

KERN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

City of Taft Transit Development Plan

Final Report

April 2015



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Overview

Home to 9,192 residents in an area of just over 15.1 square miles, the city of Taft is located in the western portion of Kern County. Local transit service in Taft is provided through the Taft Area Transit (TAT) program. This program provides two local fixed-route alignments and a combined general public/ADA complementary Dial-A-Ride service within city limits. TAT also provides limited fixed-route service in the neighboring city of Maricopa. Additional inter-community bus service is provided by Kern Transit, which connects Taft with other communities throughout Kern county including Bakersfield.

Key Findings

- Public awareness and support of public transit is high among Taft residents, although this has not translated to specific knowledge of service parameters (such as operating hours and/or fares, or the location of the nearest bus stop).
- The most frequently requested improvement specific to the fixed-route was expanded service hours, followed by more frequent service.
- Farebox revenue requirements have not been met in recent years, and the City's transit program may face reduced funding until farebox revenue increases to sustainable levels.
 - The Service Recommendations section of this report (Chapter 5) presents potential strategies for improving this performance metric.
- System ridership declined by 3.8 percent to 43,128 in FY 2013/14. Annual system ridership was 44,833 in FY 2012/13.
 - The Service Recommendations section of this report (Chapter 5) presents potential strategies for improving ridership.
- The development of a dedicated transit "hub" which is currently planned for completion by FY 2018 would support consolidated access to all public transit services (including Kern Transit). An adjacently built Park and Ride would also facilitate the development of ride-sharing programs.

Report Overview

The Transit Development Plan (TDP) presents a blueprint for short-term operational, financial, and capital improvements for Taft's transit services. The TDP, covering a five-year horizon, includes strategies to increase service efficiency and effectiveness as well as how to finance implementation of those strategies. These strategies reflect findings from rider and non-rider (community) input as well as an objective review of transit system performance. An outline of this report's contents is as follows:

1. Executive Summary,
2. Demand Assessment,
3. Service Evaluation,
4. Public Outreach,
5. Service Recommendations,
6. Preferred Service Plan (inclusive of Financial, Capital, and Implementation Plans), and

Appendix

- a. Survey Instruments.
- b. 2014 Marketing Solutions and Strategies Matrix

The [Demand Assessment](#) (Chapter 2) describes the Taft Sphere of Influence's (TSI's) population characteristics, with a focus on those population groups most relevant to transit planning. It includes maps which provide a general idea of the geographic distribution of TSI residents who are more likely to depend on public transportation for their mobility. In addition, it highlights how the TSI population and demographic characteristics compare to California's population and the nation's population as a whole. This chapter also takes into account the potential impacts to the City's transit program from projected population changes. Exhibit 1.1 presents the current and projected transit-dependent populations in the TSI.

Exhibit 1.1 TSI Total and Transit-Dependent Population Projections

	Derby Acres	Fellows	Ford City	McKittrick	Taft	Taft Heights	South Taft	TSI	Maricopa
Total Population 2000	377	155	3,503	144	8,811	1,900	1,850	16,740	1,098
Total Population 2010	393	162	3,656	150	9,192	1,983	1,931	17,467	1,157
Total Population in 2013	353	93	4,106	84	9,192	2,183	2,381	18,392	1,264
Percent Change in Population (2010 - 2013)	-10.2%	-42.6%	12.3%	-44.0%	0.0%	10.1%	23.3%	5.3%	9.2%
Percent of TSI Population	1.9%	0.5%	22.3%	0.5%	50.0%	11.9%	12.9%	100.0%	
Projected 2020	418	110	4,867	100	10,900	2,588	2,822	21,805	1,170
Projected 2030	491	129	5,715	117	12,800	3,039	3,314	25,606	1,190

TSI Populations	Youth	Seniors	Persons with Disabilities	Low-income
Total Population in 2010	5,312	1,521	N/A	3,233
Total Population in 2013	5,363	1,600	1,537	3,307
Percent of Population 2013	29.2%	8.7%	8.4%	18.0%
Projected 2020	6,367	1,897	1,832	3,925
Projected 2030	7,477	2,228	2,151	4,609

The [Services Evaluation](#) (Chapter 3) evaluates the Taft fixed-route, Dial-A-Ride, and Taft-Maricopa services, providing a snapshot of current transit usage and system performance. Such data include ridership at the system level as well as a review of key trip destinations and origins. Also included is discussion of several performance measurements including riders per service hour and farebox recovery system-wide as well as by mode. A federal Title VI Compliance assessment is also provided in this chapter. A system overview can be seen in Exhibit 1.2.

Exhibit 1.2 Taft Area Transit System Performance

Performance Measure	FY 2010/11	FY 2011/12	FY 2012/13	FY 2013/14
Operating Cost	\$827,780	\$671,954	\$737,699	\$729,463
Annual Change	---	-18.8%	9.8%	-1.1%
Fare Revenue	\$36,244	\$32,774	\$34,134	\$34,049
Annual Change	---	-9.6%	4.2%	-0.2%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	12,098	11,527	11,575	10,989
Annual Change	---	-4.7%	0.4%	-5.1%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	124,023	115,798	130,265	130,774
Annual Change	---	-6.6%	12.5%	0.4%
Ridership	44,576	43,462	44,833	43,128
Annual Change	---	-2.5%	3.2%	-3.8%
Performance Metric				
Operating Cost/VSH	\$68.42	\$58.29	\$63.73	\$66.38
Annual Change	---	-14.8%	9.3%	4.2%
Operating Cost/VSM	\$6.67	\$5.80	\$5.66	\$5.58
Annual Change	---	-13.1%	-2.4%	-1.5%
Operating Cost/Passenger	\$18.57	\$15.46	\$16.45	\$16.91
Annual Change	---	-16.7%	6.4%	2.8%
Passengers/VSH	3.68	3.77	3.87	3.92
Annual Change	---	2.3%	2.7%	1.3%
Passengers/VSM	0.36	0.38	0.34	0.33
Annual Change	---	4.4%	-8.3%	-4.2%
Fare/Passenger	\$0.81	\$0.75	\$0.76	\$0.79
Annual Change	---	-7.3%	1.0%	3.7%
Farebox Recovery	4.4%	4.9%	4.6%	4.7%
Annual Change	---	11.4%	-5.1%	0.9%
VSM/VSH	10.3	10.0	11.3	11.9
Annual Change	---	-2.0%	12.0%	5.7%

Supplementing discussion of system performance, primarily gathered through City-provided data and ride checks, is extensive public outreach data. The [Public Outreach](#) section of this report (Chapter 4) describes the extensive public outreach conducted in development of this report. The public outreach conducted as part of this study included a combination of surveying techniques. There were four elements to the outreach completed as part of this plan:

- Community survey,
- Fixed-route customer survey,
- Dial-A-Ride customer survey,
- Stakeholder survey, and
- Small group discussions.

All survey elements included some form of online participation, whether via an equivalent online survey, or the opportunity to respond to survey questions via email. The surveys were promoted on the City of Taft's website as well as on the Kern COG website. All surveys were also available in Spanish to encourage participation by residents with limited-English proficiency.

The community survey was conducted via an intercept/interview methodology. This survey was open from December 15, 2014 to February 8, 2015, and generated 312 unique responses. The fixed-route customer survey was conducted from December 18 through December 20, 2014, and all persons boarding observed trips were provided an opportunity to participate. A total of 34 surveys were realized. The Dial-A-Ride (DAR) customer survey was available from December 15 to 31, 2014 through January 8, 2015, and was initially distributed as a direct mail survey to all Dial-A-Ride registrants. Participation was incentivized via an opportunity to win a \$25 Visa gift card, and a total of 60 surveys were received. A list of stakeholders was developed and vetted by the Project Steering Committee, and a unique survey was tailored to identify overall perceptions of existing services, and to identify the most immediate mobility needs for their respective clients. A total of 28 stakeholder organizations participated in the survey. A series of small-group discussions open to the public were conducted on January 8, 2015, and on March 4, 2015, Moore & Associates attended the City of Taft's 2015 Unmet Needs hearing held in conjunction with a local gathering of community stakeholders called Sit & Sip. In addition, the recently completed City's 2014 Community Outreach Program was reviewed for relevancy in the current report.

Review of most frequent responses to the community survey questions led to the identification of the "typical" respondent. The "typical" respondent has the following characteristics:

- Speaks English (98.4 percent).
- Has not ridden Taft Area Transit within the prior 90 days (79.2 percent).
- Lives in a household where no one rides transit (79.9 percent).
- Has access to a personal vehicle and possesses a valid driver license (85.1 and 80.4 percent, respectively).
- Is between the ages of 45 and 64 (34.4 percent).
- Reports an annual household income of less than \$15,000 (29.1 percent).

The [Service Recommendations Plan](#) (Chapter 5) was developed based on findings from Chapters 2, 3, and 4, as well as discussions with City and Kern COG staff. Recommendations for increasing ridership and farebox revenue, service enhancements, and increased marketing, as well as steps to maintain local, state, and federal compliance in years beyond the Plan's horizon are developed within the chapter. Exhibit 1.3 presents a summary matrix of the developed service recommendations as administrative, operational, or capital.

Exhibit 1.3 Service Recommendations

Administrative
Develop a Taft Area Transit ticket/pass sales program.
Revise existing Dial-A-Ride eligibility criteria.
Revise Dial-A-Ride use eligibility to 12-months (versus current 36-month).
Implement all Title VI strategies.
Evaluate cost-benefit of transitioning to private operations contractor.
Operational
Expand marketing budget and level of activity.
Adjust fares for fixed-route and Dial-A-Ride services.
Revise the Transit MOU with Maricopa.
Focus fixed-route service on peak hours.
Implement fixed-route during peak hours and general public Dial-A-Ride service during midday hours (Flex service).
Replace weekend fixed-route service with general public Dial-A-Ride.
Enhance connectivity with Kern Transit.
Introduce service to Tejon Ranch during weekdays on a trial basis.
Capital
Develop and implement a Bus Stop Improvement Program (BSIP).
Optimize value of recently constructed "transit center."
Construct a purpose-built transit center/dispatch/storage facility.

Following the Service Recommendations is the [Preferred Service Alternative](#) (Chapter 6). This chapter narrows down the potential recommendations into a single operating plan, based on maximizing the operational efficiency of the City's transit program, while ensuring sustainability and meeting the mobility needs of the community. The service recommendations selected for inclusion within the Preferred Service Alternative include those most desired by the City, current and potential riders, and stakeholders throughout Taft and the TSI. Anticipated costs and impacts to the City were developed for the selected recommendations. Exhibit 1.4 presents the Preferred Service Alternative options and their anticipated impact/costs to the existing program.

Exhibit 1.4 Preferred Service Alternative Projected Impacts

Administrative Recommendations	Estimated Impact	
	Current	Proposed
Develop a Taft Area Transit ticket/pass sales program	\$0	\$8,875
Implement all Title VI strategies	\$0	\$3,000
Operational Recommendations	Estimated Impact	
	Current	Proposed
Adjust fares for fixed-route and Dial-A-Ride services	\$0	-\$4,500
Replace weekend fixed-route service with general public Dial-A-Ride	\$0	-\$53,000
Promote connectivity with Kern Transit	\$0	\$0
Increase marketing budget	\$500	\$19,400
Capital Recommendations	Estimated Impact	
	Current	Proposed
Develop and implement a Bus Stop Improvement Program (BSIP)	\$0	\$3,600
Construct a dedicated transit center/dispatch/storage facility	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000

Within Chapter 6 is found a [Financial Plan](#) which identifies potential funding sources throughout the next five years using a combination of fare revenues, local and state subsidies, and federal grants, while providing a sustainable operating budget relative to the preferred service alternative. A [Capital Plan](#) is included within this chapter and identifies the anticipated vehicular and equipment needs for the program, as well as the needs for significant facilities and improvements. Finally, the [Implementation Plan](#) develops a hierarchy among the preferred service alternative recommendations and a proposed timeframe for developing each of the respective recommendations.

The [Appendix](#) includes copies of the survey instruments used in connection with the Transit Development Plan's public outreach activities, as well as the City's 2014 Marketing Solutions and Strategies Matrix.

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DEMAND ASSESSMENT

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Demographics Assessment

In early 2014, Moore & Associates assisted the City of Taft in the development of its Community Mobility Outreach and Involvement Program. This project provided an updated assessment of local demographics based on Census 2010, the American Community Survey (2012), and the California Departments of Finance and Employment Development. The 2014 assessment serves as the foundation for the 2015 Transit Development Plan and the population estimates have been updated to reflect American Community Survey 2013 data as well as the most recent available information from the California Departments of Finance and Employment.

Updated maps of key populations, data tables with the categories most relevant to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) reporting requirements, and key findings for target demographic fields are presented within this section. This data allowed the consultant team to identify locations in the city of Taft and surrounding communities which could benefit from enhanced transit service as well as identify any shifts or changes in transportation-disadvantaged populations. The target populations include, low-income individuals, persons with limited/no access to a personal vehicle, seniors, and youth.

City of Taft: Summary of Findings

- The City of Taft's population (calculated at 9,192) has decreased by 1.4 percent since 2010.
- 77.1 percent of the population is 20 years of age or older.
- The median age is 35.5 years, which is slightly older than the median age for California.
- Median household income within the city of Taft is \$50,441, which is higher than McKittrick, Maricopa, South Taft, and Ford City; but less than nearby Derby Acres, Fellows, and Taft Heights. It is also \$10,653 less than the median income for California, and \$2,605 less than the national median.
- The major ethnic groups within the TSI that are either a single race or a combination with one or more races are as follows: White (7,760), Hispanic or Latino (3,210), Black or African-American (237), Asian (209), and Native American or Alaskan Native (104). 478 people identify with some other race, and 494 with two or more races.
- Demand for public transit in Derby Acres, Fellows, and McKittrick (based upon transit-dependent population size) is currently very modest and not expected to increase significantly within the next five years.

Taft Sphere of Influence Social Profile

In 2009, the City of Taft Transit Development Plan identified the nearby communities of Derby Acres, Fellows, Ford City, McKittrick, South Taft, and Taft Heights to be within the "sphere of influence" of the City of Taft. These communities are all classified as Census Designated Places (CDPs) and data is collected from residents in the form of five-year estimates by the American Community Survey. This assessment continues to incorporate the data from these communities. The City of Maricopa is also considered throughout this assessment; although as a separate entity and not part of the TSI.

According to the American Community Survey (FY 2009-2013), the Taft Sphere of Influence (TSI) median age is 33.8 years, while the median age in Maricopa is 32.4 years. The median household income for the TSI was \$47,451 in 2013; While Maricopa reported \$32,639. The TSI median income is approximately 23 percent lower than the state average and 10.5 percent lower than the national average. Maricopa's median income is approximately 46.6 percent lower than California and 38.5 percent below the national average. Within the TSI, approximately 31.6 percent of the population age 25 years and older does not possess a high school diploma, 32.7 percent has a high school diploma, and approximately 4.5 percent have a bachelor's degree.

In Maricopa, 21.6 percent of the population 25 years and older does not possess a high school diploma, while 57 percent has a high school diploma. Approximately 2.2 percent possesses a bachelor's degree. The TSI has a higher rate of high school graduates than both the state and the nation at-large. Attainment of a college degree continues to lag behind both the state and national averages. Given lower educational levels can translate to lower income earnings potential, this data suggest a significant portion of the population could possess some level of transit-dependency and therefore would benefit from enhanced access to public transit.

Exhibit 2.1 Summary of Demographic Characteristics

	Median Age	Median Household Income	Percentage of population over 25:		
			No High School Diploma	High School Graduate	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Derby Acres	39.8	\$59,464	14.9%	40.1%	7.0%
Fellows	36.5	\$61,000	16.7%	33.3%	5.6%
Ford City	32.7	\$37,171	33.6%	31.0%	2.7%
McKittrick	43.5	\$33,125	37.7%	37.7%	3.8%
South Taft	23.0	\$40,027	52.6%	14.2%	2.2%
Taft	35.5	\$50,441	27.5%	34.6%	5.6%
Taft Heights	25.5	\$50,929	37.9%	37.9%	4.6%
TSI Average	33.8	\$47,451	31.6%	32.7%	4.5%
Maricopa	32.4	\$32,639	21.6%	57.0%	2.2%
California Average	35.4	\$61,094	18.7%	22.6%	30.7%
National Average	37.3	\$53,046	13.9%	28.1%	28.8%

Source: American Community Survey 2013

Mode of Travel

The mode most often cited as the means of home-to-work travel within the TSI and Maricopa remains the personal vehicle. According to the American Community Survey 2013, only Ford City and Taft reported any residents using public transportation to work. This indicates a further decrease from prior assessments. There has been an overall increase in residents utilizing carpools/vanpools to access employment. Public transit can be seen as similar to ridesharing and this change may represent an increase in the willingness of the population to try transit options for some of their travel needs. Nearly

every community included a portion of its population “walking to work,” with Derby Acres, Fellows, and Taft Heights being the exceptions. Fellows continued to report that the only means of travel to employment was “personal vehicle.”

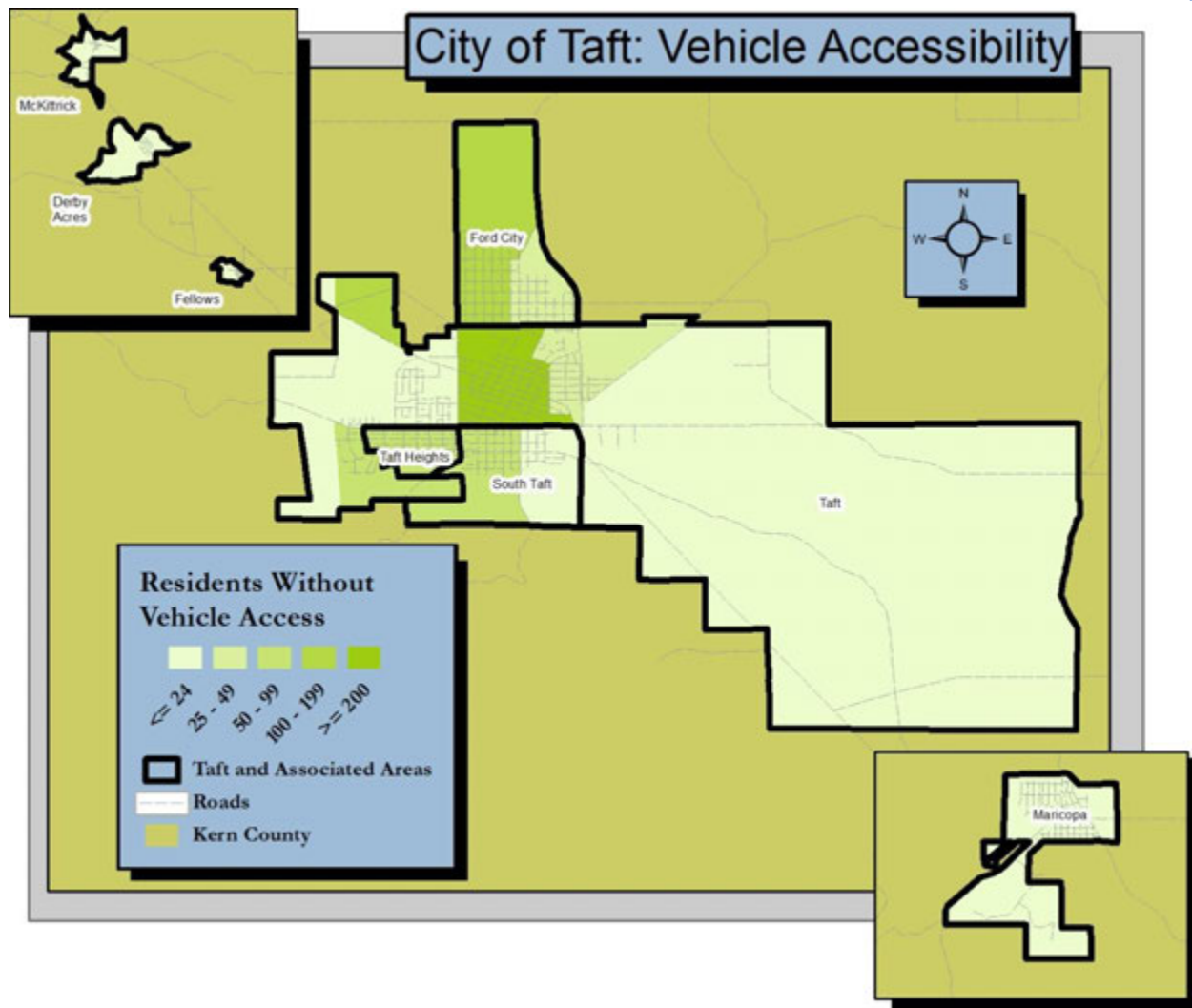
Exhibit 2.3 supplements the above data by graphically illustrating areas within the TSI where residents cited no or limited vehicle access.

Exhibit 2.2 Means of Travel to Work

	Public Transportation	Carpool	Walk	Bicycle	Personal Vehicle	Work at Home
Derby Acres	0.0%	24.5%	0.0%	1.9%	73.6%	0.0%
Fellows	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Ford City	1.0%	30.6%	6.4%	2.9%	59.1%	0.0%
McKittrick	0.0%	9.1%	18.2%	0.0%	72.7%	0.0%
South Taft	0.0%	37.4%	6.8%	0.0%	55.8%	0.0%
Taft	0.4%	22.5%	1.7%	1.1%	71.9%	2.4%
Taft Heights	0.0%	17.2%	0.0%	2.3%	80.5%	0.0%
TSI Average	0.2%	20.2%	4.7%	1.2%	73.4%	2.4%
Maricopa	0.0%	6.3%	8.9%	0.0%	84.0%	0.0%

Source: American Community Survey 2013

Exhibit 2.3 Vehicle Accessibility



Source: American Community Survey 2013

Economic Profile

Exhibit 2.4 presents unemployment figures for 2010 and 2013 within the TSI, Maricopa, California, and the nation at-large. Data from 2013 is used to identify trends, as unemployment information is unavailable at the CDP level for 2014. The unemployment rate in the TSI increased 0.2 percent (from 9.5 to 15.8 percent) between 2010 and 2013. The rate of increase within the TSI is especially significant when compared to the overall decrease experienced in California and the nation as a whole. This increase has been identified as due to the volatile nature of the primary source of employment in the region (petroleum production). Employment in this sector experienced increased volatility throughout the evaluation period. While still high, (when compared to California and nation) unemployment has decreased in Kern County overall to approximately 9.9 percent as of December 2014.

