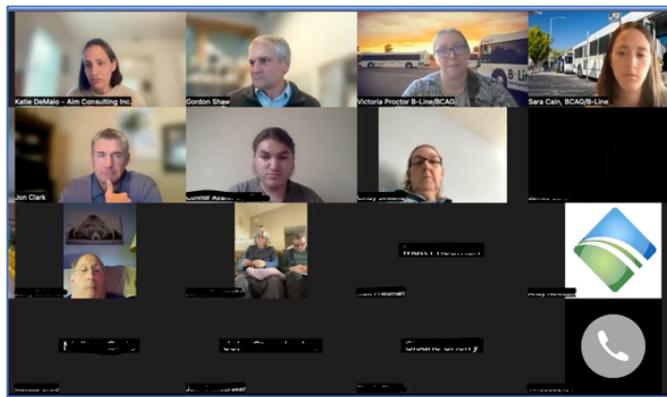
Virtual Workshop Purpose

Following various pop-up outreach efforts, the first and second virtual community workshops were held in July and October of 2022 to obtain more input about riders’ experiences and needs and establish an understanding of the region’s existing conditions. The project team then took the findings from the virtual meetings and the

onboard rider survey to develop proposed service changes and improvements. The purpose of the third virtual workshop was to provide the community with a project update, share the draft plan service changes, and collect feedback from participants.

Virtual Workshop Overview

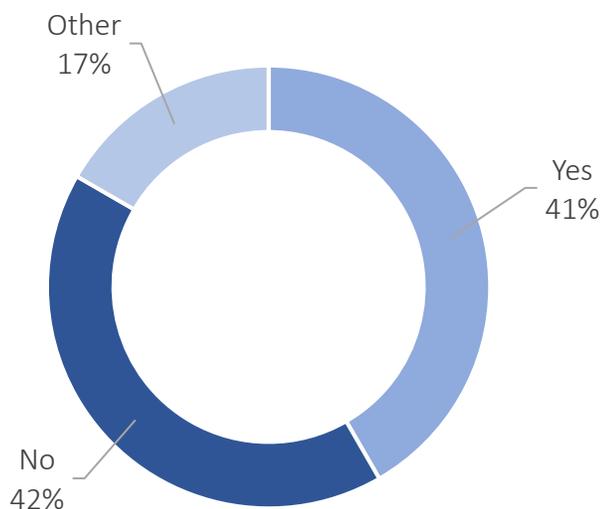
The virtual workshop included a presentation of the proposed route changes and a series of polls to collect feedback from participants on how proposed service changes would alter their transit use. Following the presentation, Katie DeMaio of AIM Consulting led the project team in facilitating a large group discussion where participants asked questions and provided input through the virtual “chat box” or by verbally asking questions. The project team concluded the community workshop by reviewing the project's next steps and plans for future outreach events. A detailed description of the workshop follows:



Live Poll #1:

Katie facilitated a live poll through Zoom before the beginning of the presentation on the draft plan.

1. Do you currently use the B-Line Service?



Other comments:

- I set up B-Line support for students and caregivers

- I work with Butte College and we gather students from all locations

Once the first live poll was completed, Katie handed the presentation over to Sara Cain from BCAG.

Presentation Part 1: Existing Conditions & Efforts

Sara Cain from BCAG began the presentation by providing an overview of the study, intended goals, existing conditions, and prior engagement efforts.

BCAG & Project Overview

Butte County Association of Governments (BCAG) functions as a regional transportation planning agency, and a metropolitan planning organization, and is the owner and manager of Butte Regional Transit (B-Line). As such, they are preparing a routing study that:

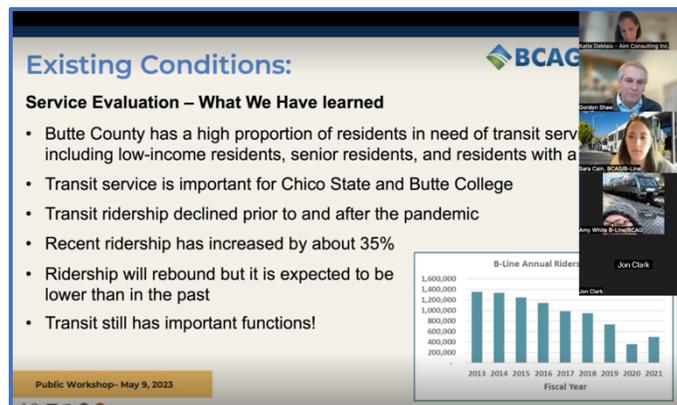
- Analyzes B-Line routes and schedules
- Reviews fare policies & fare media
- Evaluates technologies, vehicle needs, facilities, and other assets
- Identifies B-Line’s strengths and weaknesses
- Evaluates service options to improve the functionality of transit in Butte County
- With public input, identifies preferred service options and develops a plan for implementation

The study’s goals are threefold: provide recommendations to effectively expand mobility, identify and thoroughly evaluate alternative routing options, and develop innovative solutions that make the best use of B-Line’s existing resources.