What this means in terms of public transit, is that in order to increase ridership, transit agencies such as Taft Area Transit must identify those destinations and/or resources desired by job seekers and employers alike. A public transit program which effectively provides access to employment resources and job sites themselves will be seen as a valuable commodity during times of economic challenge. We recommend the City continue to promote its public transit service throughout the Maricopa area, emphasizing the affordability and reliability of Taft Area Transit, as well as access to quality day-to-day services not presently found in Maricopa.

Exhibit 2.4 Unemployment Rate

	Unemployment Rate	
	2010	2013
Derby Acres	10.2%	15.8%
Fellows	4.1%	6.1%
Ford City	16.3%	13.2%
McKittrick	3.7%	37.1%
South Taft	9.0%	11.2%
Taft	9.2%	9.0%
Taft Heights	14.0%	18.2%
TSI Average	9.5%	15.8%
Maricopa	24.0%	24.1%
California	12.4%	7.6%
National	9.7%	6.2%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, California Employment Development Department,
American Community Survey 2013

Housing Profile

Median single-family dwelling prices in the TSI and Maricopa remain considerably lower than either California or national averages, as do median housing rental costs. Interestingly, Taft Heights and South Taft have experienced significant spikes in rental rates. This may be due to fewer residents being able to afford owning a home (or qualifying for loans) and the rental market responding to increased demand. Average wages paid by employers within the TSI and Maricopa are typically lower than wages statewide. Data available does not indicate how many families are living within the same residence. It is likely within the TSI (particularly within low-income households) that multiple families are sharing the cost of housing so that income can be allocated to other necessities such as food, utilities, and commuting expenses. This may translate to a “hidden” demand for transit which is further discussed in later sections of this report.

Exhibit 2.5 Summary of Housing Characteristics

	Median Room/Structures	Owner-Occupied	Renter-Occupied
		Median Value	Median Rent
Derby Acres	5.30	\$106,300	\$525
Fellows	5.30	\$34,400	N/A
Ford City	5.10	\$90,500	\$653
McKittrick	4.90	\$69,000	N/A
Taft	5.70	\$158,900	\$600
Taft Heights	5.00	\$85,400	\$820
South Taft	4.90	\$72,800	\$744
TSI Average	5.00	\$104,971	\$693
Maricopa	5.20	\$63,200	\$620
California	5.10	\$366,400	\$1,119
United States	5.50	\$176,700	\$752

Source: American Community Survey 2013

Population

Utilizing population estimates for 2013 along with 100-percent counts from Census 2010 (and projected populations from the Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG) 2014 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), annual percentage growth can be calculated for TSI communities. We believe each community's relative share of the TSI will remain consistent, and this percentage was used to estimate community populations. Population estimates for the city of Taft and the city of Maricopa were taken from the 2014 RTP.

Census 2000 population for the Taft Sphere of Influence (TSI) was estimated at 16,740. TSI population increased 5.3 percent between 2000 and 2013 (1,652 people). Estimated populations for individual TSI communities are presented in the table below. These figures reveal only modest growth within the TSI. In 2000, Maricopa reported a population of 1,098, with an estimated growth to 1,264 (9.5 percent) in 2013. Should the RTP population estimates for Taft and Maricopa be realized, the population within TSI communities could reach 21,805 in 2020 and 1,170 in Maricopa by 2020. Interestingly the RTP projects a population decrease in Maricopa by 2020.

Exhibit 2.6 Population Change

	Derby Acres	Fellows	Ford City	McKittrick	Taft	Taft Heights	South Taft	TSI	Maricopa
Total Population 2000	377	155	3,503	144	8,811	1,900	1,850	16,740	1,098
Total Population 2010	393	162	3,656	150	9,192	1,983	1,931	17,467	1,157
Total Population in 2013	353	93	4,106	84	9,192	2,183	2,381	18,392	1,264
Percent Change in Population (2010 - 2013)	-10.2%	-42.6%	12.3%	-44.0%	0.0%	10.1%	23.3%	5.3%	9.2%
Percent of TSI Population	1.9%	0.5%	22.3%	0.5%	50.0%	11.9%	12.9%	100.0%	
Projected 2020	418	110	4,867	100	10,900	2,588	2,822	21,805	1,170
Projected 2030	491	129	5,715	117	12,800	3,039	3,314	25,606	1,190

Source: American Community Survey 2013, 2010 Census, Kern COG Regional Transportation Plan

Transit-Dependent Populations

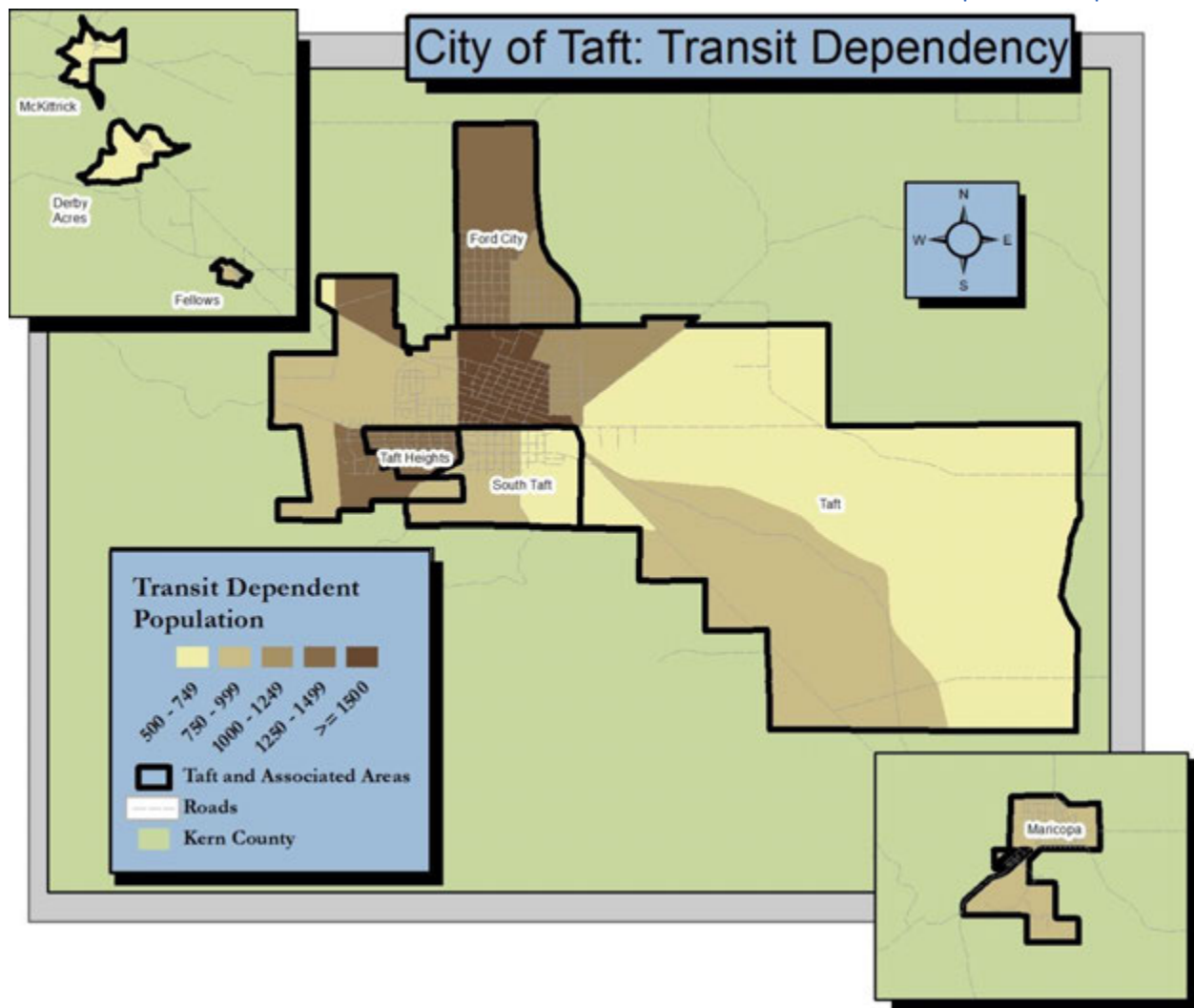
Historically, transportation-disadvantaged populations are comprised of youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, and individuals with incomes at or below the state poverty level (in California, \$23,550 annually for a family of four in 2013). Individuals within these groups typically have a greater propensity to use public transit due to the absence of other mobility options. Given the significant changes to the definition of disability in Census 2010, detailed data for the TSI communities was unavailable for this assessment. A summary of traditionally transit-dependent populations is presented in Exhibit 2.7. Exhibit 2.8 maps these populations by census block group.

Exhibit 2.7 Transit-Dependent Population Projections

TSI Populations	Youth	Seniors	Persons with Disabilities	Low-income
Total Population in 2010	5,312	1,521	N/A	3,233
Total Population in 2013	5,363	1,600	1,537	3,307
Percent of Population 2013	29.2%	8.7%	8.4%	18.0%
Projected 2020	6,367	1,897	1,832	3,925
Projected 2030	7,477	2,228	2,151	4,609

Source: American Community Survey 2013, Census 2010

Exhibit 2.8 Transit-Dependent Populations



Source: American Community Survey 2013

Youth Population

For the purposes of this study, the term “youth” is defined as individuals 19 years of age or younger. This is due to the age categorizations provided by the American Community Survey. Youth population in the TSI accounts for 29.2 percent (1,082) of total residents in 2013, and 30.5 percent in Maricopa (386). This suggests strong demand for non-auto based/solo driver travel options. Assuming the relative share of total population remains stable, the youth population could rise to 1,282 in the TSI and 357 in Maricopa by 2020.

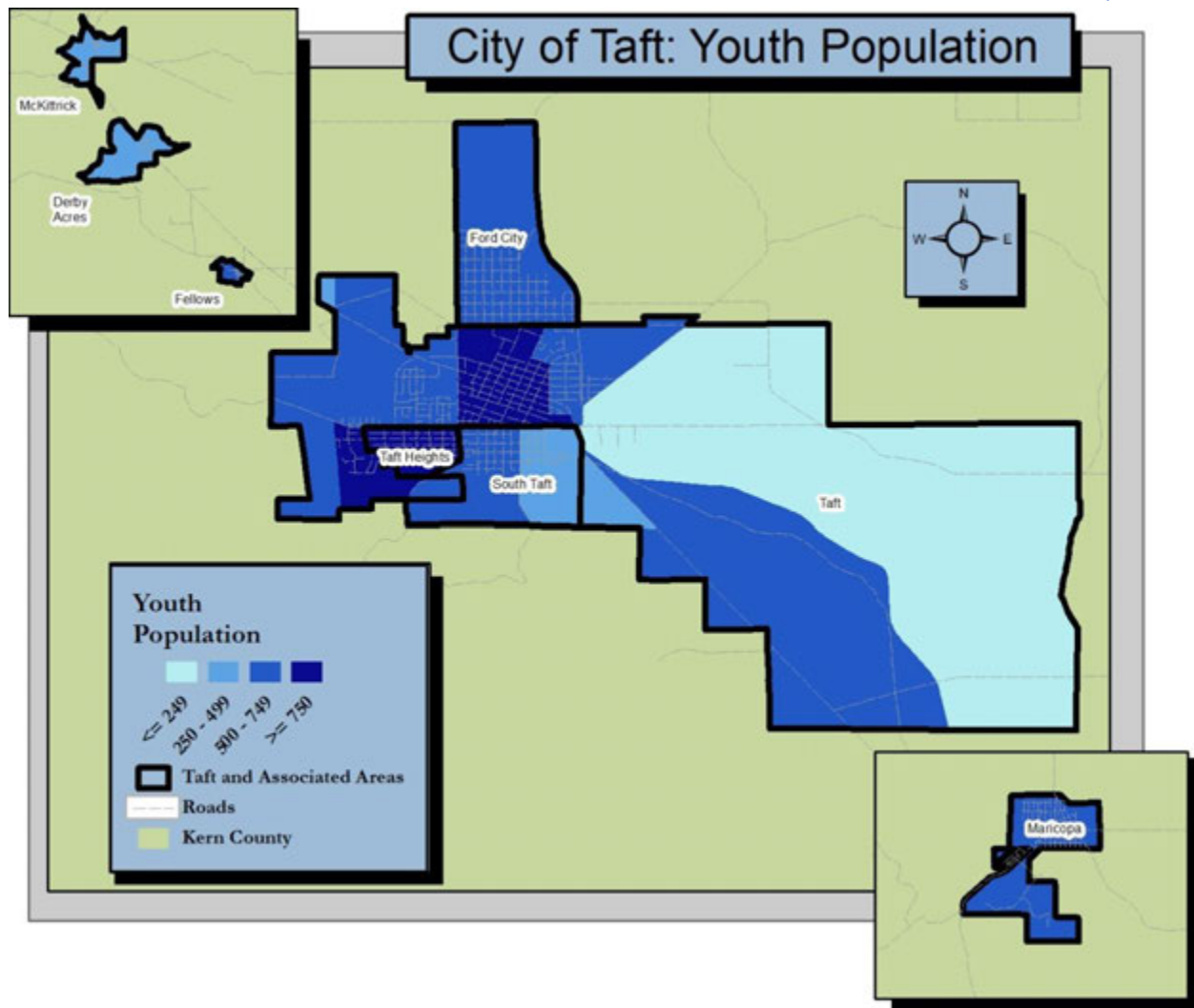
Typically, the mobility needs of youth are addressed by family, friends, and/or the local school district, making public transit unnecessary for many trips. We believe this to be the case within the TSI and Maricopa. Introduction of Taft Area Transit fixed-route service took into account existing youth populations and distribution by routing the service to nearby schools. In addition, the Maricopa-Taft route offers access to Taft College. Providing regular and reliable transportation to youth-oriented destinations will aid in improving mobility throughout the TSI.

Exhibit 2.9 Youth Population Projections

Populations	Derby Acres	Fellows	Ford City	McKittrick	Taft	Taft Heights	South Taft	TSI	Maricopa
Total Population 2013	353	93	4,106	84	9,192	2,183	2,381	18,392	1,264
Youth Population in 2013	91	39	1,186	19	2,105	841	1,082	5,363	386
Percent of Total Population in 2013	25.8%	41.9%	28.9%	22.6%	22.9%	38.5%	45.4%	29.2%	30.5%
Youth Population in 2020	108	46	1,406	23	2,496	997	1,282	6,358	357
Youth Population in 2030	127	54	1,651	26	2,931	1,171	1,506	7,466	363

Source: American Community Survey 2013

Exhibit 2.10 Youth Population



Source: American Community Survey 2013

Senior Population

For the purposes of this study, the term “senior” is defined as individuals 65 years of age or older. The senior population within the TSI was estimated at 1,600 in 2013. Assuming the relative share of seniors remains stable at 8.7 percent, the TSI senior population would climb to 1,897 by 2020. Maricopa’s senior population is estimated to decline to 109 in 2020.

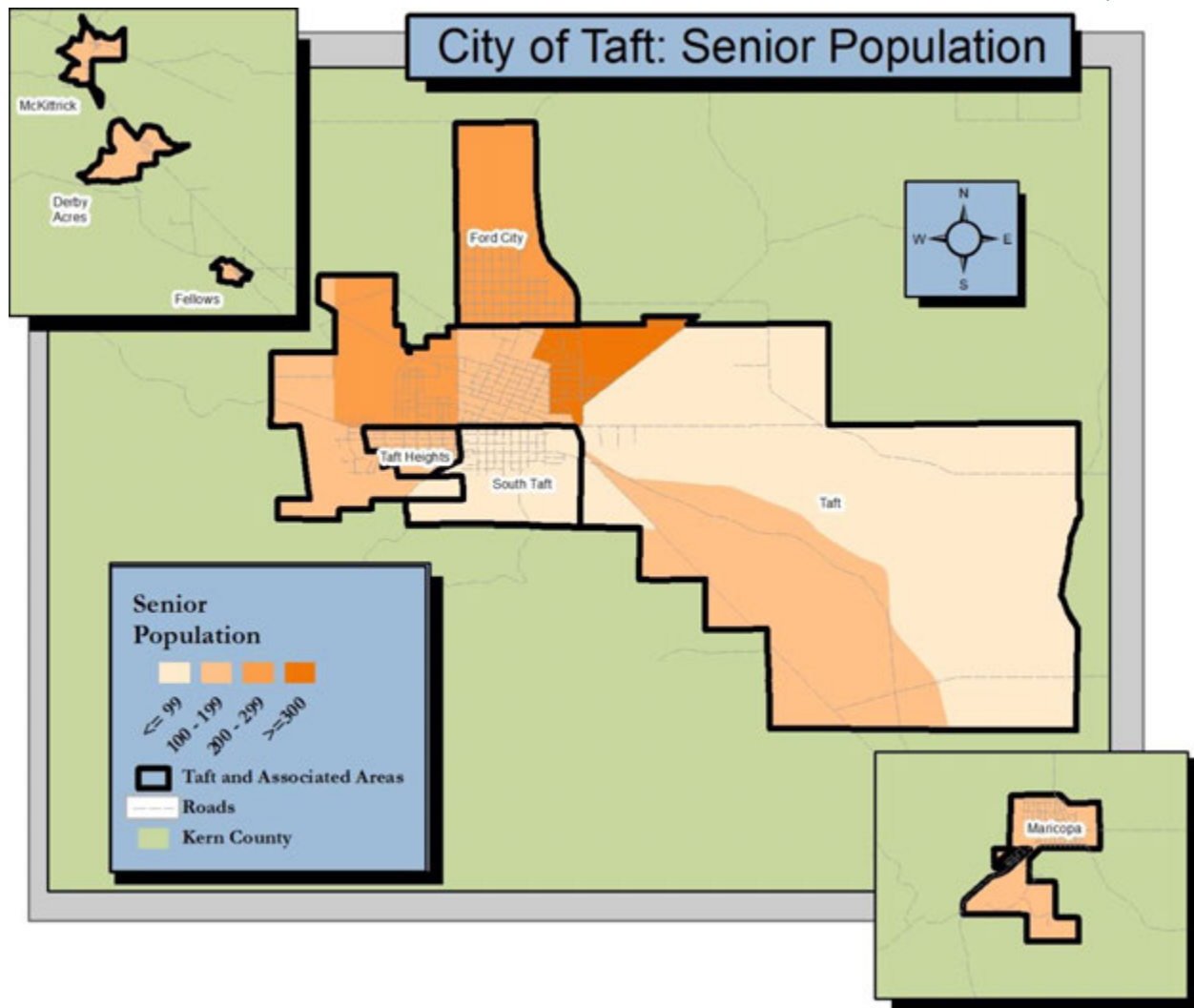
Seniors traditionally have a greater propensity to use public transit than other demographic groups. This socio-demographic group is often transit-dependent, relying on either Kern Transit for travel into Bakersfield, or Taft Area Transit (specifically Dial-A-Ride) for travel throughout the local area. By contrast, Maricopa seniors have fewer mobility options, but do have access to the Taft-Maricopa Route which provides connections with Kern Transit as well as Taft Area Transit. Ensuring seniors have access to healthcare and other day-to-day services are critical to supporting both the TSI’s and Maricopa’s overall quality of life.

Exhibit 2.11 Senior Population Projections

Populations	Derby	Fellows	Ford City	McKittrick	Taft	Taft Heights	South Taft	TSI	Maricopa
Total Population 2013	353	93	4,106	84	9,192	2,183	2,381	18,392	1,264
Senior Population in 2013	63	1	490	10	795	127	114	1,600	118
Percent of Total Population in 2013	17.8%	1.1%	11.9%	11.9%	8.6%	5.8%	4.8%	8.7%	9.3%
Senior Population in 2020	75	1	581	12	943	151	135	1,897	109
Senior Population in 2030	88	1	682	14	1,107	177	159	2,228	111

Source: American Community Survey 2013

Exhibit 2.12 Senior Population



Source: American Community Survey 2013

Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities are distributed throughout the TSI in a pattern similar to both the senior and youth populations. The TSI population of persons with disabilities could reach 1,822 if relative share remains stable, and Maricopa would see a slight decrease to approximately 91 persons with disabilities. Derby Acres reports a disproportionately high share of persons with disabilities (19 percent), although total number is modest (67 persons).

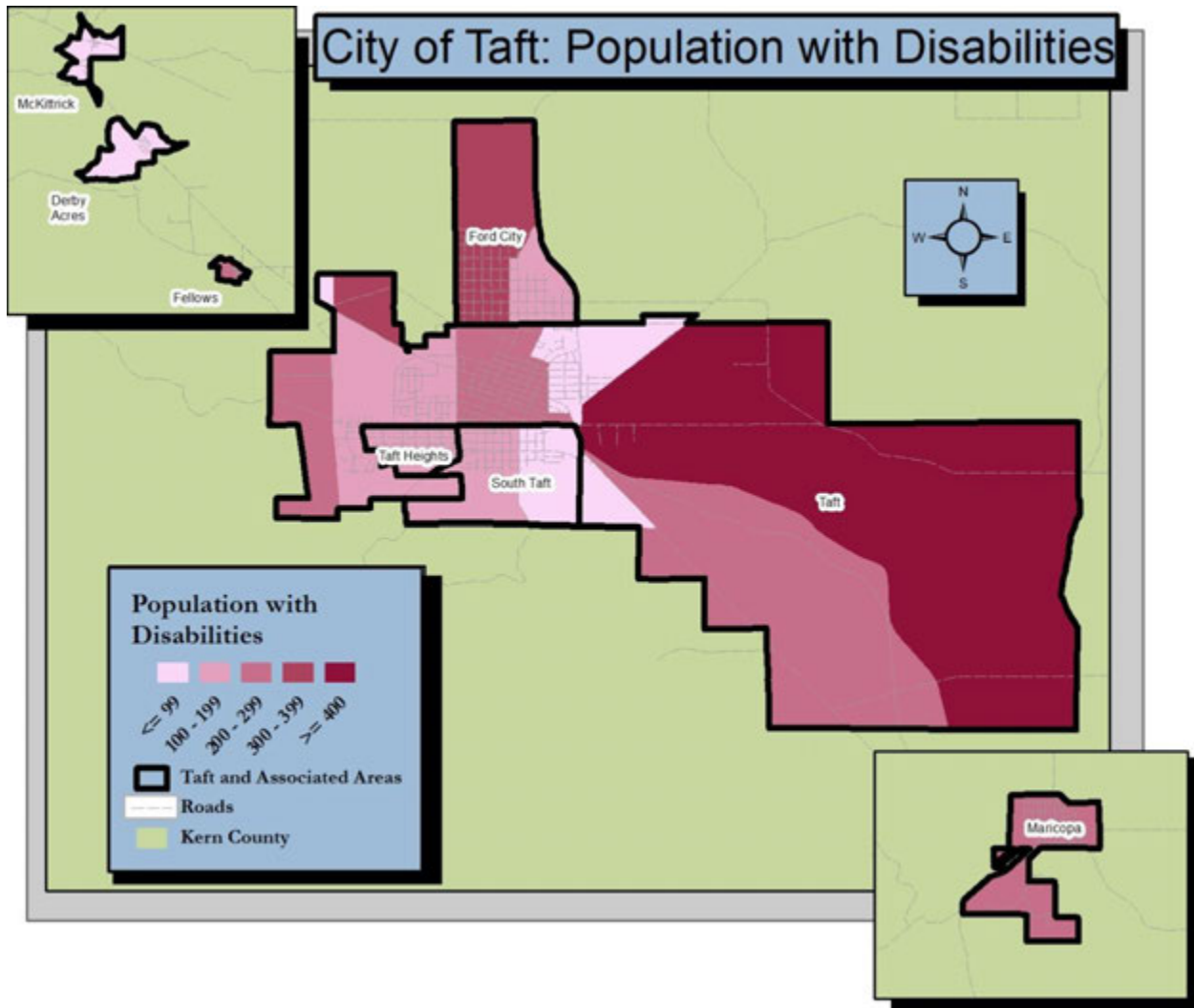
In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act regulations, a complementary demand-response service must be available within three-quarters of a mile of any fixed-route transit route. The City's current Dial-A-Ride service meets this requirement. The program registrant database is regularly reviewed, and enrollment of eligible persons is permitted as necessary. We recommend the City continue its efforts to mode-shift as many Dial-A-Ride customers onto the more cost-efficient fixed-route service as practical.

Exhibit 2.13 Persons with Disabilities Population Projections

Populations	Derby	Fellows	Ford City	McKittrick	Taft	Taft	South Taft	TSI	Maricopa
Total Population 2013	353	93	4,106	84	9,192	2,183	2,381	18,392	1,264
Persons with Disabilities in 2013	67	1	379	10	794	126	160	1,537	98
Percent of Total Population in 2013	19.0%	1.1%	9.2%	11.9%	8.6%	5.8%	6.7%	8.4%	7.8%
Population in 2020	79	1	449	12	942	149	190	1,822	91
Population in 2030	93	1	528	14	1,106	175	223	2,140	92

Source: American Community Survey 2013

Exhibit 2.14 Persons with Disabilities Population



Source: American Community Survey 2013

Low-Income Population

The relative share of low-income residents within the TSI is estimated at 18.0 percent of total TSI population in 2013. In addition, Maricopa continues to report nearly one in three of its residents (29.4 percent) as low-income. These high percentages of low-income individuals are not surprising given the current levels of unemployment throughout the region. Individuals within this demographic are likely to be dependent upon alternate modes of travel including public transit for personal mobility. Given the significant percentage of total population identified as low-income, increasing affordable and accessible mobility options to key destinations (such as employment resource centers and education facilities like Taft College) would likely translate to an enhanced quality of life for low-income individuals.

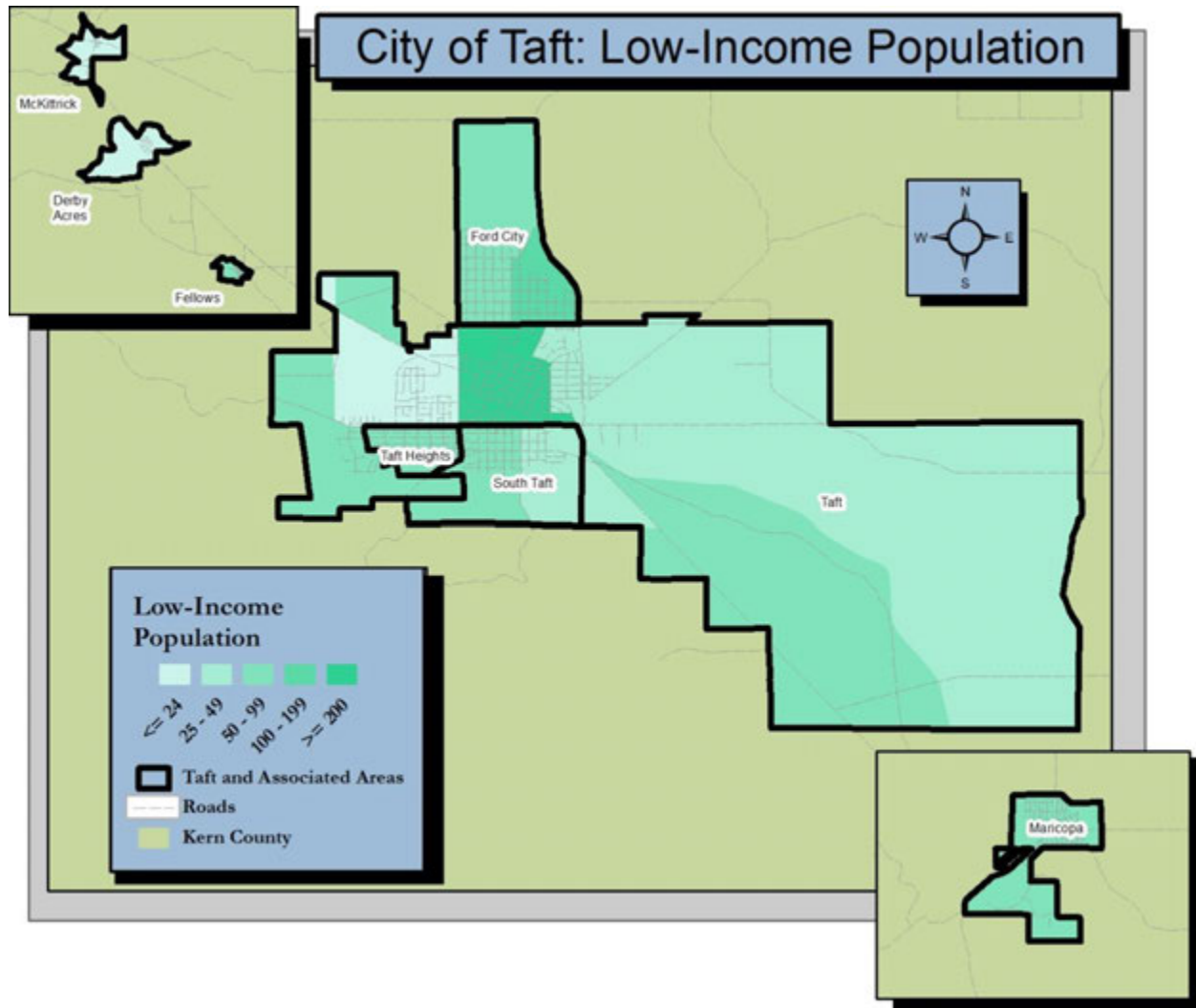
The significant number of low-income individuals found within the TSI indicates a strong likelihood of increased transit demand. Improved transit service awareness and targeted outreach (focusing on how to access and ride the service) throughout the study area would likely result in increased ridership and fare revenue. Implementation of the strategies presented in the City of Taft's 2014 Community Outreach Program would likely result in increased public awareness, translating to increases in transit ridership and revenue.

Exhibit 2.15 Low-Income Population Projections

Populations	Derby Acres	Fellows	Ford City	McKittrick	Taft	Taft Heights	South Taft	TSI	Maricopa
Total Population 2013	353	93	4,106	84	9,192	2,183	2,381	18,392	1,264
Low-income Population in 2013	37	0	1,319	4	1,113	432	402	3,307	371
Percent of Total Population in 2013	10.5%	0.0%	32.1%	4.8%	12.1%	19.8%	16.9%	18.0%	29.4%
Low-income Population in 2020	44	0	1,563	5	1,320	512	476	3,921	343
Low-income Population in 2030	52	0	1,836	6	1,550	601	560	4,604	349

Source: American Community Survey 2013

Exhibit 2.16 Low-Income Population



Source: American Community Survey 2013

Minority Populations

Minorities are defined as those individuals reporting their race as any except “White alone.” The single largest ethnic and/or racial “minority” group within the TSI is “some other race” (4.9 percent). Other groups identified through the 2013 American Community Survey include two or more races (3.8 percent), African-American (1.9 percent), Asian (1.3 percent), and Native American or Alaskan Native (1.1 percent). Overall the non-white population in the TSI stands at 13.1 percent and 18.4 percent in Maricopa.

There is a significant proportion of the Hispanic/Latino community which resides within the TSI boundaries (30.9 percent). The largest populations of Latinos unsurprisingly reside in Ford City, Taft, and South Taft. Maricopa reports 25.2 percent of the population as Hispanic/Latino. It should be noted the 2014 Community Outreach Program identified a significant Oaxacan population residing throughout the TSI. This demographic faces increased barriers to transit and transportation as a result of language barriers and a greater illiteracy rate. This group has been specifically targeted for outreach given it falls into multiple transit-dependent categories such as low-income and limited access to personal vehicles.

Interestingly there is a discrepancy between persons identifying themselves as “White alone,” and Hispanic/Latino. Many would consider Hispanic/Latino to be a minority categorization, although this distinction seems to be lacking in the TSI. Nearly 16,000 residents consider themselves to be “White” while an additional 5,690 cited Hispanic/Latino. This is most likely due to the limitations of the Census and American Community Survey questions.

Exhibit 2.17 Minority Population Projections

Populations	Derby Acres	Fellows	Ford City	McKittrick	Taft	Taft Heights	South Taft	TSI	Maricopa
Total Population 2013	353	93	4,106	84	9,192	2,183	2,381	18,392	1,264
Minority Population in 2013	3	0	380	6	1,522	130	373	2,414	232
Percent of Total Population in 2013	0.8%	0.0%	9.3%	7.1%	16.6%	6.0%	15.7%	13.1%	18.4%
Minority Population in 2020	4	0	450	7	1,805	154	442	2,862	215
Minority Population in 2030	4	0	529	8	2,119	181	519	3,361	218

Source: American Community Survey 2013

Exhibit 2.18 Minority Population – Detail

	Derby Acres	Fellows	Ford City	McKittrick	Taft	Taft Heights	South Taft	TSI	Maricopa
White	350	93	3,726	78	7,670	2,053	2,008	15,978	1,032
Black or African-American	0	0	0	0	237	27	88	352	2
Native American and Alaskan Native	0	0	65	2	104	28	0	199	34
Asian	0	0	0	0	209	34	0	243	59
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	6	0
Some Other Race	0	0	224	0	478	0	205	907	105
Two or More Races	3	0	91	4	494	35	80	707	32

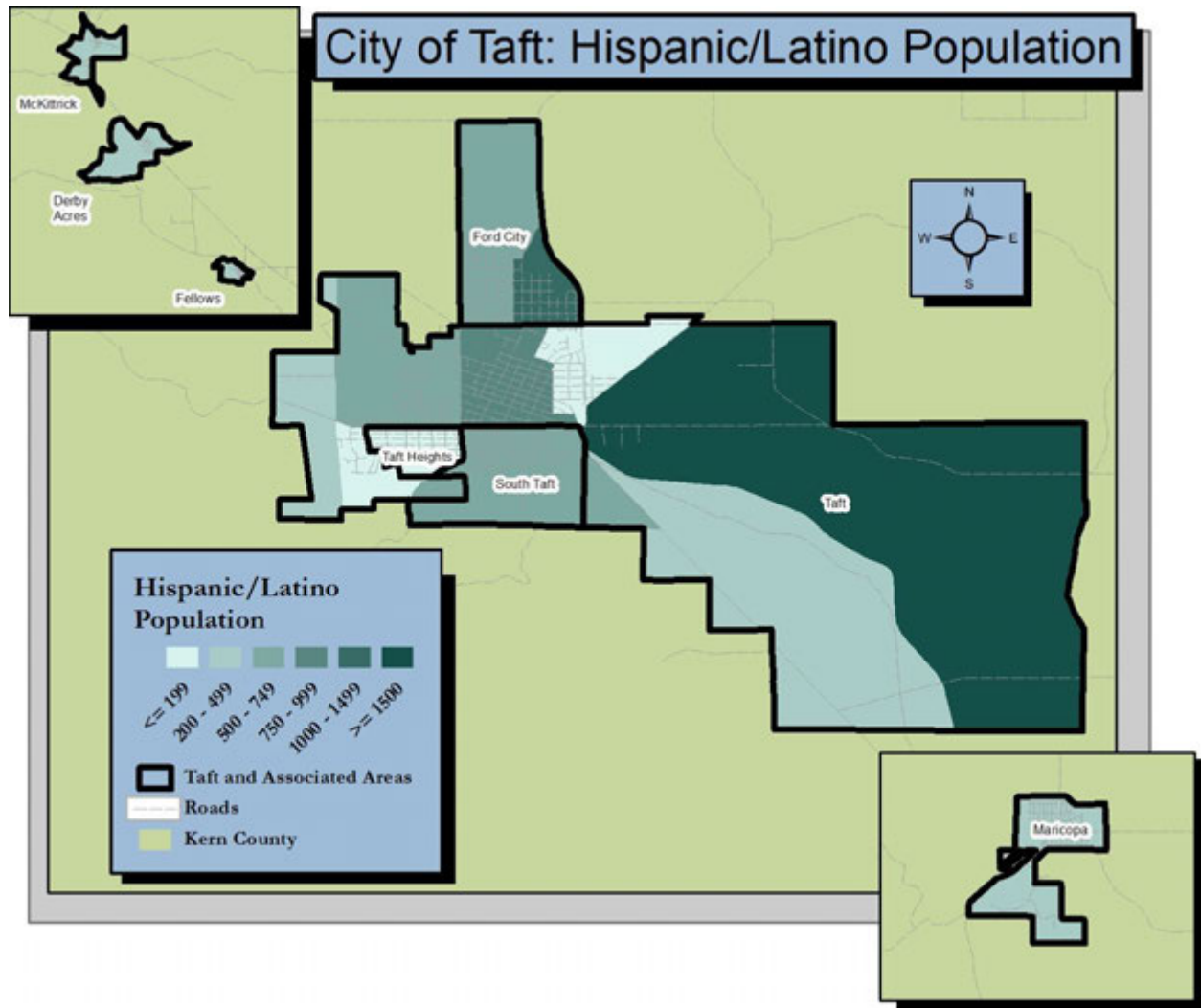
Source: American Community Survey 2013

Exhibit 2.19 Hispanic/Latino Population

Populations	Derby Acres	Fellows	Ford City	McKittrick	Taft	Taft Heights	South Taft	TSI	Maricopa
Total Population 2013	353	93	4,106	84	9,192	2,183	2,381	18,392	1,264
Hispanic/Latino Population in 2013	31	0	1,062	28	3,210	39	1,320	5,690	319
Percent of Total Population in 2013	8.8%	0.0%	25.9%	33.3%	34.9%	1.8%	55.4%	30.9%	25.2%
Hispanic/Latino Population in 2020	37	0	1,259	33	3,806	46	1,565	6,746	295
Hispanic/Latino Population in 2030	43	0	1,478	39	4,470	54	1,837	7,922	300

Source: American Community Survey 2013

Exhibit 2.20 Hispanic/Latino Population Map



Source: American Community Survey 2013

Trip Generators

A listing of trip generators located throughout the City of Taft, neighboring communities (Ford City, Taft Heights, and South Taft), and the City of Maricopa has been developed for the 2015 Transit Development Plan. Trip generators can be defined as locations which are regularly patronized by transit-dependent populations and include education, healthcare, government, social service, grocery, and recreation destinations.

The identification of trip generators provides a basis for 1) quantifying demand for public transit service, and 2) identifying temporal and spatial gaps in available transit service.

Exhibit 2.21 presents an updated list of trip generators within both Taft city limits as well as neighboring communities. When assessed alongside the results of origin/destination data collected in late 2014 (through transit rider, stakeholder, and community surveys), the City's current public transit service offers reasonable access (within a quarter-mile) to the majority of local important trip generators.

The majority of employers are located within Taft city limits. These include school districts, government facilities (i.e., city hall, libraries, social service centers), as well as many small retail and commercial establishments. Educational destinations warranting public transit service (i.e., high schools, Taft College) are also located within city limits. Healthcare and recreational destinations are located primarily within Taft, accessible to residents throughout the area, although there is demand for travel to destinations beyond the TSI such as Bakersfield and Tejon Ranch.

Exhibit 2.21 Potential Transit Trip Generators

Trip Generator	Address
A Street Park	A Street and Hillard Street
Albertsons	1044 N. Kern Street
Belridge Elementary School	19447 Wagon Wheel Road
Asher Street Market	228 Asher Avenue
Buena Vista High School	900 N. 10th Street
Buena Vista Mobile Home Park	123 S. 10th Street
Chamber of Commerce	400 Kern Street
Chevron Valley Credit Union	1092 Kern Street
Taft City Hall	209 E. Kern Street
Civic Center	Taft Highway 119
Conley Elementary School	623 Rose Avenue
Fire Department	801 Center Street
Next Step Cardio Fitness	506 Center Street
First Nutrition	915 N. 10th Street
Ford City Park	Cedar Street
Franklin Field	Highway 119 and E. Cedar Street
Head Start	955 Stanislaus Street
Historic Fort	915 N. 10th Street
Jefferson Elementary School	318 Taylor Street
K-Mart	301 Gardner Field Road
Lincoln Junior High School	810 6th Street
Maricopa City Hall	400 California Street
Maricopa Elementary School	955 Stanislaus Street
Maricopa High School	955 Stanislaus Street
McKittrick Elementary School	23250 2nd Street
Mercy Westside Hospital	110 E. North Street
Midway Elementary School	259 F Street
Natatorium Pool	821 4th Street
Parkview Elementary School	520 A Street
Post Office (Maricopa)	345 California Street
Post Office (Fellows)	34 Midway Road
Post Office (Taft)	427 North Street
Regency Nursing Home	111 West Ash Street
Roosevelt Elementary School	811 6th Street
Save-A-Lot	521 Finley Drive
Skate Escape	226 Main Street
Skate Park	10th and Kern Streets
Senior Citizen Center	271 California Street
Taft City Police Department	320 Commerce Way
Taft City School District	820 6th Street
Taft College	29 Emmons Park Drive
Taft College: Westec	210 E. Center Street
Taft Community Center/Senior Center	500 Cascade Place
Taft Community Health Center	1100 4th Street
Taft Heights Park	A Street
Taft Library	27 Emmons Park Drive
Taft Primary School	212 Lucard Street
Taft Union High School	701 7th Street
Taft Veterans Building	218 Taylor Street
Town Market	14 Midway Road
West Kern Oil Museum	1168 Wood Street
West Side Hospital	110 E. North Street
West Side Community Resource Center	915 N. 10th Street
Westside Independent Study High School	29 Emmons Park Drive
Westside Regional Occupational Program	515 9th Street

3

SERVICE EVALUATION

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SERVICE AND SYSTEM EVALUATION

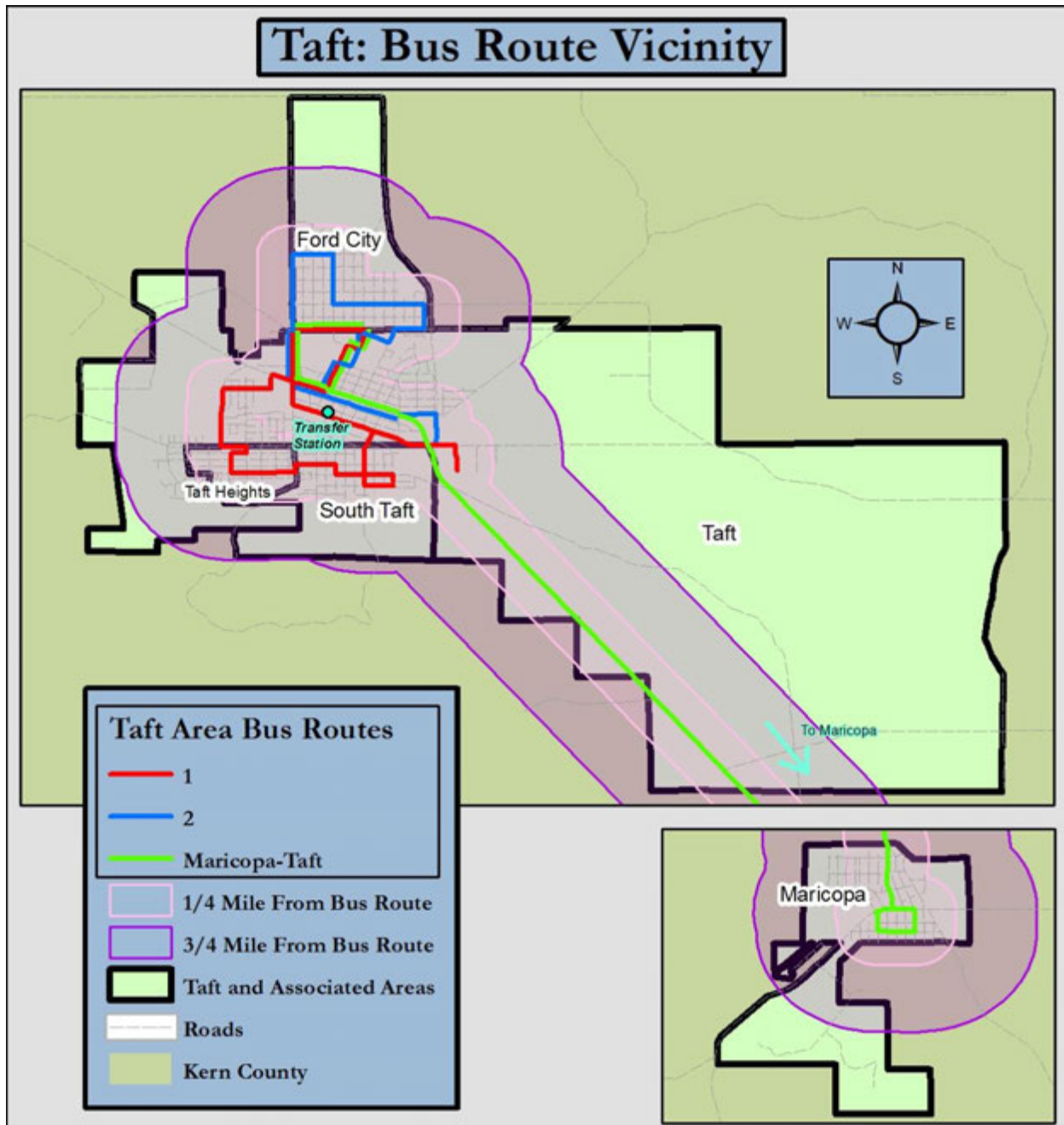
The Service and System Evaluation of Taft Area Transit provides an overview of the current services available within the Taft Sphere of Influence (TSI), assesses the status of previously adopted service recommendations, and evaluates performance of the system through quantifiable measures. The primary goals of this evaluation are an objective assessment of current transit operations, and the identification of areas for improvement and enhancement, while providing a foundation for service enhancement recommendations. .