Existing Conditions

Gordon Shaw of LSC then explained the existing conditions of the B-Line public transit system, starting on what has been learned from the service evaluation:

- Butte County has a high proportion of residents in need of transit services, including low-income, seniors, those with disabilities, etc.
- Transit service is important for Chico State and Butte College.
- Transit ridership declined before and after the pandemic (note the bar graph in the screenshot).
- Ridership since last spring increased by 35% (now 47%, perhaps because of high gas prices and more in-person college classes). Ridership will rebound but is expected to be lower than in the past.



Gordon then detailed ridership patterns across the B-Line, including:

- Specific to the Chico area: some areas of Chico generate low ridership, high ridership between downtown/Chico State and the Chico Mall/Butte College, some neighborhoods are not served, like far to the northwest, and there is potential to better serve northern Chico, focusing on North Valley Plaza.

- Specific to Oroville/Paradise area: the core area of Oroville has higher ridership compared to outlying areas, on-time dependability is a problem in Oroville due to being stretched thin, smaller vehicles could serve expected passenger loads in Oroville, low productivity in Paradise/Magalia (routes 40 & 41), and substantial areas of Paradise are not currently served.

Prior Engagement

In December 2021, the team conducted an onboard rider survey to learn more about the current travel patterns and demographics of riders, which 280 riders participated in. As a result, the study team learned that:

- Roughly 1/3 of the passengers were students, 1/3 were commuters, and 1/3 taking transit for other reasons.
- 87% of respondents ranked B-Line service as good or excellent.
- High-ranked factors were driver courtesy and affordability, and lowest-ranked factors were bus stops and shelters, and B-Line information at bus stops.
- Participants requested more frequent weekend service and more shelters at bus stops.

In addition to the survey, a virtual community meeting was held in July (with 16 participants). Materials for the survey and the meeting were distributed in English, Spanish, and Hmong.

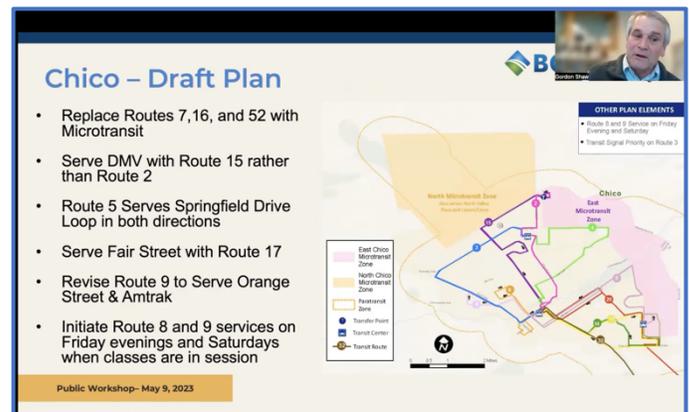
Presentation, Part 2: Near-Term Draft Plan

Gordon Shaw introduced and provided details on proposed service changes included in the draft plan, broken down by area. What follows is a summary of this part of the presentation and comments made:

Chico

The potential near-service concepts proposed for Chico include:

- Replacing Routes 7, 16, and 52 with microtransit.
- Serving DMV with Route 15 rather than Route 2.
- Route 5 serves Springfield Drive Loop in both directions.
- Serving Fair Street with Route 17.
- Revising Route 9 to Serve Orange Street & Amtrak.
- Initiating Route 8 and 9 services on Friday evenings and Saturdays when classes are in session.

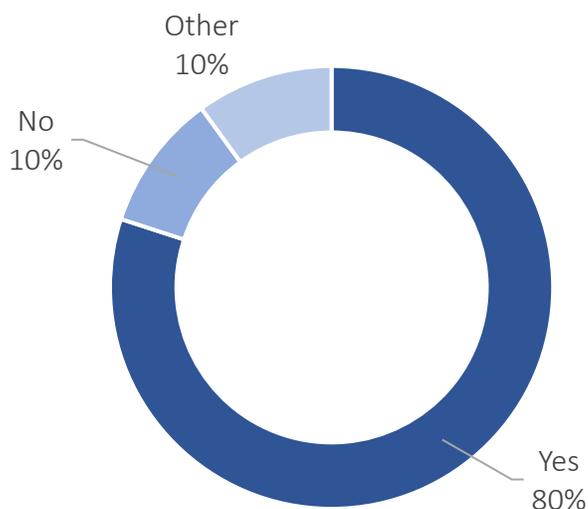


Gordon also introduced the concept of microtransit, which is a type of transit service included in the draft plan to replace some fixed routes in low-ridership areas. The goal of microtransit service is to provide coverage over an area not served efficiently by fixed-route service with a short response time, typically within 15 minutes of the request, through app-based technology. Riders may use an app on their phone to request a ride, similar to Uber or Lyft, and service is available to all within a specific zone, and to/from key transit hubs. Service is typically provided within 15-30 minutes of a request, and the fare is typically the same as the fixed route fare.

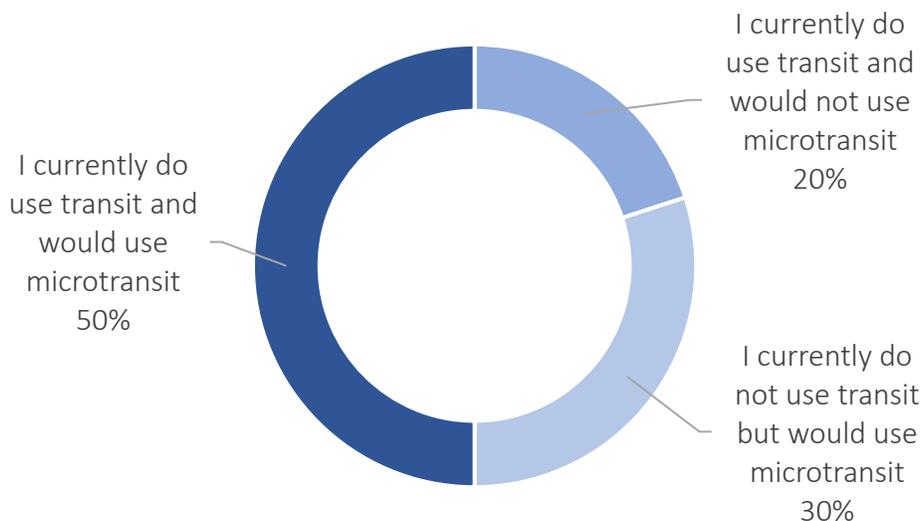
Live Poll #2:

Katie then paused the presentation to facilitate another live poll through Zoom. On the following pages are graphs summarizing the results.

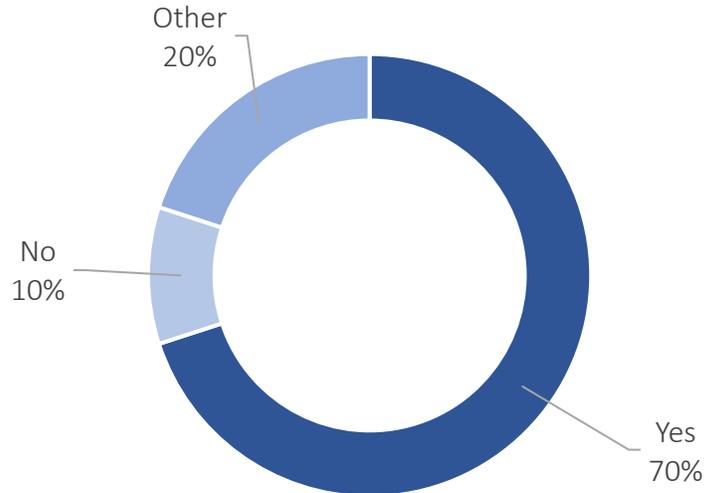
2. Is microtransit a good solution for the areas identified?