Service Area

The Taft Area Transit (TAT) service area includes the City of Taft, and the communities of Ford City, South Taft, and Taft Heights. Limited inter-community service to Maricopa is also provided. Collectively these communities represent the majority of the TSI population (approximately 97 percent). While also located within the TSI, the communities of Derby Acres, Fellows, and McKittrick are not presently served by TAT based largely upon very modest demand and therefore a very high cost-benefit ratio. The TSI is a primarily rural region with significant ties to the petroleum industry. The TSI is accessible via State Highways 33 which travels north-south through Taft, and State Highway 119 which accesses Taft from the northeast.

Exhibit 3.1 presents a map of the existing TAT service area and fixed-routes.

Exhibit 3.1 Taft Area Transit Service Area



Prior Study

In 2009 the City of Taft adopted a Transit Development Plan with a five-year horizon. The recommendations were presented therein were a series of operating scenarios (Status Quo, Growth, Fixed-Route, and Kern Regional Transit Expansion). From these initial scenarios, a “Preferred Scenario” was developed which featured many of the elements included in the “Fixed-Route” scenario. This scenario included the introduction of traditional fixed-route transit service within Taft city limits, as well

as introduction of a ADA-complementary demand-response service. The scenario also proposed the introduction of a deviated fixed-route service linking Taft and Maricopa. Exhibit 3.2 illustrates the Preferred Scenario recommendations and their current status.

Exhibit 3.2 Prior Study Recommendation Status

Recommendation	Status
Adopt new Performance Measurement System	Complete. The 2009 TDP was adopted by the Taft city council and included a Performance Measurement System.
Implement reporting and regulatory elements supporting the Performance Measurement System	Complete. TAT regularly reports performance data to Kern COG on a monthly basis.
Modify trip reservation and trip-sheet reporting procedures	Complete. Forms were revised prior to the transition to fixed-route service in 2010.
Enact and enforce patron "late-cancellation" and "no-show" policies	Complete. Policies were implemented in 2010 and remain in effect.
Increase and maintain staffing levels (5 FTE drivers, 1 FTE dispatcher)	Complete. TAT maintains adequate staffing levels to provide services as published.
Achieve 95-percent on-time performance	In progress. On-time performance is often impacted by uncontrollable factors including traffic and weather.
Implement two transit routes operating on weekdays.	Complete. TAT transitioned to a fixed-route service in 2010.
Implement a complementary ADA demand-response service	Complete. TAT implemented a complementary paratransit service in 2010.
Limit demand-response service to seniors and ADA-certified individuals on weekdays	Complete. Implemented as part of City's adopted ADA Paratransit Plan in 2010.
Introduce service into Maricopa on a deviated fixed-route basis	Complete. Implemented as part of the launch of fixed-route services in 2010.
Install transit amenities (i.e., shelters, bus stop signs, schedules) at high-use locations	Ongoing. Higher activity bus stops received transit shelters and info-display units prior to fixed-route service launch in 2010. Upgrades continue as funding allows
Implement a marketing plan to increase community awareness and support for Taft Area Transit	In-progress. The City of Taft completed a Community Outreach Plan in 2014 to aid in promotion of existing services.
Eliminate service to Derby Acres, Fellows, and McKittrick	Complete. Service to these communities was eliminated as part of the transition to a fixed-route service in 2010.

While the City has implemented all strategies and recommendations from the 2009 Transit Development Plan, the forecast gains in ridership and farebox recovery were not realized. The primary reasons for which are discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

Existing Transit Service

Taft Area Transit is funded and operated by the City of Taft. The current system features two local fixed-routes which cover the communities of Ford City, South Taft, Taft Heights, South Taft, and city of Taft. A third fixed-route, the Taft-Maricopa line, links Taft with neighboring Maricopa to the south. In addition, TAT offers an eligibility-based demand-response service via its Dial-A-Ride. The Dial-A-Ride operates within three-quarters of a mile of each of the fixed-route alignments. ADA requirements for the Taft-Maricopa route are addressed through the route's deviation policy for persons with disabilities. As such, the Taft-Maricopa route will deviate from the established alignment up to three-quarters of a mile for persons with disabilities upon advanced request. The following table summarizes the TAT service operating hours and fares. All TAT staff are either full or part-time City employees.

Exhibit 3.3 Current TAT Service Hours and Fares

Service Type	Service Name	Operating Hours	
		Weekday	Weekend
Fixed-route	Route 1	7:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	8:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.
Fixed-route	Route 2	7:15 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.	8:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.
Fixed-route	Taft-Maricopa	7:12 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.	N/A
Demand-response	Dial-A-Ride	7:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	8:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Fare Category	Fixed-route		Dial-A-Ride
	Local	Taft-Maricopa	
General	\$1.00	\$1.50	\$1.50 (as guest only)
Senior	\$0.75	\$1.50	\$1.25
ADA-Certified	\$0.75	\$1.50	\$1.25
Youth	\$0.75	\$1.50	\$1.25
Children (under 5 with fare-paying adult)	Free	Free	Free
ADA Attendant (with fare-paying ADA patron)	Free	Free	Free
12-trip Pass (General)	\$10.00	N/A	N/A
12-trip Pass (Senior)	\$7.50	N/A	\$12.50
12-trip Pass (Youth)	\$7.50	N/A	N/A

Fleet

Taft Area Transit utilizes a fleet of varied composition. State and federal funding received by the City in prior years allowed the City to procure a number of new, smaller vehicles (e.g., 2010 Dodge Caravan), which have been assigned to the Dial-A-Ride service. In addition, the City possesses larger cut-away vehicles for its fixed-route service. All vehicles are ADA-compliant and are gasoline powered. A fleet summary is presented below.

Exhibit 3.4 TAT Fleet

Fleet ID	Year	Make	Model	Fuel	Mileage	Capacity	Wheelchair Capacity	Condition	Status
14	2008	Chevy	C5500	Gas	149,055	16	2	Good	In-service
15	2008	Chevy	C33503	Gas	132,119	8	1	Good	In-service
16	2010	Dodge	Caravan	Gas	7,713	5	1	Good	In-service
17	2010	Dodge	Caravan	Gas	7,391	5	1	Good	In-service
18	2010	Dodge	Caravan	Gas	7,414	5	1	Good	In-service
19	2010	Dodge	Caravan	Gas	7,584	5	1	Good	In-service
20	2010	Dodge	Caravan	Gas	7,726	5	1	Good	In-service
21	2011	Chevy	C33503	Gas	15,181	8	2	Good	In-service
22	2011	Chevy	C33503	Gas	104,102	8	2	Good	In-service
23	2011	Chevy	C33503	Gas	102,566	8	2	Good	In-service

Facilities

Day-to-day functions (including dispatching and customer service) are conducted from the TAT office located at 333 Commerce Way in Taft. This is adjacent to the vehicle storage and fueling facilities. The yard also houses other City of Taft vehicles, and the entrance features an electrically-controlled security gate. All fleet maintenance is conducted by City staff at the city garage located at 1100 Ash Street. Specialty/warranty repairs are completed by various vehicle manufacturer warranty technicians.

Service Evaluation

Per the adopted Performance Measurement System, Taft Area Transit has established goals and metrics to assess its overall efficiency as well as to identify areas of potential improvement. The following section presents TAT system-wide performance across the prior four fiscal years (FY 2010 through FY 2014).

Exhibit 3.5 TAT System Performance

Performance Measure	FY 2010/11	FY 2011/12	FY 2012/13	FY 2013/14
Operating Cost	\$827,780	\$671,954	\$737,699	\$729,463
Annual Change	---	-18.8%	9.8%	-1.1%
Fare Revenue	\$36,244	\$32,774	\$34,134	\$34,049
Annual Change	---	-9.6%	4.2%	-0.2%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	12,098	11,527	11,575	10,989
Annual Change	---	-4.7%	0.4%	-5.1%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	124,023	115,798	130,265	130,774
Annual Change	---	-6.6%	12.5%	0.4%
Ridership	44,576	43,462	44,833	43,128
Annual Change	---	-2.5%	3.2%	-3.8%
Performance Metric				
Operating Cost/VSH	\$68.42	\$58.29	\$63.73	\$66.38
Annual Change	---	-14.8%	9.3%	4.2%
Operating Cost/VSM	\$6.67	\$5.80	\$5.66	\$5.58
Annual Change	---	-13.1%	-2.4%	-1.5%
Operating Cost/Passenger	\$18.57	\$15.46	\$16.45	\$16.91
Annual Change	---	-16.7%	6.4%	2.8%
Passengers/VSH	3.68	3.77	3.87	3.92
Annual Change	---	2.3%	2.7%	1.3%
Passengers/VSM	0.36	0.38	0.34	0.33
Annual Change	---	4.4%	-8.3%	-4.2%
Fare/Passenger	\$0.81	\$0.75	\$0.76	\$0.79
Annual Change	---	-7.3%	1.0%	3.7%
Farebox Recovery	4.4%	4.9%	4.6%	4.7%
Annual Change	---	11.4%	-5.1%	0.9%
VSM/VSH	10.3	10.0	11.3	11.9
Annual Change	---	-2.0%	12.0%	5.7%

Exhibit 3.6 Fixed-Route and Dial-A-Ride Performance

Performance Measure	Fixed-route				Dial-A-Ride			
	FY 2010/11	FY 2011/12	FY 2012/13	FY 2013/14	FY 2010/11	FY 2011/12	FY 2012/13	FY 2013/14
Operating Cost	\$445,483	\$351,459	\$299,782	\$315,726	\$382,297	\$320,495	\$437,917	\$413,737
Annual Change	---	-21.1%	-14.7%	5.3%	---	-16.2%	36.6%	-5.5%
Fare Revenue	\$16,312	\$14,506	\$13,485	\$12,661	\$19,932	\$18,262	\$20,680	\$21,388
Annual Change	---	-11.1%	-7.0%	-6.1%	---	-8.4%	13.2%	3.4%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	6,496	5,570	4,704	4,920	5,602	5,957	6,871	6,069
Annual Change	---	-14.3%	-15.5%	4.6%	---	6.3%	15.3%	-11.7%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	66,887	62,819	60,376	63,808	57,136	52,979	69,889	66,966
Annual Change	---	-6.1%	-3.9%	5.7%	---	-7.3%	31.9%	-4.2%
Ridership	22,232	21,437	17,212	17,596	22,344	22,025	26,429	25,532
Annual Change	---	-3.6%	-19.7%	2.2%	---	-1.4%	20.0%	-3.4%
Performance Metric								
Operating Cost/VSH	\$68.57	\$63.10	\$63.73	\$64.17	\$68.25	\$53.80	\$63.73	\$68.17
Annual Change	---	-8.0%	1.0%	0.7%	---	-21.2%	18.5%	7.0%
Operating Cost/VSM	\$6.66	\$5.59	\$4.97	\$4.95	\$6.69	\$6.05	\$6.27	\$6.18
Annual Change	---	-16.0%	-11.3%	-0.3%	---	-9.6%	3.6%	-1.4%
Operating Cost/Passenger	\$20.04	\$16.39	\$17.42	\$17.94	\$17.11	\$14.55	\$16.57	\$16.20
Annual Change	---	-18.2%	6.2%	3.0%	---	-15.0%	13.9%	-2.2%
Passengers/VSH	3.42	3.85	3.66	3.58	3.99	3.70	3.85	4.21
Annual Change	---	12.5%	-4.9%	-2.3%	---	-7.3%	4.0%	9.4%
Passengers/VSM	0.33	0.34	0.29	0.28	0.39	0.42	0.38	0.38
Annual Change	---	2.7%	-16.5%	-3.3%	---	6.3%	-9.0%	0.8%
Fare/Passenger	\$0.73	\$0.68	\$0.78	\$0.72	\$0.89	\$0.83	\$0.78	\$0.84
Annual Change	---	-7.8%	15.8%	-8.2%	---	-7.0%	-5.6%	7.1%
Farebox Recovery	3.7%	4.1%	4.5%	4.0%	5.2%	5.7%	4.7%	5.2%
Annual Change	---	12.7%	9.0%	-10.9%	---	9.3%	-17.1%	9.5%
VSM/VSH	10.3	11.3	12.8	13.0	10.2	8.9	10.2	11.0
Annual Change	---	9.5%	13.8%	1.0%	---	-12.8%	14.4%	8.5%

Ridership

As a whole, ridership has fluctuated considerably across the past four fiscal years. The system averaged 44,000 riders throughout the evaluation period. Ridership for the two fixed-routes is fairly evenly split, comprising 84.7 percent of total fixed-route ridership. The Taft-Maricopa route accounts for approximately 15.3 percent. The Dial-A-Ride accounts for 59.2 percent of total ridership. When Taft Area Transit transitioned to a fixed-route service, it was anticipated there would be a large mode-shift of customers from demand-response to fixed-route service. While some prior customers did indeed mode shift, many elected to stop using transit and identified other means of travel such as personal vehicles. This “pirating” of ridership from the fixed-route service by the Dial-A-Ride has resulted in decreased operating efficiency and has forced the City to become reactive versus proactive with respect to service adjustments and supporting marketing activities. In order to sustainably increase ridership, the City must revise how the services are promoted expanding beyond historic tactics. Increasing ridership on fixed-route services while also reducing demand on Dial-A-Ride will aid TAT in meeting performance metrics.

Exhibit 3.7 System Ridership

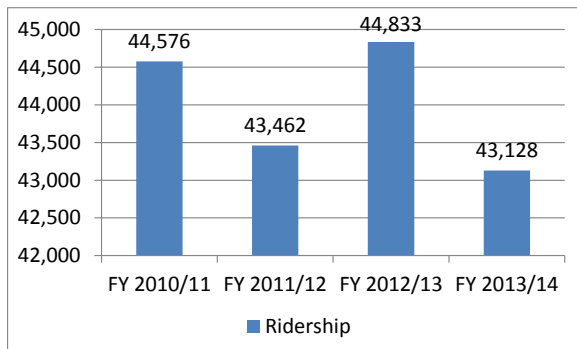
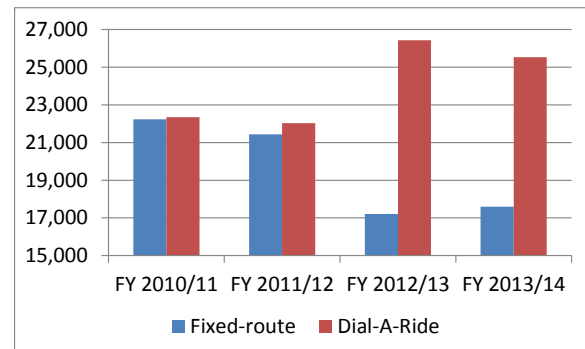


Exhibit 3.8 Ridership By Mode



Farebox Recovery

Farebox Recovery Ratio calculates the percentage of operating cost recovered through passenger fares. It is the most common measure of public subsidy of a transit service. The City of Taft is responsible for achieving a farebox recovery ratio of not less than ten percent of operating costs. The City has struggled to meet this metric and has been at risk of receiving a reduced amount of TDA funding from Kern COG. System farebox recovery stands at 4.7 percent for FY 2014 (a modest increase from 4.4 percent in FY 2011). One of the most effective ways of improving this metric is to increase ridership. The City is actively engaging in measures to promote existing services while also reducing operating costs in order to achieve the farebox levels required to continue receiving its full share of formula-based TDA funding. A further discussion of strategies to improve this metric is presented in the Service Recommendations chapter.

Exhibit 3.9 System Farebox Recovery

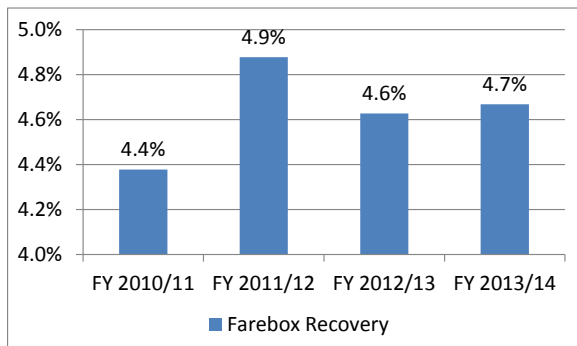
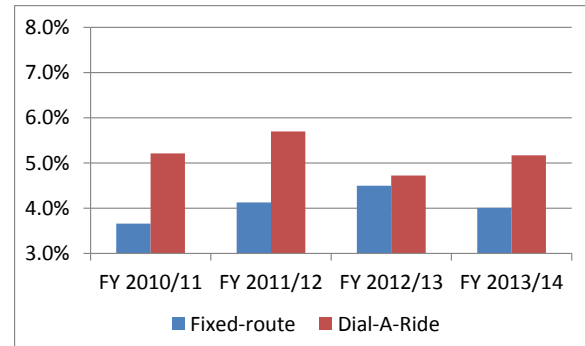


Exhibit 3.10 Farebox Recovery By Mode



Operating Cost/Vehicle Service Hour (VSH)

This metric calculates service efficiency, based on the overall cost to provide a single hour of revenue service. This metric varied throughout the study period, ranging from a low of \$58.29/VSH to a high of \$68.42/VSH. The general trend for this metric in recent years has been one of increase.

The Dial-A-Ride Operating Cost/VSH has increased significantly (from a low of \$53.80 to the current \$68.17), significantly impacting overall cost increases, while the fixed-route metric has remained fairly steady.

The factors which most significantly affect operating costs in a small un-urbanized transit system include staff/operator costs, fuel, and maintenance. While little can be done by small programs directly to control fuel costs, the City retains more control over staffing and maintenance costs. Additionally this metric is impacted by the number of revenue hours spent delivering service. A reduction of revenue hours while also employing operating cost reduction measures can significantly improve this metric. Providing the correct level of service (across all modes), meaning reducing the revenue hours of under-performing services, while increasing ridership (via targeted marketing and awareness campaigns to transit-dependent populations) may result in dramatic improvement to this and other performance metrics.

Exhibit 3.11 System Operating Cost/VSH

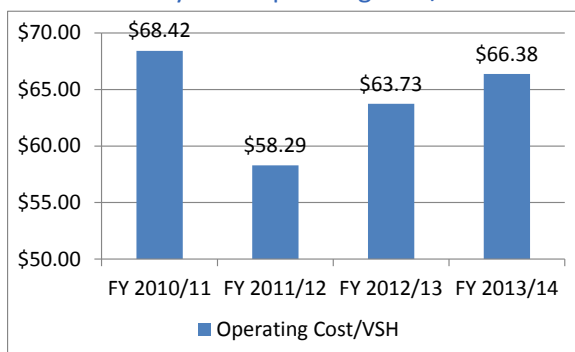
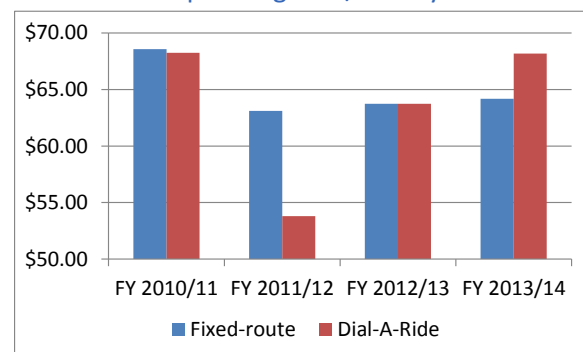


Exhibit 3.12 Operating Cost/VSH By Mode



Operating Cost/Vehicle Service Mile (VSM)

Overall Operating Cost/VSM has steadily decreased to a low of \$5.58 in FY 2014. We believe this is due chiefly to the increased efficiency of the fixed-route service, as the Dial-A-Ride cost per mile metric has remained high. Fixed-route mileage varies much less than Dial-A-Ride mileage during a typical operating day. The variable nature of demand-responsive service results means the City is less likely to realize operating efficiencies and improvements based on cost/mile metrics. In order to improve this metric, the City should focus efforts on increasing ridership on fixed-routes while maximizing the efficiency of the Dial-A-Ride through increased use of shared-rides whenever feasible.

Exhibit 3.13 System Operating Cost/VSM

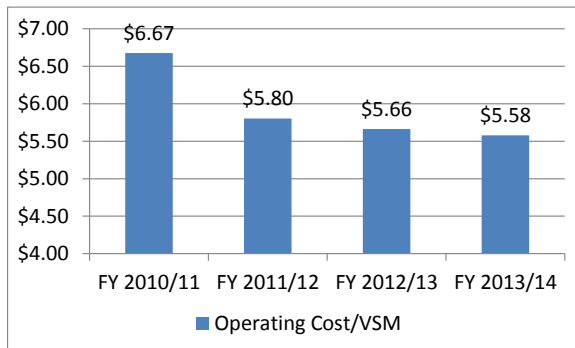
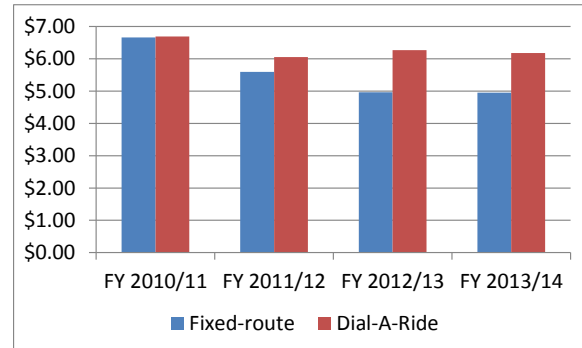


Exhibit 3.14 Operating Cost/VSM By Mode



Operating Cost/Passenger

Another measure of cost effectiveness, Operating Cost/Passenger, calculates the amount the City expends for a single unlinked passenger trip. As seen in the exhibits below, Operating Cost/Passenger remained fairly steady throughout the evaluation period. The City spent \$18.57/Passenger in FY 2010/11, decreasing to \$16.91 in FY 2013/14, an 8.9 percent decrease in Operating Cost/Passenger. We believe this improvement can be partially attributed to increases in efficiency by the fixed-route which saw a net decrease of 10.5 percent, while the Dial-A-Ride realized only a five percent decrease.