3. Would you use transit in Chico more with microtransit?



4. Do you agree with the proposed changes in Chico?



Comments made during this poll:

- Microtransit is ok if the connections at the transit centers have a reasonable wait.
- Yes, connecting to the transit center is important.
- The only reason I would not use micro transit is that I live close enough to a fixed route.
- I can't assess whether microtransit is a good solution for areas I never travel through.
- I'm not sure how these changes will affect Butte College Students. With the changes for evenings and weekends, it doesn't sound like the increased service is available to our campus locations on Forest Ave.
- I would use micro transit. I would give it a try.
- The eye doctor is now there, and the medical office as well.
- If there is an issue with time, how is combining 3 routes with 1 bus? Are they going to run once every 3 hours instead of 2?

Oroville

Next, potential service changes for Oroville were presented, including:

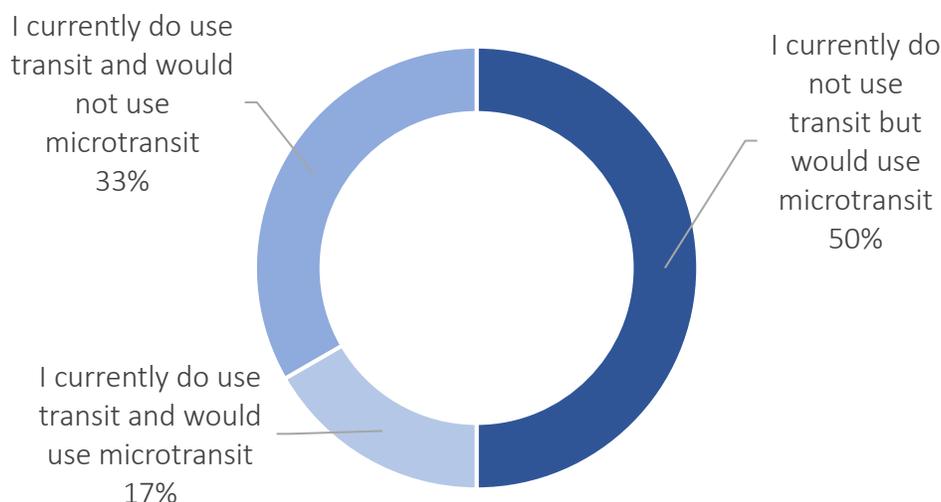
- Using 1 bus to operate 3 short routes (25, 26, 27) and using 1 van to operate microtransit service in East and North Zones.
- Using existing Paratransit Service to provide microtransit service in Thermalito Area. This will eliminate existing low-productivity fixed route service, expand the transit service area, provide the potential to expand ridership, and improve on-time performance.

Live Poll #3:

Katie then paused the presentation to facilitate another live poll through Zoom. On the following pages are graphs summarizing the results.

5. Is microtransit a good solution for the areas identified? - Six participants responded “Yes” (100 % of responses)

6. Would you use transit in Oroville more with microtransit?



7. Do you agree with the proposed changes in Oroville? - Six participants responded “Yes” (100 % of responses)

Paradise/Magalia & Intercity

Next, potential services concepts for Paradise and Magalia were presented, including:

- Combining existing Route 40 (Chico-Paradise) and Route 41 (Magalia) into a single consistent route, with 5 westbound daily runs and 4 eastbound on weekdays, and 3 runs in each direction on Saturday.
- Establishing microtransit service to expand from 6:30 AM – 6:00 PM on weekdays and 9:30 AM – 5:30 PM on Saturdays.

Intercity changes were next shared, including:

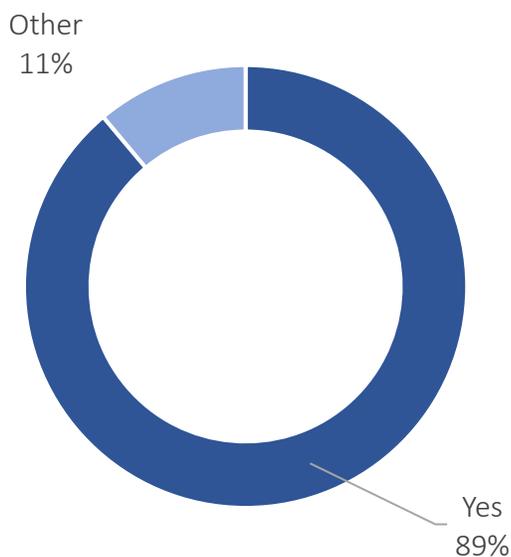
- Route 20 Chico-Oroville is a streamlined route in the northern Oroville area to improve on-time performance.
- Route 30 Gridley/Biggs-Oroville and Route 32 Gridley/Biggs-Chico have no changes.
- Route 31 Paradise-Oroville is being reinstated.