Exhibit 3.15 System Cost/Passenger

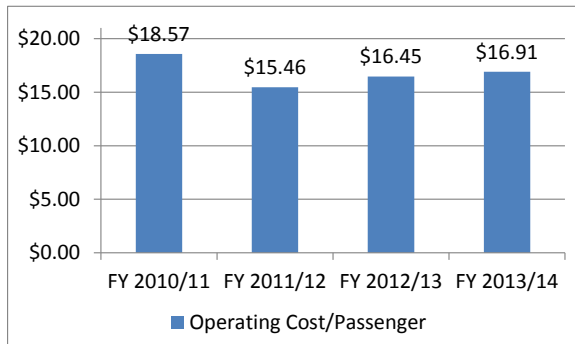
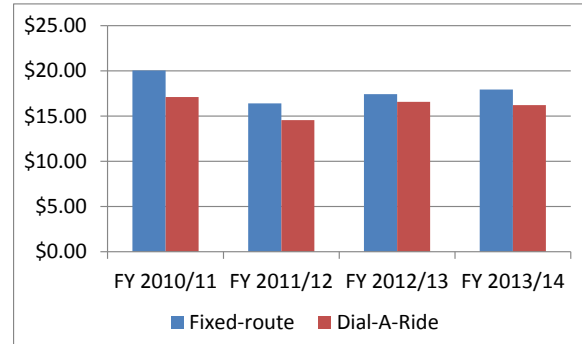


Exhibit 3.16 Cost/Passenger By Mode



Passengers/VSH

Passengers/VSH calculates the productivity level and efficiency of a transit service during revenue-generating hours of operation. This metric quantifies the number of rides provided during each revenue or service hour. Relative to overall ridership trends, Passengers/VSH increased by 4.5 percent between FY 2011/12 and FY 2013/14. This means that while ridership increased by nearly five percent overall, service hours increased at a lesser rate, yielding an improved Passengers/VSH metric. The Dial-A-Ride service reflects a better performance in terms of this metric, posting 4.21 Passengers/VSH versus fixed-route's 3.58 Passengers/VSH in FY 2013/14. This is likely attributable to the shared-ride nature of the Dial-A-Ride and the popularity of "guest" trips for persons accompanying "eligible" patrons.

Exhibit 3.17 System Passengers/VSH

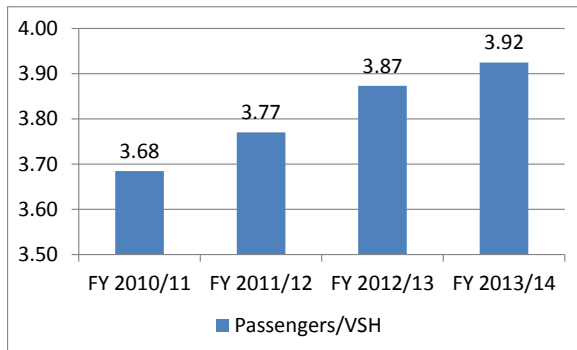
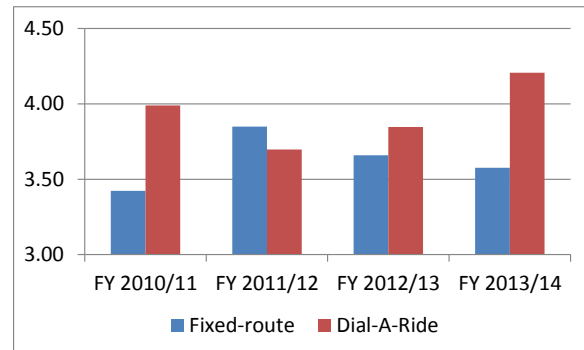


Exhibit 3.18 Passengers/VSH By Mode



Passengers/VSM

Passengers/VSM experienced a modest net decrease of 8.2 percent from FY 2011/2012 to FY 2013/14, as indicated in Exhibit 3.19 below.

Exhibit 3.19 System Passengers/VSM

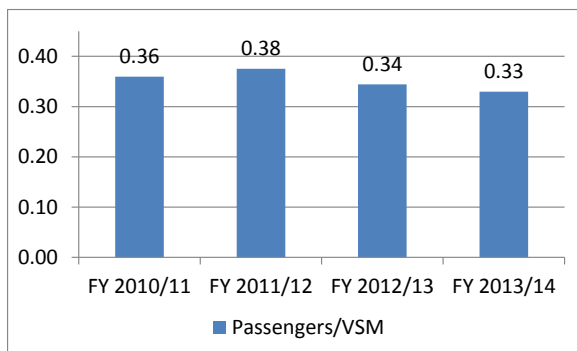
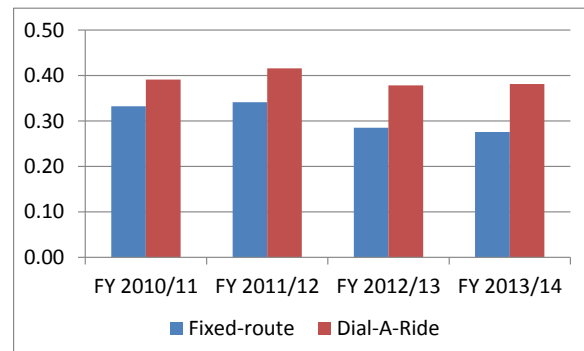


Exhibit 3.20 Passengers/VSM By Mode



Fare/Passenger

This metric calculates the average fare paid for each unlinked trip. The Fare/Passenger ratio decreased by two cents across the evaluation period, leveling to \$0.79 in FY 2013/14. This decrease is in line with the Farebox Recovery metric, and is due primarily to declines in ridership on the fixed-route as well as an increased number of discounted or free trips. Multi-trip pass customers receive the equivalent of two free rides onboard the fixed-route service. This was implemented as a means of promoting the value of the City's fixed-route. Now that the service has matured, the multi-trip pass is purchased by riders to realize a fare savings, and has resulted in erosion of the fixed-route's financial efficiency. To address this fare revenue erosion we recommend the City either increase the price of the multi-trip pass or adjust its fare pricing to reduce the number of "free trips" to just one.

Exhibit 3.21 System Fare/Passenger

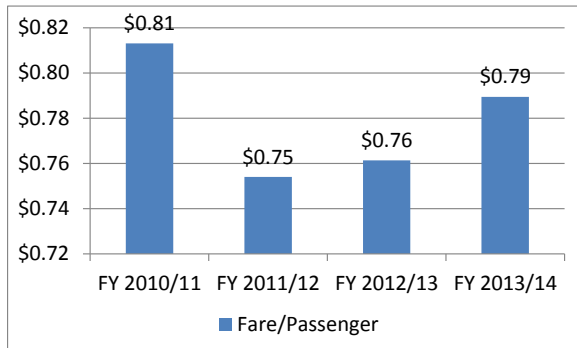
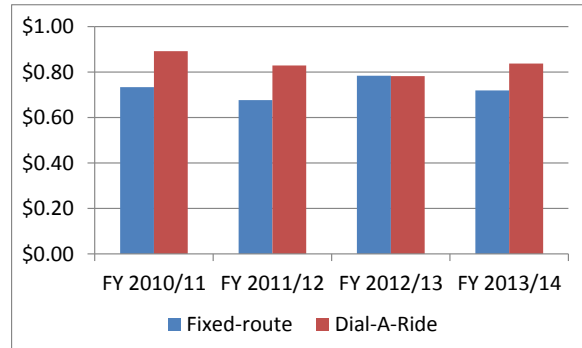


Exhibit 3.22 Fare/Passenger By Mode



Ride Check

In December 2014, Moore & Associates conducted a ride check onboard the City's fixed-route service. The ride check included a tally of all boarding and alighting activity as well as an assessment of on-time performance across a full weekday and full weekend. The ride check was conducted concurrent with the onboard survey. Ridership during the ride check was 44 persons.

Of note should be the relatively high level of on-time performance, particularly for Route 2, where 100-percent of observed trips ran on-time. (On-time defined as operating within five-minutes of published schedule). Route 1 also performed well, with 89.1 percent of trips running on time. Nearly all late departures fell within the morning hours, due likely to heavier traffic associated with schools along the route path.

The majority of passenger activity on the fixed-route was observed during mid-day on Route 1 and in the morning on Route 2. This again correlates to school schedules with many riders utilizing transit to travel from home to school (14.7 percent of riders). Overall Route 2 had more than twice as many passengers as Route 1. This is not entirely surprising, given a large portion of the TSI resides within Ford City which is served by Route 2. In addition, a large portion of the local transit-dependent population (including limited-English speakers) resides within a quarter-mile of Route 2's alignment.

Exhibit 3.23 Ride Check Performance

	On-time Performance	Passenger Activity				
		Morning	Mid-day	Afternoon	Evening	Total
Route 1	89.10%	8.3%	66.7%	16.7%	8.3%	100.0%
Route 2	100%	34.4%	28.1%	25.0%	12.5%	100.0%
Fixed-Route Average	94.60%	27.3%	38.6%	22.7%	11.4%	100.0%

Dial-A-Ride Trip Log Review

A review of a typical month worth of Dial-A-Ride trip logs was completed. The month of October 2014 was selected as a standard month as all local schools were in session (including Taft College), and there were no holidays which might impact ridership. The review of trip logs revealed the following:

1. The most frequently requested pick-up/drop-off locations include: K-Mart, Albertsons, Save-A-Lot, Taft College, Taft College Dorms, and the Historic Fort. These locations are consistent with the overall “transit trip purposes” cited by Dial-A-Ride customers (grocery, shopping, and social service destinations).
2. The majority of trips involve either a pick-up or drop-off within Taft city limits, although many trip origins and/or destinations are recorded within unincorporated communities (i.e., county-to-county) destinations.
3. The majority of trip origins and destinations fell within ¼ mile of a TAT fixed-route alignment.
4. Approximately one-third of all trips were paid using a transit pass.

Review of the Dial-A-Ride trip logs also revealed a number of ways in which to improve reporting efficiency and reduce staff time required to develop reports for Kern COG. Further discussion is presented in the Service Recommendations section of this Plan.

Kern Transit

As the only other public transit operator in the area, Kern Transit serves a vital role in the mobility landscape of the TSI. In addition, Kern Transit will provide a direct connection to any future High-Speed Rail station within the Bakersfield Metropolitan area. Currently Kern Transit provides multiple each weekday and Saturday between Taft and Bakersfield (Route 120). This route makes stops at several locations within Taft including Jefferson School, Taft College, Taft Transit Center and Taft city hall. In Bakersfield the Route 120 serves Cal State Bakersfield, the Bakersfield Amtrak station, Golden Empire Transit’s Downtown Transit Center, and the Bakersfield Greyhound station.

In October 2014, Kern Transit’s Route 120 provided 2,315 unlinked trips. The majority of these trips occurred during weekdays, which is not surprising as many of these trips reflect persons traveling to school or healthcare providers in Bakersfield. Many of these trip generators also remain closed during the weekend.

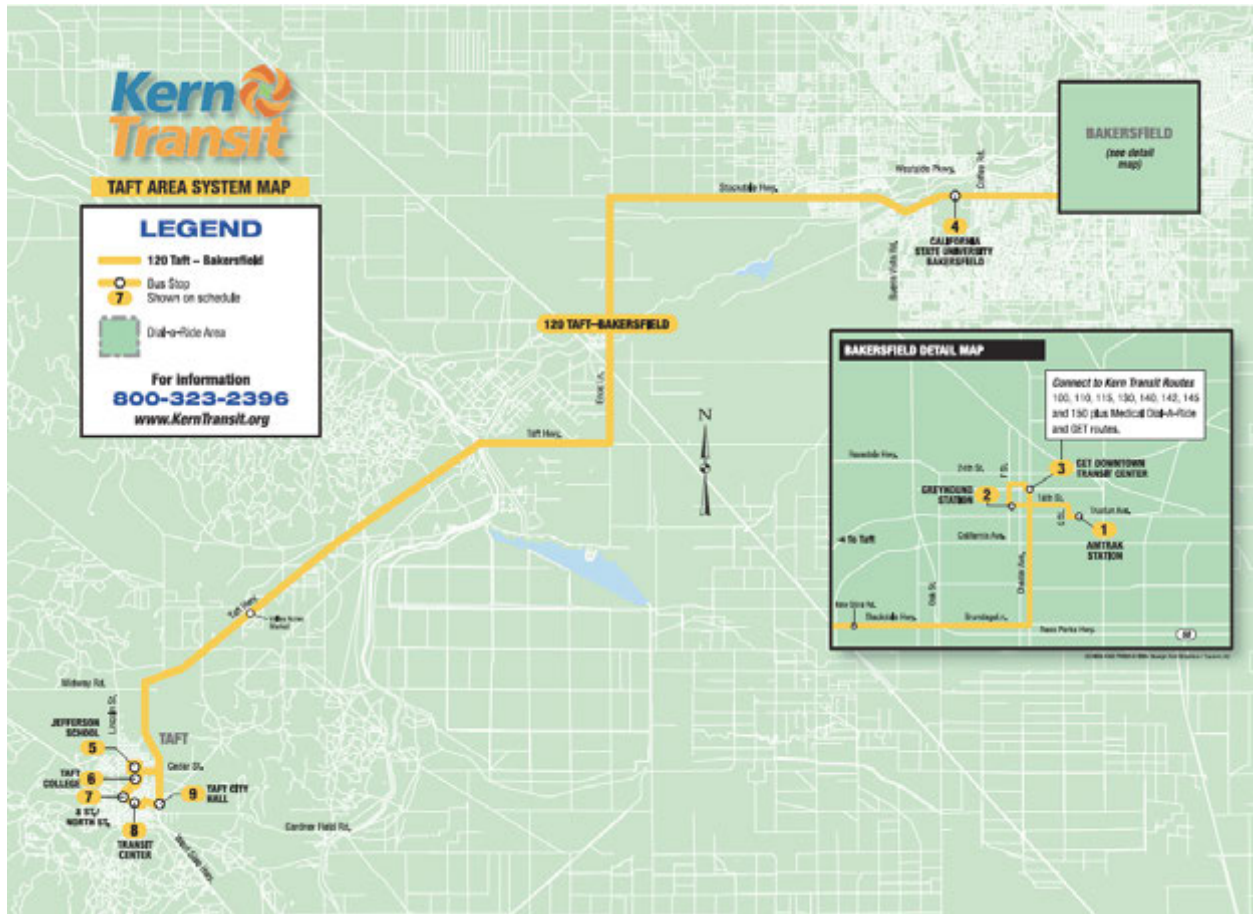
Kern Transit Route 120 pick-up and drop-off locations do not always align with current TAT fixed-route stops. Whenever possible, TAT stops should be co-located with Kern Transit stops, and timed to allow for transfer/connectivity between services. Exhibits 3.24 and 3.25 present the Kern Transit Route 120 schedule and map.

Exhibit 3.24 Kern Transit Route 120

120 – BAKERSFIELD to TAFT										
Westbound Monday thru Friday / Lunes a Viernes							Saturday / Sábados			
Bus Stop	AM			PM			AM	PM		
BAKERSFIELD										
1 Bakersfield Amtrak	—	—	10:27	12:47	3:42	5:47	10:27	3:42	—	
2 Greyhound – 18th St.	—	—	10:32	12:52	3:47	5:52	10:32	3:47	—	
3 GET Downtown Transit Center	4:35	6:20	10:35	12:55	3:50	5:55	10:35	3:50	—	
4 Cal State Bakersfield	—	6:37	10:57	1:17	4:15	6:20	10:57	4:15	—	
TAFT										
5 Jefferson School – Taylor St.	5:25	7:17	11:37	1:57	4:55	7:02	11:37	4:55	—	
6 Taft College – Cougar Court	5:28	7:20	11:40	2:00	4:58	7:05	11:40	4:58	—	
7 8th St. at North St.	5:32	7:24	11:44	2:04	5:02	7:09	11:44	5:02	—	
8 Taft Transit Center	5:35	7:27	11:47	2:07	5:05	7:12	11:47	5:05	—	

120 – TAFT to BAKERSFIELD										
Eastbound Monday thru Friday / Lunes a Viernes							Saturday / Sábados			
Bus Stop	AM			PM			AM	PM		
TAFT										
5 Jefferson School – Taylor St.	5:55	7:50	12:12	2:30	5:30	7:35	7:50	12:12	5:30	
6 Taft College – Cougar Court	5:58	7:53	12:15	2:33	5:33	7:38	7:53	12:15	5:33	
7 8th St. at North St.	6:02	7:57	12:19	2:37	5:37	7:42	7:57	12:19	5:37	
8 Taft Transit Center	6:05	8:00	12:22	2:40	5:40	7:45	8:00	12:22	5:40	
9 Taft City Hall – Ford St.	6:09	8:04	12:26	2:44	5:44	7:49	8:04	12:26	5:44	
BAKERSFIELD										
4 Cal State Bakersfield	6:47	8:44	1:06	3:24	6:24	8:27	8:44	1:06	6:24	
1 Bakersfield Amtrak	*7:04	*9:01	*1:23	*3:44	*6:41	*8:39	*9:01	*1:23	*6:41	
3 GET Downtown Transit Center	*7:09	*9:06	*1:28	*3:49	*6:46	*8:44	*9:06	*1:28	*6:46	
2 Greyhound – 18th St.	*7:12	*9:09	*1:31	*3:52	*6:49	*8:47	*9:09	*1:31	*6:49	

Exhibit 3.25 Kern Transit Route 120 Alignment



Title VI Compliance

This section provides a summary of the City's transit program compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In June 2014, the City of Taft adopted a Caltrans-approved Title VI Program. This was the City's first Title VI (transit) submittal reflecting the guidelines established in the FTA Circular 4702.1B revision (effective October 1, 2012). The Title VI Program was completed in collaboration with City staff, local stakeholders, and Caltrans.

Compliance with Title VI for transit operators receiving federal funding (either directly or as a sub-recipient) requires an assessment of the following categories, policies, and procedures:

- A. Title VI notification to the public;
- B. Locations where notice is posted;
- C. Complaint policy and procedures;
- D. List of any Title VI investigations, complaints, or lawsuits filed since prior assessment;
- E. Public Participation Plan inclusive of:
 - 1. A summary of outreach efforts made, and
 - 2. An Outreach Plan to engage minority and limited-English proficient populations;
- F. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan inclusive of:
 - 1. Four-Factor Analysis,
 - 2. Safe Harbor Provision (applicable to written documents),
 - 3. Provision of language assistance services,
 - 4. Description of how the City monitors/updates LEP Plan elements, and
 - 5. Description of employee training with respect to interactions with LEP populations;
- G. Racial breakdown of non-elected planning/advisory councils, boards, or committees;
- H. Title VI equity analysis for recently constructed facilities;
- I. Board Resolution approving/adopting the Title VI Plan; and
- J. Fixed-route performance and service standards.

The City's Title VI submittal program was found to be in compliance with all applicable Title VI requirements, and the adopted Plan is available for public review at Taft city hall.

4

PUBLIC OUTREACH

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Methodology

The public outreach conducted as part of this study included a combination of outreach tactics:

- Community survey,
- Fixed-route customer survey,
- Dial-A-Ride customer survey,
- Stakeholder survey, and
- Small group workshops.

All survey elements included some form of online participation, whether via an identical online survey, or the opportunity to submit a survey response via email. The surveys were promoted on the City of Taft's website as well as Kern COG's website. All surveys were produced in Spanish and English to increase participation by residents with limited-English proficiency. In-person surveying was conducted by Moore & Associates' staff, and bilingual surveyors were present throughout each day of data collection.

The community survey was conducted via direct mail as well as intercept/interview methodologies. This survey was open from December 15, 2014 until February 8, 2015, and generated 312 unique responses. Moore & Associates' staff surveyed Taft and nearby communities in two waves; the first from December 18 to 20, 2014, and again from February 4 to 5, 2015. High activity locations throughout Taft were visited; including The Fort, Albertsons shopping center, K-Mart, Taft Community Center, Taft College, and the city library.

The fixed-route customer survey was conducted in conjunction with the previously discussed ride check from December 18 through December 20, 2014. A representative sampling of all Taft Area Transit routes was completed (weekday and weekend), and all persons boarding observed trips were provided an opportunity to participate. A total of 34 surveys were realized. Persons who had previously completed a survey during the week were allowed to complete a second survey on the weekend as their trip purpose and/or destinations may have differed from their typical weekday travel behaviors.

The Dial-A-Ride customer survey was open from December 15 to 31, 2014. The survey was initially distributed as a direct mail survey to all Dial-A-Ride registrants. The survey mailer included a bilingual (English and Spanish) survey tailored to the Dial-A-Ride demographics (i.e., large-print, tailored questions regarding mobility, etc.), and a postage-paid response envelope. Participation was incentivized via an opportunity to win a \$25 Visa gift card. We received a total of 60 surveys from Dial-A-Ride customers.

A list of stakeholders was compiled and vetted by the Project Steering Committee to ensure thorough representation of local businesses and organizations with a "stake" in the project's successful outcome. These stakeholders were contacted via email as well as through phone calls, and some through in-person visits. The organizations contacted ranged from local businesses and employers, to social service

groups, healthcare providers, to education and faith-based organizations. This survey was tailored to assess community perceptions regarding TAT, and to identify the most immediate mobility needs of their respective clients. Twenty-eight stakeholder organizations participated in the survey.

Moore & Associates facilitated a series of small-group workshop discussions open to the public on January 8, 2015. Two sessions were held, (the first in the early afternoon, and the second in the early evening) to encourage community participation. Participants were asked to share their opinion with respect to transit and local mobility, and were also provided the opportunity to complete a community survey. Further, on March 4, 2015, Moore & Associates participated in the City of Taft's 2015 Unmet Transit Needs public hearing held in conjunction with a local gathering of community stakeholders called Sit & Sip. A brief presentation was provided describing the core elements of the TDP as well as initial findings, followed by a discussion of opportunities to improve local transit. Thirty-seven attendees provided input during the various workshops.

All survey data was entered into electronic databases and cleaned/verified for accuracy utilizing Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Response frequencies were developed for each survey question and utilized for exhibit creation and analysis. English-language versions of the instruments can be found in the Appendix.

Recent Outreach (2014 Community Outreach Program)

In 2014, the City of Taft conducted a study focused on identifying the mobility needs of the community as well as identifying latent demand for public transit within the community. The public outreach portion of the project included a variety of methodologies including stakeholder outreach, community survey, and community event participation throughout the City of Taft's sphere of influence. The stakeholder survey was essential in that it not only garnered valuable insight from each organization on its perceptions of Taft Area Transit, but also identified the types of services the responding organizations provided. The community survey was initially developed in the form of a direct mailer and equivalent online version, and was distributed to 500 randomly-selected Taft households. The survey distribution was preceded by promotion in the Taft *Independent* and Midway *Driller* newspapers, a postcard to the households of Maricopa, as well as a notice on the City of Taft's website. A bilingual survey team conducted intercept surveys at stakeholder and community events to augment the direct mail and online collection. A survey specific to the Oaxacan community was undertaken during an event at the City Recreation Center during which attendees was also advised on how to ride the bus.

A list of overall strategies was developed and each with supplementing tactics, desired outcomes, justifications, and estimated costs. Below is a summary of the developed strategies arising from the 2014 study:

1. Improve accessibility to service information,
2. Targeted outreach and community involvement,
3. Promotions and campaigns,

4. Improved public communications, and
5. Customer satisfaction improvement.

The following presents a sampling of recommendations identified to support the strategies listed above:

- Develop a bilingual brochure the City can provide to points of interest in Taft and Maricopa.
- Introduce alternative pass sales outlets.
- Transit marketing should be expanded to include:
 - Outreach and promotion,
 - A travel training program, and
 - Updated program website.
- Targeted outreach to area schools (including Taft College).
- Outreach to non-English speaking populations, especially:
 - Spanish
 - Oaxacan
- Development of marketing campaigns to communicate the value of Taft Area Transit.
- Distributing periodic media releases.
- Establish social media accounts for Taft Area Transit (i.e., Twitter, Facebook).
- Improve/balance bus stop amenities.

The complete Marketing Solutions and Strategies Matrix can be found in this report's Appendix. The City's 2014 Community Outreach report is available for review at Taft city hall.

Community Survey Analysis

This survey was designed to obtain a representative sampling of the general community as well as anyone residing within the TSI.

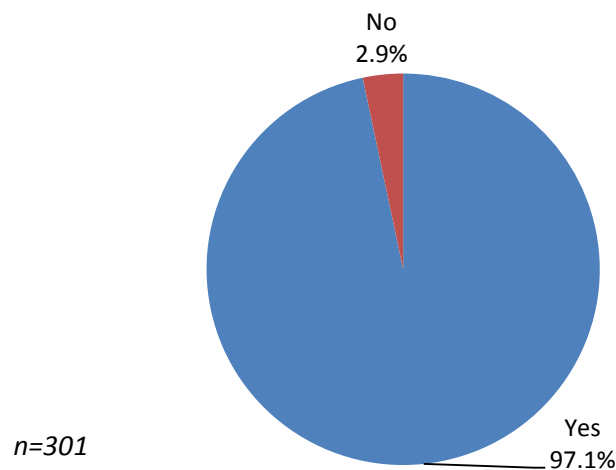
A comprehensive review of most-frequent survey responses led to the development of a mobile survey respondent.. The "typical" respondent has the following characteristics:

- Speaks English (98.4 percent).
- Has not ridden Taft Area Transit within the prior 90 days (79.2 percent).
- Lives in a household where no one rides transit (79.9 percent).
- Has access to a personal vehicle and possesses a valid driver license (85.1 and 80.4 percent, respectively).
- Is between the ages of 45 and 64 (34.4 percent).
- Reports an annual household income of less than \$15,000 (29.1 percent).

Analysis of survey responses led to the development key findings along with information critical to the development of transit service recommendations. The following exhibits illustrate the survey findings

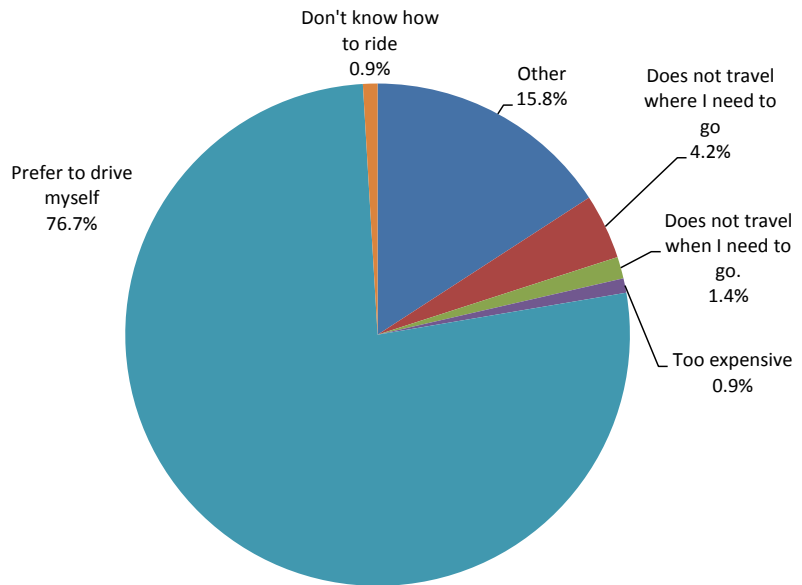
The City has struggled to increase ridership and improve fare revenue. Therefore it is somewhat ironic that the overwhelming majority of survey respondents indicated an awareness of the city's public transit program (97.1 percent). We believe this may be due to a number of reasons including lack of direct experience/knowledge regarding how to use the transit service and the possibility that many "destinations" most-frequently traveled are not served by TAT.

Exhibit 4.1 Awareness of TAT



When asked if the respondent had actually ridden Taft Area Transit services in the prior 90 days, the majority indicated not having done so (79.2 percent). A data cross-tabulation between these respondents and the primary barrier revealed a preference to "drive themselves" (76.7 percent). The next most-frequently cited reasons being "Other" (15.8 percent) which includes a variety of responses including family/friends as means of traveling or preferring to walk/exercise.

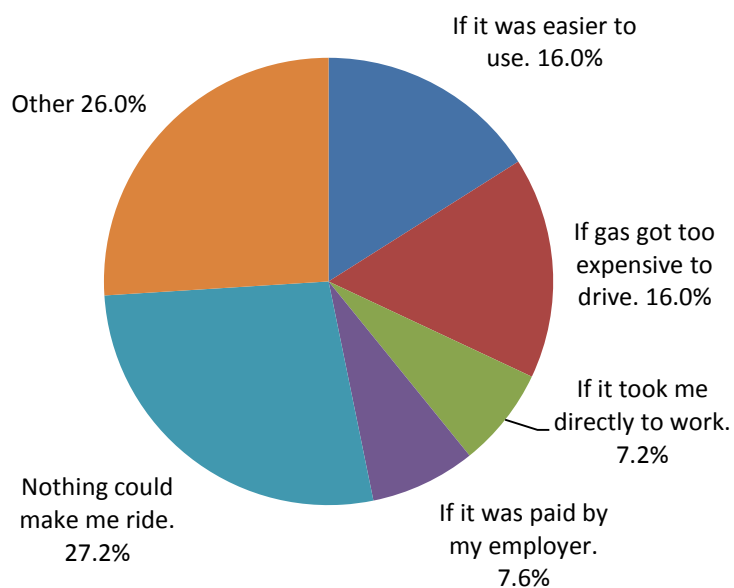
Exhibit 4.2 Reasons for Not Riding Transit



n=215

When asked what may cause them to consider riding Taft Area Transit for some or all of their trips, respondents indicated the highest potential motivations to be “if it was easier to use” and “if gas got too expensive to drive” (16.0 percent). The most-commonly cited response, however, was “nothing could make me ride” (27.2 percent).

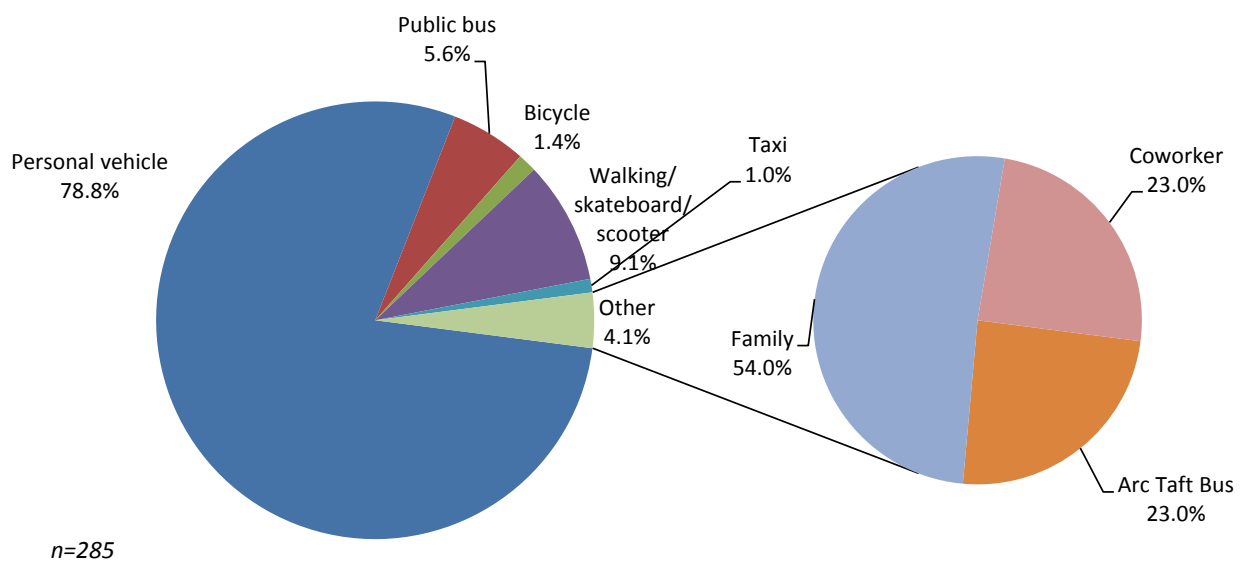
Exhibit 4.3 Improvements Which Would Cause You to Ride



n=215

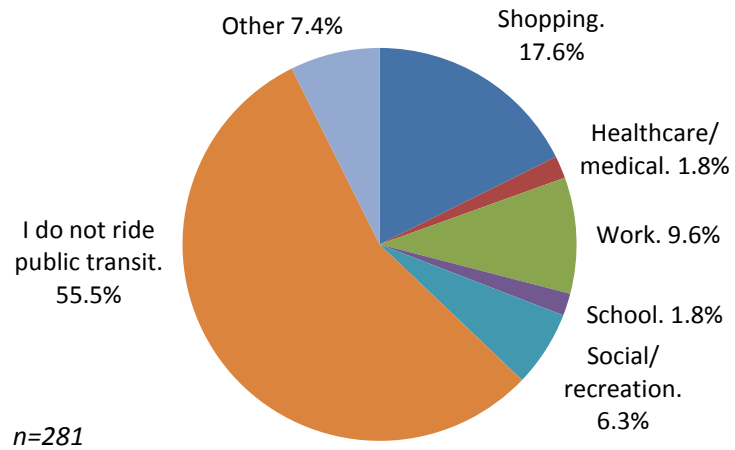
In Taft, the primary mode of intra-community travel is not surprisingly the personal vehicle (78.8 percent). Several other mobility options came to light through the survey including walking/skateboarding/scooter (9.1 percent), public bus (5.6 percent) and other options (4.1 percent). This indicates TAT is primarily in competition against the personal vehicle for choice riders. The demand assessment also revealed significant populations which are traditionally transit-dependent currently reside within the TSI. The City should prioritize efforts to maximize ridership among the transit-dependent populations (i.e., get all “walkers” to use transit for their trips), and then seek to attract “choice riders” out of personal vehicles.

Exhibit 4.4 Primary Method of Transportation



Survey respondents were asked to identify their most common trip purpose when riding public transit. The majority of respondents indicated not riding transit at all (55.5 percent). Those indicating some transit usage cite using transit primarily for shopping trips (17.6 percent) and work (9.6 percent). Responses within the “Other” category included “car needed repair,” and a preference not to drive.

Exhibit 4.5 Trip Purpose on Transit



Survey respondent demographics are summarized in the following exhibits and data specific to vehicle access, age, income, employment, languages spoken at home, and personal mobility.

Exhibit 4.6 Access to Personal Vehicle

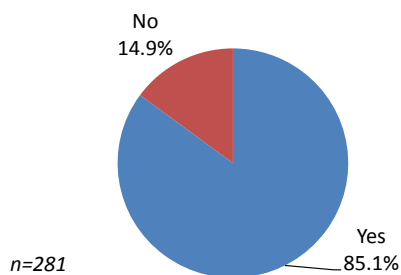


Exhibit 4.7 Age

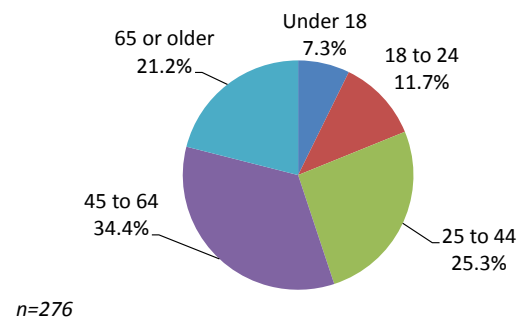


Exhibit 4.8 Annual Household Income

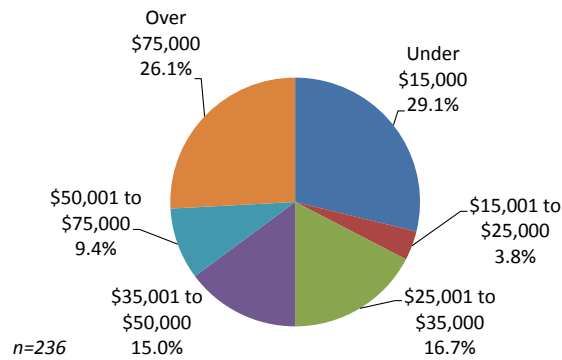


Exhibit 4.9 Employment Status

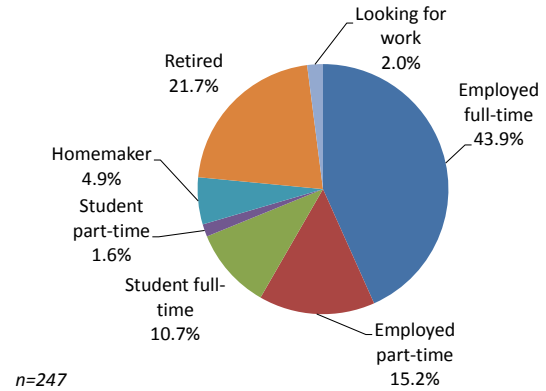


Exhibit 4.10 Languages Spoken at Home Transit

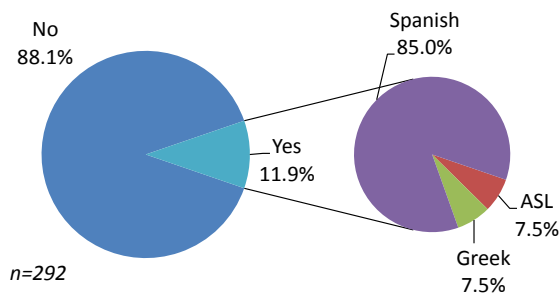
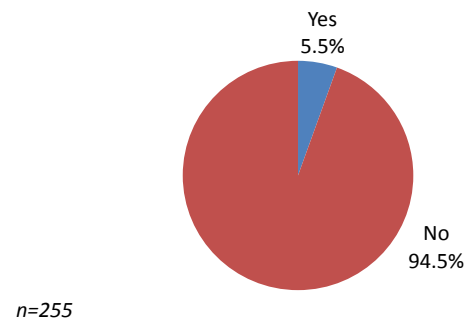


Exhibit 4.11 Require Assistance to Ride Public

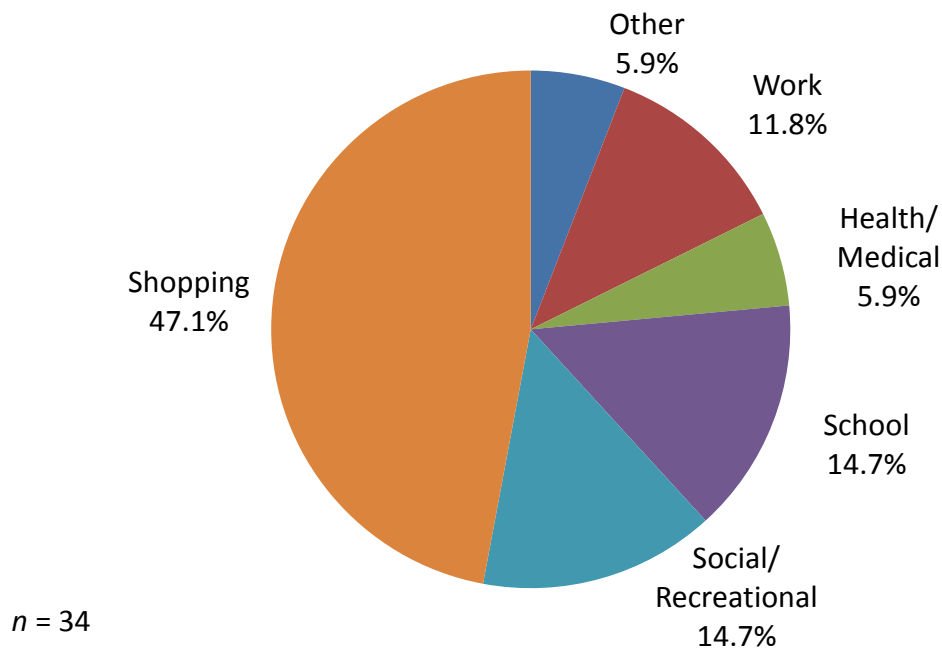


Customer Surveys

Fixed-route Onboard Survey

The most popular trip purpose among fixed-route transit riders was shopping (47.1 percent). The next most common responses were social/recreational reasons and school (14.7 percent each). This is in line with responses received by the community as a whole where shopping was also the most frequently-cited trip purpose amongst fixed-route riders.

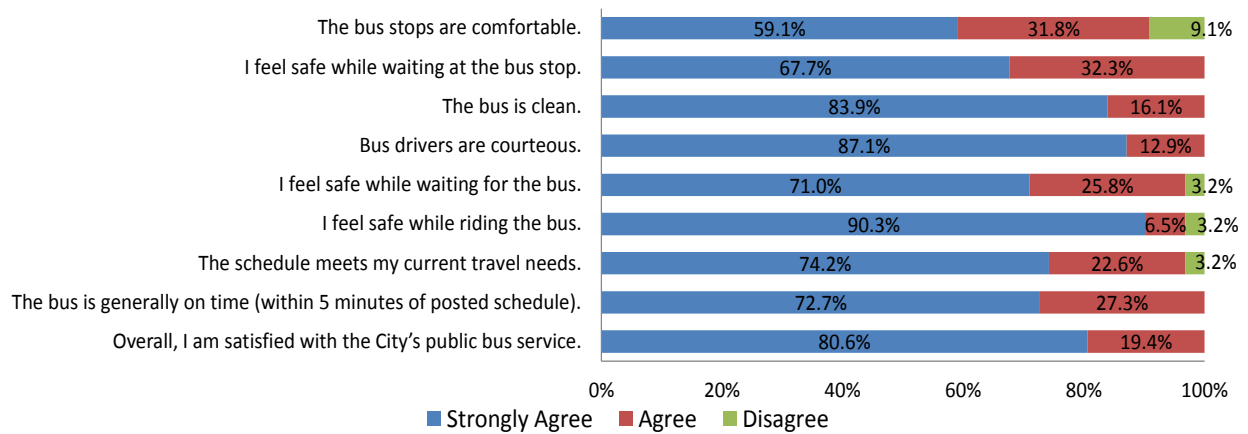
Exhibit 4.12 Trip Purpose



Persons riding onboard the fixed-route service shared their opinion as to how the service was functioning through a rating of various service characteristics. The questions were posed so that respondents would indicate whether they agreed with the evaluative statement. In each case, agreement was equivalent to satisfaction. Of note is the overall high ranking of the majority of evaluated attributes. Only three of eight categories reported anything less than "Agree," and no category revealed any strong disagreement with the rating categories. The top rated category was "feeling safe onboard the bus," where 90.3 percent strongly agreed. This indicates not only a high level of trust of the drivers, but of the service and equipment as well. This is also reflected by the 80.6 percent of respondents that strongly agreed the overall service is satisfactory to them. The service attributes which has the greatest potential for improvement is rider comfort at the bus stop. Given many of the current stops do not feature customer amenities such as benches or shelters, this presents an opportunity for the City to increase customer satisfaction by installing durable bus stop furniture and equipment.

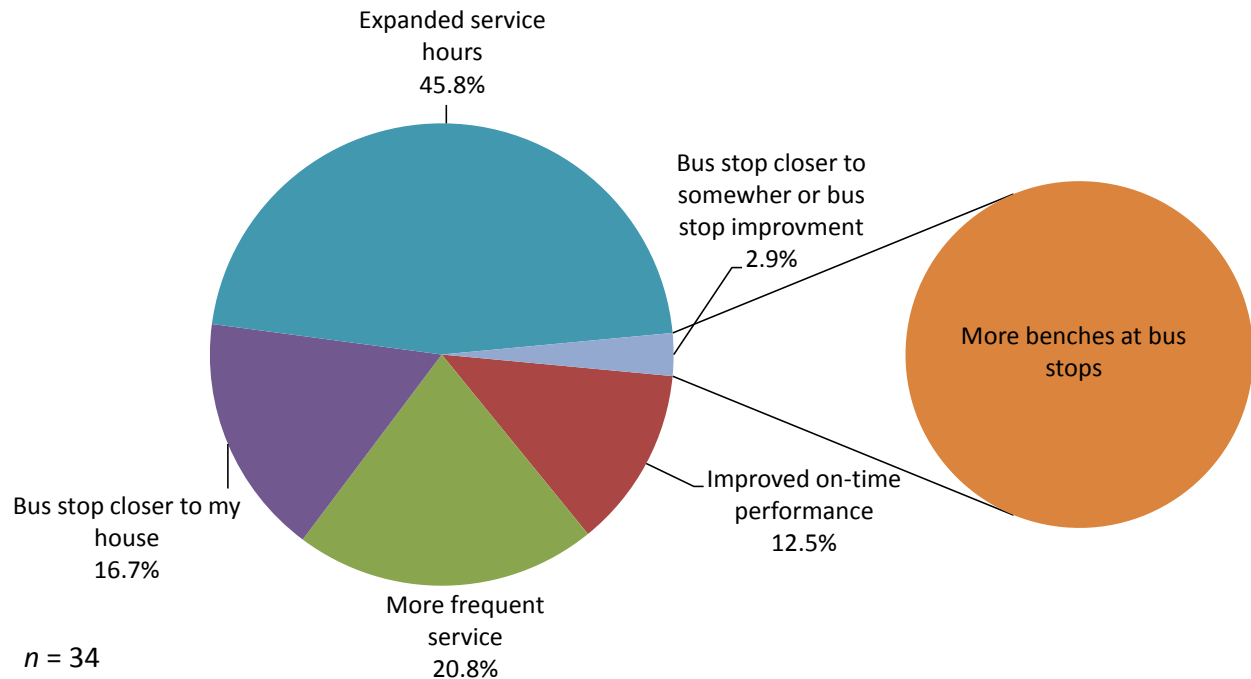
Exhibit 4.13 presents a summary table of all service attribute ratings.