Live Poll #4:

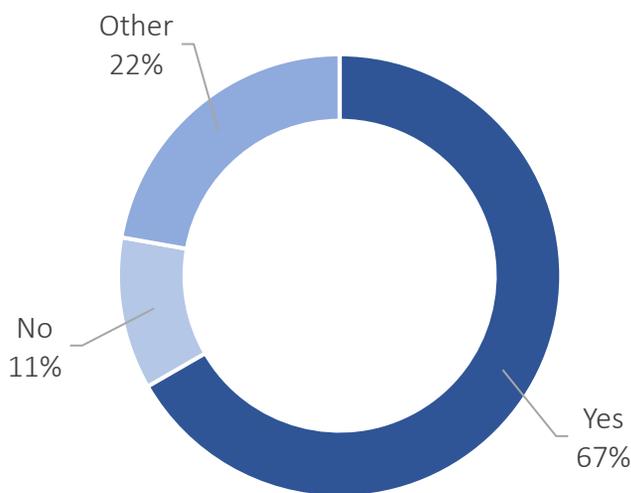
Katie then paused the presentation to facilitate another live poll through Zoom. Below are the results.

8. Do you like the concept of providing microtransit in Magalia/Paradise to augment the fixed route service? - Nine participants responded “Yes” (100 % of responses)

9. Do you like the idea of combining the two existing routes into one consistent route?



10. Do you agree with the proposed changes in intercity routes?



Comments made during this poll:

- I do go to Paradise, to Adventist Health Center. I would use micro transit
- Eliminating service to Wagstaff/Clark is terrible. Curtailing 41 and eliminating 40 entirely is inexcusable.
- Micro is the only way to Paradise. The distances are too far.
- We are paying \$1.75 for all trips within Paradise/Magalia and only paying \$2.40 to go into Chico.
- Stiffer to Neal is 10 miles for local fare.

- To augment 40/41 service yes; to supplant 40/41, service no.
- I think we need to experience it and see how it works.
- It's worth trying.
- A city transit system should be able to provide transportation to the county's local community college. A route or two needs to come through the college's main campus.
- 31 used to serve Butte College's main campus on demand and there was negligible demand. The college already runs buses for students.
- Major dead zones in Chico. Too far to walk to the bus stops. More micro transit areas
- I'm outside the microtransit range. I need to be able to bike to a fixed route stop, and reducing service frequency again is counterproductive.
- The college is currently looking for a more sustainable alternative to providing transportation to its students. Can B-line fill this need?
- Route 31 was between Paradise and Oroville. Route 20 is between Chico and Oroville which are larger population areas.
- Yes, I was on the 20 this afternoon. It doesn't go particularly close to the main campus. Getting to the stop on campus is a long diversion from Clark and Durham Pentz. Cost a lot of time on the 31 for very little benefit.

Presentation, Part 3: Mid-Term, Capital, and Fare Plan

Gordon then provided an overview of the mid-term, capital, and fare plan, which is as follows:

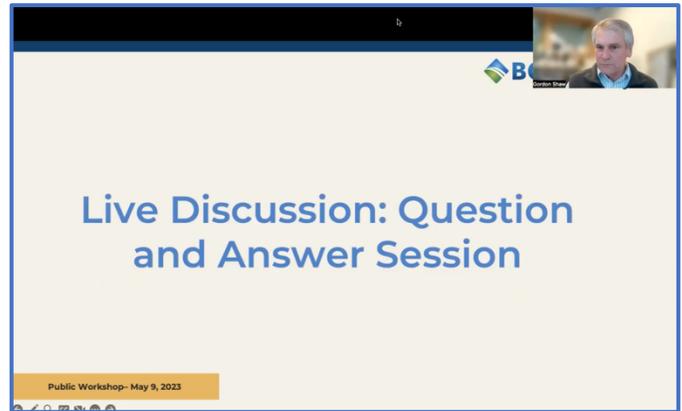
- The mid-term plan includes operating service every 15 minutes on weekdays on Routes 3 and 14, providing a high-quality service corridor connecting Chico's key transit areas, and expanding Transit Signal Priority to a total of 15 key intersections.
- The capital plan includes the removal of 112 existing stops (largely in microtransit zones), installation of 6 new stops, reduction in peak bus needs of 2 buses, 6 vans are needed for microtransit, which can be provided by the existing fleet, software/app program needed for microtransit service, and transit Signal Priority will require \$240,000 in the near term plus \$300,000 in the mid-term.
- The fare plan will include simplifying the existing complicated fare structure by eliminating the 2-ride fares and providing a new half-fare day pass (for passengers eligible for the discounted fare). Additionally, expand persons eligible for discount fares to include Veterans, and provide micro-transit service at the same fare as existing Fixed Route fares.

Question and Answer Discussion

The meeting was then opened for questions and answers. What follows is a summary of each question and the project team's response:

- Where is the service between Vallombrosa and East 1st Street?
 - There is not one directly there. There is a service that runs along Mangrove, and we will have microtransit available to use instead of Route 7.

- Can students use the microtransit without supervision and does microtransit only connect at transit points or can it go directly to the school?
 - The same rules as the regular service buses apply. If the microtransit is within the zone, then yes you can take it directly to the school. If not in the zone, then you can look at the key transfer zones to use microtransit.
- Will service go to Meriam Park?
 - The park would be covered in the new microtransit zone.
- What changes are being made to service outlying areas like the Butte College campus?
 - Currently, the BCAG team is having discussions with Butte College staff to reach the campus. They have received this request over the years, and it would add about 8 - 10 minutes to deviate to the school on Route 20. One of the main goals of this study is to improve on-time performance and to make the deviation, it would require another bus. As of now, it will not be added.
- If there is an issue with time, how will you combine three routes with one bus? Will the bus now run every three hours instead of two?
 - It will be operated three 15 to 20 minutes every hour with a layover for the rest of the hour.
- How many people will a microtransit bus hold?
 - 15 riders.
- Are there plans on expanding the Chico State program to the Chico Unified district?
 - BCAG could look into that eventually.
- Can you add free fare days to allow people to try out the bus service?
 - We are planning one for the fall which will coincide with clean air days.
- Were preschool and elementary drop-off and pick-up times adjusted to match school schedules?
 - We have not looked at school time hours to match the service hours. However, if the school falls into a microtransit zone then it would be possible to schedule a bus pick up or drop off around the school hours.
- How many riders would you need for B-Line to expand outside its existing resources.?
 - B-Line does not have any adopted standards for this. We often look at riders per hour. As planners, we look at if there are over 8-10 passengers each hour then we need to add a bus. (Gordon indicated that the figures were general transit planning guidelines, not specific to B-Line, which does not have numbers for warranting service expansion.)



Additional comments:

- Will 2 ride passes still be honored? We have school sites that purchased them in bulk.
- Chico Unified is very interested in a ride program like Chico State. Is there a plan to expand that type of program?

- How many student riders do you need to make stops at the Butte College main campus beneficial?
- Why aren't the 30 and 32 picking up and dropping off in all the little towns from Chico to Biggs via the Midway?
- Has the High School schedule been adjusted to accommodate the state-mandated change to the school day?
- Does your draft plan involve one or two microtransit vehicles for the Paradise/Magalia area?
- I know the Oroville routes like the back of my hand and those drivers are already overwhelmed I can't imagine 3 routes instead of 2.
- Are transfers going to be issued to get on your next bus?
- There is no demand for service in the area between Vallombrosa, Hooker Oak Park, and East 1st Ave. Because there has never been any service. I have lived at Juniper and Vallombrosa for 25 years with no viable service. At 71 I won't walk that far.
- The students ride free, and we would pay a bulk price
- Token transit is a band-aid that takes lots of leg work for me.
- The 32 and 30 also need to run on weekends for kids that want to go to the mall.
- How many new riders do you need before B-line will expand outside its "existing resources"?
- If the vehicle is in south Paradise, it's not going to function to get people from Imperial/Steiffer to Lakeridge to catch the fixed route.
- It would be great to have a pickup at both Chico High Schools around 3:50.
- Did the town of Paradise approve the cancellation of even more Paradise to Chico runs on top of the runs you canceled immediately following the Camp Fire?
- Pleased about the 15-minute service on the 14. Micro transit seems like a great idea.

Next Steps and Conclusion

Sara Cain concluded the meeting by sharing the project's next steps, noting that the results and comments made this evening will be used for finalizing the draft plan. There will be continued public engagement through this process, including upcoming pop-up events in the Butte region to garner additional participation and awareness of the draft plan changes.

People can stay up to date with the project by visiting the project website at www.blinetransit.com and can direct questions to Sara Cain at scain@bcag.org