Exhibit 4.13 Fixed-Route Service Ratings



When asked if any improvement might cause them to ride the City's fixed-route bus service more often, the most common response was "expanded service hours" (45.8 percent) followed by "more frequent service" (20.8 percent). Given the City's fixed-route service operates on weekdays as early as 7:15 a.m.; it is likely these respondents desire an expansion of evening hours beyond the current end time of 6:00 p.m. "Increased service frequency" was seen as the next most common improvement, with Taft routes currently operating at either 30 or 45 minute headways depending on time of day. In addition, the Taft-Maricopa route only makes three trips each day. Providing additional service frequency during peak periods, while also reducing non-peak service, could result in an overall improved service to customers without an increase in operating cost.

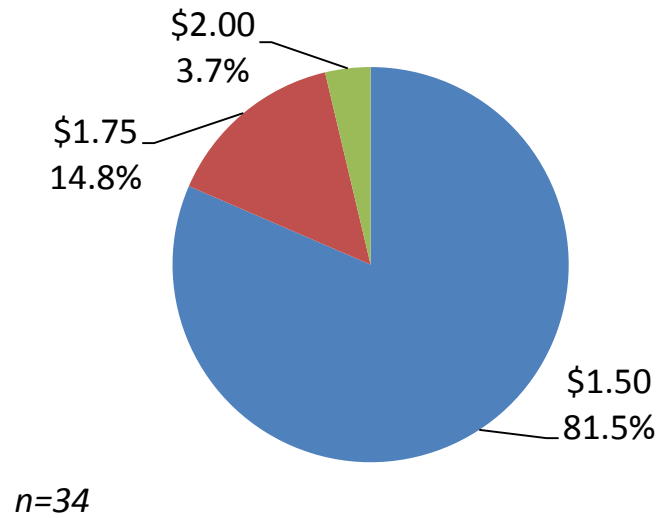
Exhibit 4.14 Preferred Service Improvement



Among existing riders, 74.2 percent indicated paying for their surveyed trip using cash, while 12.9 percent used a multi-trip pass. TAT offers a number of non-cash fare options (based on eligibility category) which offer an even better value for frequent riders. The absence of pass sales locations (currently passes are only available for purchase in-person at city hall) has hampered this program. Non-cash fare media is not only convenient for customers, but of value to the transit program as the customer is paying for all its potential trips in advance, regardless of the number of actual trips taken.

With the recent challenges to achieve the required TDA farebox recovery, the City queried customers whether they felt the fixed-route's a good value, as well as their willingness to pay an additional/higher fare. Nearly all believed the fixed-route service to be a good value (96.8 percent). This response indicates customers realize the fixed-route service is ultimately saving them money compared to other potential transportation options. When presented with options to of a higher fare, the majority of respondents indicated a willingness to support a 20-percent increase, to \$1.50 per trip (81.5 percent). An additional 14.8 percent expressed a willingness to pay up to \$1.75 per trip. Assuming the City retained its current rider/customer base, a fare increase to \$1.50 would move farebox recovery to around 6 percent.

Exhibit 4.15 Willingness to Pay Additional Fare – Fixed-Route



The following exhibits summarize the fixed-route rider survey responses.

Exhibit 4.16 Transit Usage by Day

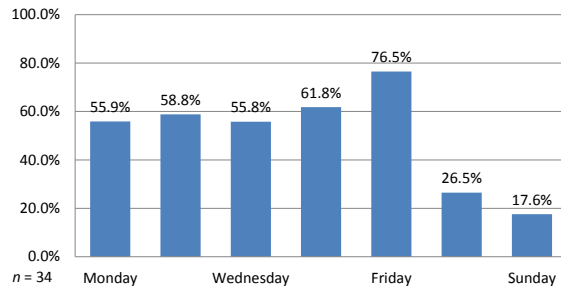


Exhibit 4.17 Employment Status

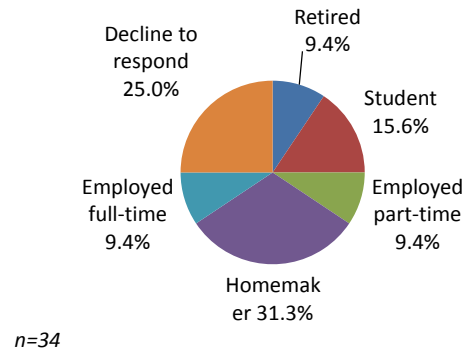


Exhibit 4.18 Annual Household Income

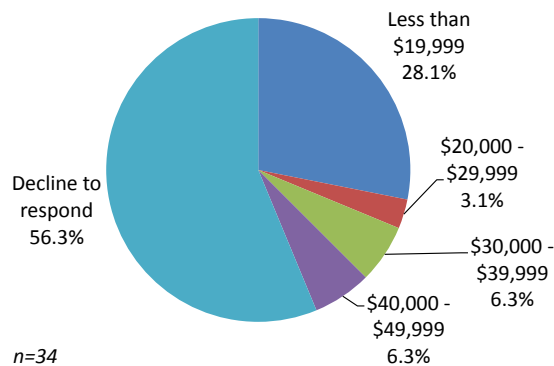


Exhibit 4.19 Community of Residence

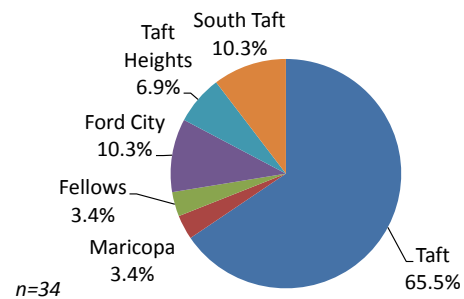


Exhibit 4.20 Respondent Gender

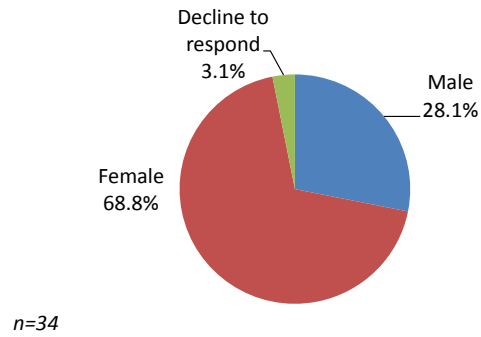
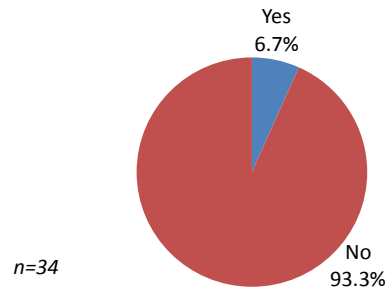


Exhibit 4.21 Access to Vehicle



Dial-A-Ride Customer Survey

Given the eligibility-based nature of the Dial-A-Ride (DAR) service, customers tend to be older and/or possess a mobility impairment which prevents them from using the traditional fixed-route service. The recent Dial-A-Ride customer survey revealed valuable insight specific to this group.

Nearly 90 percent of the survey respondents can be considered “return riders,” citing use of the service for one year or longer. More than half of the respondents have ridden for more than 2 years. This suggests a relatively high level of transit-dependency, which is further borne out by the fact that nearly 40 percent of surveyed riders make at least three round trips (via DAR) each week. Of greatest interest is the additional 30 percent of respondents who indicated “not riding every week.” From this we conclude that there is a block of current DAR riders who may not reflect the intended customer (aged and/or mobility impaired). Assuming this is correct, this presents an opportunity to shift these riders to the fixed-route service and potentially reduce the amount of DAR capacity provided (VSH), which translates to cost savings. The best way to do this is via tightened eligibility criteria.

Exhibit 4.22 Tenure

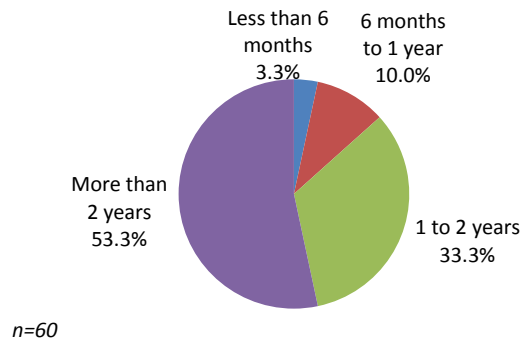


Exhibit 4.23 Frequency of Use

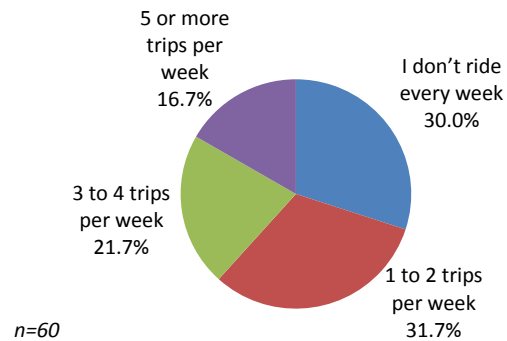


Exhibit 4.24 Frequency of Use versus Motivator

	No or limited access to a personal vehicle	Don't drive/ no longer drive	Other transportation services are too expensive (i.e., taxi)	Convenient	Don't know about other options	Prefer DAR over other options	Other
I don't ride every week	16.7%	27.8%	5.6%	22.2%	11.1%	11.1%	5.6%
1 to 2 trips per week	52.6%	36.8%	0.0%	5.3%	0.0%	5.3%	0.0%
3 to 4 trips per week	23.1%	61.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	0.0%
5 or more trips per week	60.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	10.0%
Overall	36.7%	35.0%	1.7%	8.3%	3.3%	11.7%	3.3%

The majority of Dial-A-Ride survey respondents indicate that the service is their primary means of transportation (55.9 percent), although fifty percent cited some use of fixed-route service. The most frequently-cited reason for using Dial-A-Ride was lack of or limited access to a personal vehicle (36.7 percent). This was followed by “don’t drive/no longer drive” at 35 percent. The next most frequently-cited reason was that the service is convenient (8.3 percent). Further emphasizing the transit-dependency of this group, we found that the majority of respondents would utilize the fixed-routes service (31.7 percent). Nearly 50 percent stated they would get a ride from either a friend or family

member if the DAR service was not available/no longer available. This also indicates that should the eligibility requirements of the Dial-A-Ride be tightened, it would not immediately displace existing customers, as many would be able to mode-shift onto the fixed-route service. This mode shift would likely result in lowered operating costs as well as improved performance metrics for the fixed-route service.

Exhibit 4.25 Primary Reason for Using Dial-A-Ride

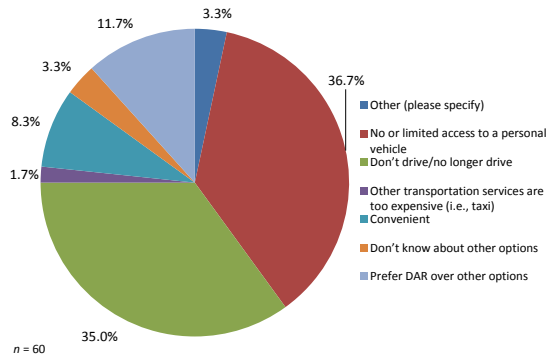
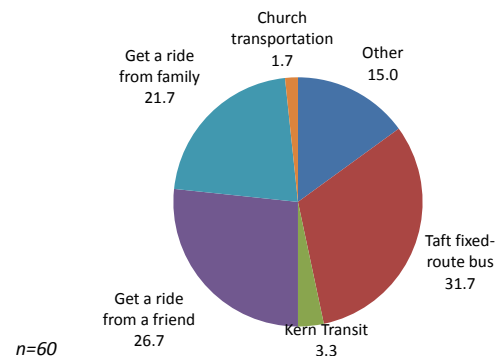
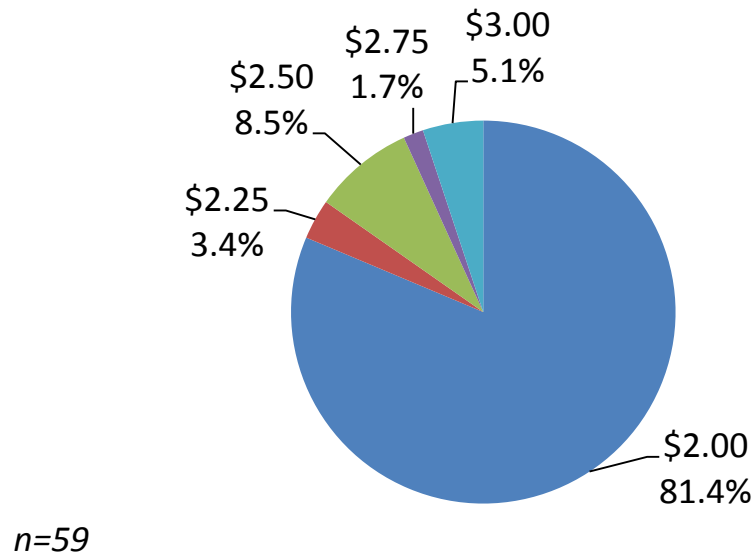


Exhibit 4.26 Travel Options Without Dial-A-Ride



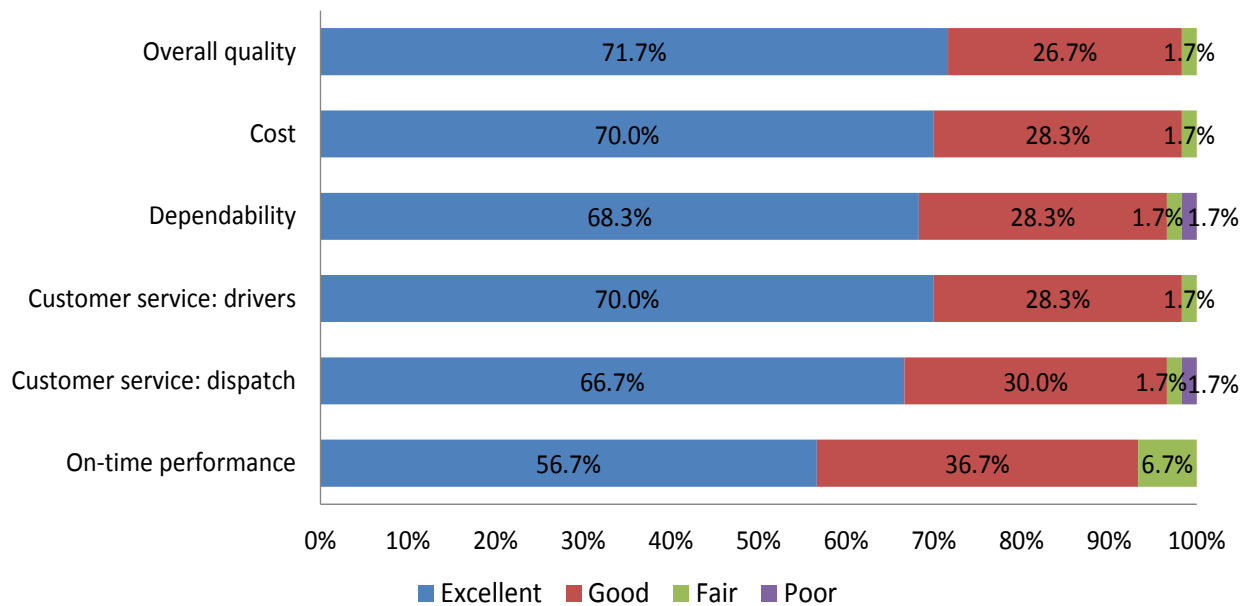
The current price of a one-way Dial-A-Ride trip is \$1.25. Further, a 12-trip pass is priced similarly to ten one-way trips (\$12.50). This highly-subsidized low fare, paired with further discounts available via multi-trip passes has impacted the City's ability to achieve the required TDA farebox recovery ratio. When asked how much they would be willing to pay for a Dial-A-Ride trip, customers responded that two dollars (an increase of 60 percent) would be acceptable, with a modest number facing as high as three dollars. We believe an increase to two dollars each way would increase farebox recovery to as high as 7 percent and shift many of the able-bodied riders to the fixed-route service, which would positively impact total program cost-effectiveness.

Exhibit 4.27 Willingness to Pay Additional Fare – Dial-A-Ride



Customers of the Dial-A-Ride were also asked to rate the service on a scale similar to the fixed-route survey. Service attributes including on-time performance and service dependability were rated as “excellent”, “good,” “fair,” or “poor.” Overall the service earned a combined 98.4 percent “excellent” or “good” rating. The category with the lowest satisfaction rating was on-time performance, although even this category realized a combined 93.4 percent “excellent or good” rating. While some categories did receive a “poor” rating (including dependability and dispatch customer service), the 1.7 percent response figure translates to a single customer. Not surprisingly “cost” is considered as either excellent (70 percent) or good (28.3 percent) by customers. When viewed overall the Dial-A-Ride is a well-liked element of the TAT program, and is perceived to be a value to customers and enjoys high customer satisfaction.

Exhibit 4.28 Dial-A-Ride Performance Ratings



Dial-A-Ride customers are generally quite satisfied with the current level of service and operating parameters. This is evidenced in Exhibit 4.29 below which concludes the most frequently-cited improvement desired is “no improvement” at 29.1 percent of respondents. Interestingly, the next most cited improvements were Saturday service (25.6 percent) and Sunday service (20.9 percent). As the Dial-A-Ride already operates on both Saturday and Sunday, we conclude this means an expansion of service hours most likely later into the afternoon/early evening. Nearly 20 percent did in fact request longer service hours, although this was not tied to a specific service day. We recommend the City approach possible weekend service expansion with caution as the number of actual riders would likely be less than a typical weekday, and 2) the impact on total operating cost would be significant (likely negating the anticipated benefit of a fare increase).

Exhibit 4.29 Preferred Improvements

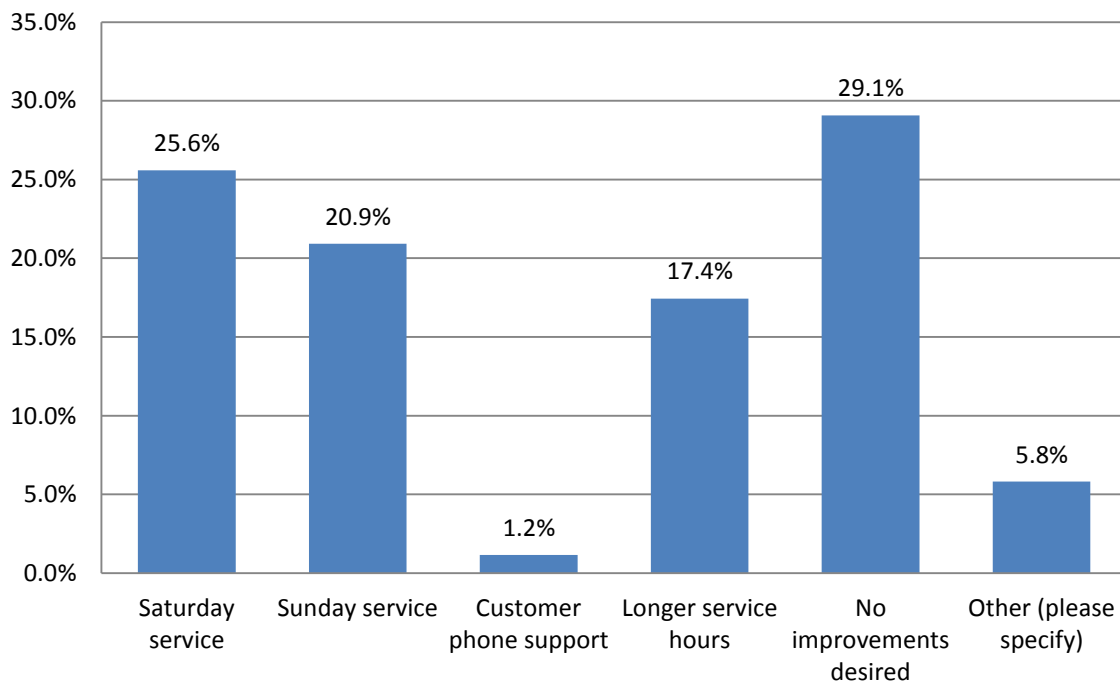


Exhibit 4.30 illustrates that the majority of respondents have a mobility impairment (55.9 percent), and 44.1 percent do not. This indicates a high number of current DAR patrons may be able-bodied enough to use the fixed-route without significant personal mobility challenges. More than 20 percent of respondents cite traveling with a companion or guest. DAR customers are allowed to travel with a non-registered companion for a fee of \$1.50. Because there are no eligibility requirements or limits for these companions (aside from needing to travel with a registered DAR customer), allowing guest trips may be having an adverse impact on the cost-effectiveness of the DAR. These customers could utilize the fixed-route service for their trip, rather than rely on the DAR. The City should take care to ensure all Personal Care Attendants are also registered as they travel free when accompanying a DAR customer.

Exhibit 4.30 Mobility Impairment

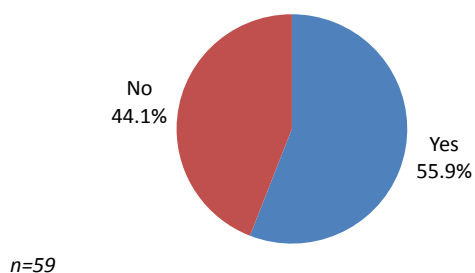
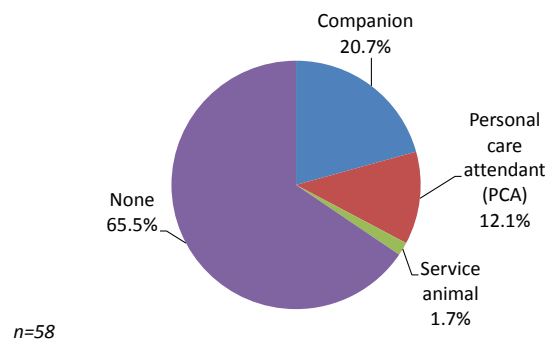


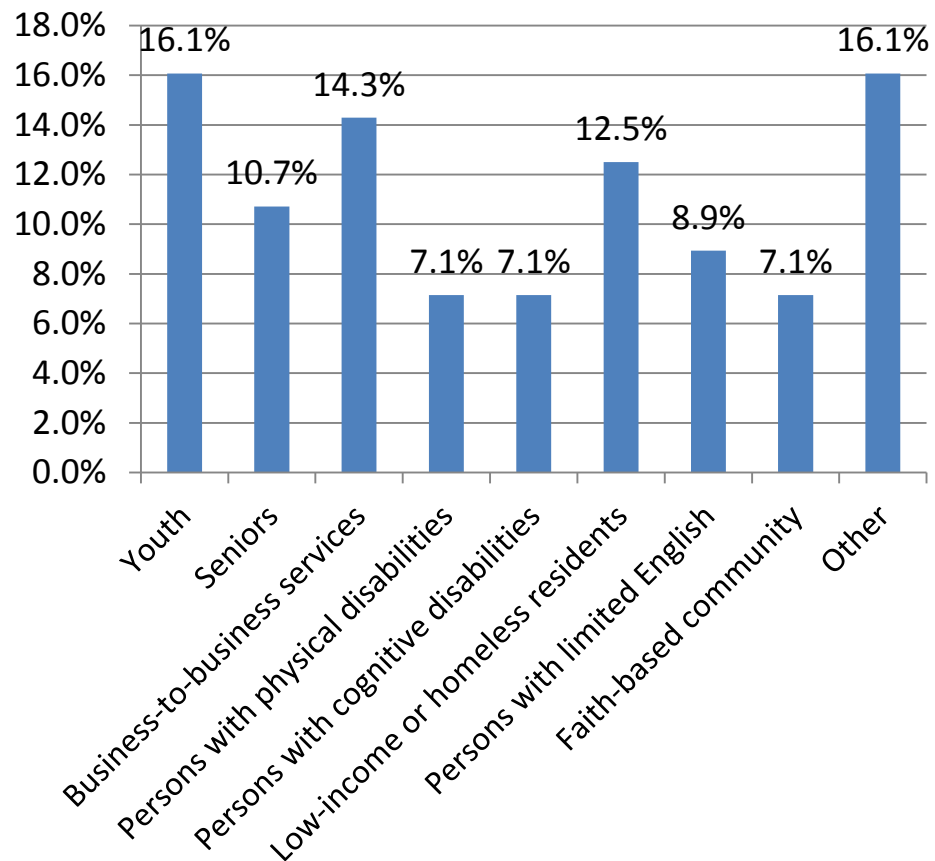
Exhibit 4.31 Travel with Personal Care Attendant



Stakeholder Survey and Small Group Workshop Discussions

The populations served by the 28 stakeholders who responded to the survey are presented in Exhibit 4.32. The “other” category includes responses from law-enforcement, agricultural/seasonal workers, and the oil/petroleum industry. Respondents were allowed to select more than one population.

Exhibit 4.32 Stakeholder Populations Served



Stakeholders were asked to share their opinions regarding the City’s public transit program. As this was an open-ended question, responses varied from “no opinion,” to “very efficient.” If a stakeholder cited an unaided awareness of the City’s transit program the perceived value was generally high.

Only one stakeholder group indicated providing regular transportation to its clientele (3.8 percent). When queried as to the most important transportation challenges in Taft, stakeholders cited a variety of issues including the condition of the streets and roads, improving access to Bakersfield, and lack of bus stop and/or transit center. Of the two challenges germane to public transit, “access to Bakersfield” is likely an awareness or education barrier (as daily inter-community service is available via Kern Transit),

while “lack of bus stops and/or transit centers” can be addressed through greater public awareness of the City’s ongoing public transit investment efforts (i.e., bus stop improvement program).

When queried regarding specific program strengths and weaknesses, stakeholders shared the following:

Strengths:

- Availability,
- Aids the disadvantaged,
- Low cost, and
- Reliability.

Weaknesses:

- Encourages spending outside of Taft,
- “Invisible” (defined as lack of service awareness),
- Not viable (for work trips), and
- Limited hours.

We believe these perceptions fall in line with responses received through the general community and transit rider surveys. Given the scope of the City’s current transit program (as well as likely future scope reflective of both demand and available funding), it is unlikely the service level will increase substantially. Further, the jobs/housing landscape within Taft and nearby communities is also likely to remain largely unchanged. Therefore, we believe the most cost-effective way to address the concerns identified through the stakeholder outreach is through increase in targeted marketing. The historic “low profile” nature of the service means many potential riders remain unaware of the service.

While many of the respondent organization’s clientele do use the current transit service to access the (17.6 percent), a large number of respondents indicated they do not (47.1 percent). Further, many simply were unaware of travel habits of their clientele (35.3 percent). This presents an opportunity for the City to market directly to these groups and increase ridership. This is underscored by responses to the question of whether or not stakeholders would be interested in promoting public transit, with 75 percent indicating a willingness to do so.

The resources needed to assist in the promotion of The City’s transit service focused primarily on the provision of service materials such as brochures and fliers. These are low-cost and effective ways for the City to increase awareness and promote existing transit services as well as potential service enhancements and/or changes.

Stakeholders were asked to share their thoughts on the most significant unmet mobility need from their clientele’s point of view. Again, responses varied given the open-ended nature of the question, although in general the respondents indicated a lack of awareness/promotion, inability to access

Bakersfield, and “no opinion.” When asked to identify the single greatest improvement which could be made regarding local transportation, respondents indicated additional marketing/promotion, enhanced connections with regional transportation, and more accessible bus stops.

The final survey question sought to identify whether or not a change in the way TAT provides service is merited. The majority of stakeholders believe the current fixed-route system is the best option for the TSI (66.7 percent), although some believe returning to a general public Dial-A-Ride service (26.7 percent) would be beneficial.

Small Group Workshop Discussions

The following is a summary of the small group discussions which were conducted in support of the TDP. The small groups were facilitated with the support of City staff, as well as through contacts made during initial outreach efforts including the community and stakeholder surveys.

Taft Focus Group 1 - 2:30 p.m. January 8, 2015

- Demand response (Dial-A-Ride) service is terrific
- Ridership not at the levels it needs to be
- One key issue is people don't know how to read the schedules
 - Schedules look confusing
 - Local illiteracy issue
 - Schedules not printed well (small font), not in color
 - Need bus schedules to be available at Taft College
- Awareness
 - Comprehension challenges amongst potential riders
 - Training and marketing on how to access the system should be expanded
 - Shelters make [the fixed-route] stand out better
- There is a bus stop at the church (Calvary Temple church stop), but it is not clearly visible
- Advantageous to have a schedule in the newspaper
- A challenge is limited funding
- Identify new funding sources and/or partners
- Easier to read signs would help the service
- Partner with the Chamber
 - Utilize local service clubs to promote services
- Kern Transit - avoid duplication of services
- Everyone at city hall is buying tickets for the bus
 - Taft Independent Living (TIL) students especially
- Bill Norris (Taft College Bookstore) - gets asked for bus tickets daily
 - Opportunity to expand pass sales
- Albertsons and Kmart are key trip generators as well as Save-A-Lot
- A challenge for local TIL students is accessing the Bakersfield train station

Taft Focus Group 2 - 5:30 p.m., January 8, 2015

- Taft Independent Living (TIL) - public transit is an important aspect of the training program
 - TIL students are not from Kern County
 - Many have not taken public transit from their home communities
 - TIL teaches them how to use TAT
- TIL teaches them how to use the Dial-A-Ride
 - Training plans are developed from scratch
- Trip generators
 - Shopping destination include Kmart, Dollar Tree, Save-A-Lot, Chevron Valley Credit Union, and Albertsons,
 - The Taft Recreation Center is also popular
 - Many ride the fixed-route to work
 - Taft movie theatre is also a popular destination
- Better access to TAT passes is desired.
 - The City used to sell tickets to TIL, an expansion of pass sales would be great (locations such as Albertsons, College book store, etc.)
- Expand the time of operation into the evening
 - Particularly during the summer
- Adjustments to fare prices would be acceptable
 - Tickets are currently fairly priced
 - \$15 for 12 trips would be acceptable

Taft Unmet Transit Needs Hearing – TDA Article 8 Public Hearing

The “unmet transit needs” hearing was opened at approximately 9:30 a.m. and there were a few general public comments made during the hearing. One attendee stated a potential unmet need would be using TAT as a transportation option to and from local urgent care. Another attendee stated he believed an unmet need is the lack of a monthly pass option for local and regional travel. The last speaker stated an unmet need is the lack of decipherable system maps/schedules as well as the need to maintain quality of the provided information. Following receipt of public comment the hearing was closed, and a brief presentation regarding the City’s Transit Development Plan was provided followed by general discussion. The discussion is summarized below:

- The TSI has a large Oaxacan community and their input is valuable to improving the services available.
- A regional pass system would help transportation and increase mobility
 - Bob Snoddy, Kern COG, indicated a study had been conducted in recent years, though it concluded the Kern municipalities preferred to maintain independent control of funding sources and that a regional pass program would not be likely in the near future.
- A general consensus was reached regarding the need to increase awareness of service parameters (such as hours of availability, days of operations, bus stop locations, etc.).
 - Partnering with local organizations and businesses to promote the City’s transit program was seen as a welcome strategy.

- Service recommendations are being developed to be objective while remaining tailored for the local community.
- A number of possible service options will be presented, and will include funding/implementation tactics.
- The City of Taft is moving forward with the development of a new transit center adjacent to the Oil Workers Monument on Supply Row.
 - The facility will include bus staging space for up to three vehicles and a public restroom.
 - The Center will also have space for day-to-day operations including dispatch and (overnight) vehicle storage.
 - Vehicle maintenance will also be conducted at the site, as well as bus washing.
 - An adjacent park and ride lot will be constructed to support inter-community transit travel.

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5

SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

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Preface

The City of Taft finds itself in an enviable position with respect to the provided public transportation services. Customers are extremely satisfied with the service as a whole and recent population growth has spurred additional opportunities to increase transit use. These factors have led the City to seek options for sustainable operation and enhancement of its transit program, Taft Area Transit (TAT). The following section presents proposed recommendations grouped as three primary categories:

1. Administrative,
2. Operational, and
3. Capital.

The recommendations have been developed in an “a la carte” fashion, designed to provide the City maximum flexibility in implementation while still providing a guided path towards said implementation.

Administrative Recommendations

These recommendations are intended to optimize available resources and provide the public with the most attractive transit program possible. Improvements made to administrative functions pertaining to TAT will lead to increased program efficiency and ultimately reduced operating expenses. Some of the recommendations are adjustments to existing program policies (both internal and public).

1. Develop a Taft Area Transit ticket/pass sales program.

What: Utilizing the 2014 Community Outreach Program as a foundation, expand the overall TAT marketing budget for the next two or three fiscal years to allow for targeted marketing and awareness campaigns.

Rationale: Lack of public awareness of TAT services has negatively impacted ridership and farebox recovery. Increased and targeted marketing would capitalize on the community awareness of TAT transit and likely translate to increased demand and ridership.

2. Revise existing Dial-A-Ride eligibility criteria.

What: Reducing the total population eligible for Dial-A-Ride service would allow it to focus on those riders who truly need the service (e.g., unable to utilize the City’s fixed-route service). The proposed policy adjustment would require raising the age of eligibility to 65 or older (or possibly eliminating aged-based eligibility altogether). This change in policy would also be tied to targeted outreach to area healthcare facilities to support understanding of the Dial-A-Ride program and its target customers.

Rationale: Many existing Dial-A-Ride customers have the ability to utilize the fixed-route for some or all of their transit trips, though many continue to use the more costly Dial-A-Ride service. Mode shifting these customers onto the fixed-route would lower demand for Dial-A-Ride service potentially eliminating the need to operate two DAR vehicles each service day.

3. [Revise Dial-A-Ride use eligibility to 12-months \(versus current 36-month\)](#)

What: Modify current Dial-A-Ride policy to include a 12-month eligibility limit.

Rationale: Minimize the potential for temporarily eligible customers using the service beyond their intended eligibility. Improved customer database. Potentially reduced number of trips scheduled on Dial-A-Ride which may have been made on the fixed-route, reducing operating cost (fuel/wear and tear) and increasing farebox on the fixed-route.

4. [Implement all Title VI strategies.](#)

What: In 2014 the City of Taft adopted an enhanced Title VI Program. Some strategies from the program have yet to be implemented.

Rationale: Ensuring compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations will ensure the City continues to receive transit funding without delay. The approved program's recommendations and strategies will also help the City provide information to populations with limited-English and literacy challenges.

5. [Evaluate cost-benefit of transitioning to private operations contractor.](#)

What: Transition from City-employed staff to a private operations contractor to operate and maintain TAT program. All capital (vehicles, facilities, equipment, etc.) would remain City property.

Rationale: Contractor-operated transit programs have proven time and again to reduce annual operating costs while maintaining a high level of service for customers. Operating parameters would remain in City control while the anticipated reduction in operating costs would improve TAT performance metrics.

[Operational Recommendations](#)

These recommendations focus primarily on improving day-to-day operations of the TAT program as well as presenting possible modifications to service delivery. The recommendations range from adjustments to route alignments and schedules, to adjustments in fares, to comprehensive modifications to the way service is delivered throughout the region. As with the Administrative recommendations, the following are not presented in hierarchical order.

1. [Expand marketing budget and level of activity.](#)

What: The TAT budget for advertising and printing was \$5,000 in FY 2012. A transit program in Santa Barbara County with similar service parameters has a budget of approximately \$30,000 annually. We recommend the City of Taft increase the transit marketing budget to at least \$25,000 annually.

Rationale: Lack of awareness or confusion regarding existing services has impacted TAT's ability to attract additional ridership. Respondents to community surveys continue to cite limited awareness of the service, with many indicating not knowing how to use it.

2. **Adjust fares for fixed-route and Dial-A-Ride services.**

What: The City's public transit program has been operating with the same fare structure since the transition to a dual-mode system in 2009. Fares collected have not kept pace with inflation and ridership fluctuations have also resulted in decreased performance (i.e., lower than anticipated farebox recovery).

Rationale: Fares should be adjusted so as to increase the "price attractiveness" of the fixed-route service when compared to the less cost-effective DAR.

3. **Revise the Transit MOU with Maricopa.**

What: The funding MOU between the City of Taft and the City of Maricopa expired in 2012. At the time of the MOU the TAT Operating Cost/Vehicle Service Hour was \$70.76. Currently the Taft-Maricopa route accounts for 18.1 percent of fixed-route ridership and fares translate to \$3,600.

Rationale: We do not believe the City of Taft should subsidize the Taft-Maricopa route. The service was to be fully funded via farebox collections and subsidies from the City of Maricopa. If this route is currently being subsidized by the City of Taft its elimination should be considered.

4. **Focus fixed-route service on peak hours.**

What: Adjust the current fixed-route schedule to eliminate midday service (9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) on both routes. No change to Taft-Maricopa schedule.

Rationale: Eliminating the midday service will result in an overall vehicle service hours operated while not significantly impacting current riders. The proposed reduction translates to 10 Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)/day. Historically, midday (fixed-route) ridership has been very modest. The proposed reduction is likely to cause an increase in demand for DAR service during midday hours. However, in order to enjoy the full benefit of this recommendation, the City would (also) need to cap its DAR operation at no more than two vehicles.

5. **Implement fixed-route during peak hours and general public Dial-A-Ride service during midday hours (Flex service).**

What: Eliminating fixed-route service during the midday and focusing on a general public Dial-A-Ride allows for an opportunity to reduce total VSH's.

Rationale: Current ridership demand requires two Dial-A-Ride vehicles during all day-parts. Eliminating fixed-route during the midday would eliminate at least one vehicle from midday service.

6. **Replace weekend fixed-route service with general public Dial-A-Ride.**

What: Historic daily weekend ridership on the fixed-route service is significantly lower than weekday ridership. Replacing the fixed-route service on the weekend with a general public Dial-A-Ride would allow for the use of smaller more efficient vehicles throughout the service day.

Rationale: Customers on the weekend typically seek different destinations than they do during the week (i.e., discretionary trips versus work or school). On weekends the fixed-route operates on a 60-minute headway which does not provide an attractive travel option compared to the reservation-based Dial-A-Ride service. Transitioning to a general public Dial-A-Ride service on weekends would result in a reduction in overall program cost.

7. Enhance connectivity with Kern Transit.

What: Adjust TAT fixed-route schedules to more closely align with Kern Transit' Taft schedule.

Rationale: TAT riders as well as potential riders desire more opportunities to travel throughout the region, particularly to Bakersfield. Currently the only public transit option is via Kern Transit. Rather than implementing an inter-city service, leveraging the connectivity options between TAT and Kern Transit is the most cost-effective solution. A further step would be joint fare and/or transfer policies between the two operators.

8. Introduce service to Tejon Ranch during weekdays on a trial basis.

What: Temporary demonstration project (3 to 6 month) to provide a fixed-route link to the employment and shopping resources at Tejon Ranch. Would be operated similar to the Taft-Maricopa route with limited frequency during the day and potentially on the weekend.

Rationale: The Tejon Ranch complex is home to many large employers in southern Kern County. Many persons travel from locations even farther away than Taft to access the jobs and shopping. Crafted as a demonstration project, grant funding could be secured to cover initial set-up and operating costs. Premium fares could be adopted to achieve a farebox recovery of not less than 25-percent. Providing access to Tejon Ranch may also be achieved through the coordination of ride-sharing programs including car/vanpool programs. In addition, these ride-share groups could ultimately utilize the planned Park and Ride facilities near downtown Taft to facilitate the shared rides. Working with Tejon Ranch employers, the City could lead a ridesharing program aimed at reducing the cost of commuting for residents, while also improving safety standards. Ridesharing statistics could be readily monitored and the City could collect the "credit" of said ridesharing. The reduction of trips would aid in future grant applications while reducing congestion throughout the city and improving air quality.

Capital Recommendations

The following recommendations focus on the fixed-route service, although they would also benefit the Dial-A-Ride service.

1. **Develop and implement a Bus Stop Improvement Program (BSIP).**

What: A program designed at funding, procuring, and installing customer amenities at bus stops throughout the TAT service area.

Rationale: Many survey respondents indicated difficulty in identifying bus stop locations despite current signage. Additional amenities could help identify such locations, as well as increase customer comfort and satisfaction. Increasing bus stop amenities is likely to increase both ridership and revenue. Capital funding can be obtained through numerous sources, and these projects would not directly impact farebox recovery as capital costs do not factor into said calculation.

2. **Optimize value of recently constructed “transit center.”**

What: In the last couple of years, the City constructed a “transit center” at 5th and Center. The facility was intended to serve both TAT and Kern Transit, and included rest rooms for transit drivers. Unfortunately, the intended value of the facility has never been realized.

Rationale: In recent months, access to the facility has been limited (either through bollards and or street construction) impacting traffic flow, rendering the facility to be of little value as a transit asset. We recommend the City either “rededicate” this facility to its intended purpose, or identify a practical alternative, as need for such a facility remains.

3. **Construct a purpose-built transit center/dispatch/storage facility.**

What: Construction of a new transit facility located on Supply Row will result in a new, centrally located “one-stop shop” for all TAT transit operations, maintenance, and storage. An adjacent Park and Ride lot will also be constructed.

Rationale: Consolidation of transit operations to a centrally located facility will simplify customer interaction and travel. Day-to-day functions could be conducted out of the facility including pass sales, customer service, and transfers/connections to regional travel options such as Kern Transit.

Benefit: Potentially reduced maintenance and repair costs. Simplified connections to regional travel resulting in increased ridership. Helps facilitate ride-sharing programs by providing adequate vehicle parking. Improved customer services, distribution of information, pass sales location and accessibility to all TAT services.

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6

PREFERRED SERVICE PLAN

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Overview

This chapter provides the City of Taft with a clearly defined service enhancement scenario including impacts to ridership, farebox recovery, and other administrative, operational, and capital elements. The Preferred Service Plan was developed based on feedback from the Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG), and City of Taft, as well as professional judgement. The following elements from the Service Recommendations chapter have been deemed to be of greatest value to the City and its public transit program:

Administrative:

- Develop a Taft Area Transit ticket/pass sales program.
- Implement all Title VI strategies.

Operational:

- Adjust fares for fixed-route and Dial-A-Ride services
- Replace weekend fixed-route service with general public Dial-A-Ride.
- Promote connectivity with Kern Transit.
- Increase marketing budget and level of activity

Capital:

- Develop and implement a Bus Stop Improvement Program (BSIP).
- Construct a dedicated transit center/dispatch/storage facility.

While not specifically included within the Preferred Service Plan, we recommend the City consider the potential benefits of adopting a contracted operations approach. This alternative would likely yield substantial program cost-savings. The City could also include an “offer of hire” of current staff as a prerequisite.

The forecast impacts to the TAT program are summarized in Exhibit 6.1 below.

Exhibit 6.1 Projected Impacts

Administrative Recommendations	Estimated Impact	
	Current	Proposed
Develop a Taft Area Transit ticket/pass sales program	\$0	\$8,875
Implement all Title VI strategies	\$0	\$3,000
Operational Recommendations	Estimated Impact	
	Current	Proposed
Adjust fares for fixed-route and Dial-A-Ride services	\$0	-\$4,500
Replace weekend fixed-route service with general public Dial-A-Ride	\$0	-\$53,000
Promote connectivity with Kern Transit	\$0	\$0
Increase marketing budget	\$500	\$19,400
Capital Recommendations	Estimated Impact	
	Current	Proposed
Develop and implement a Bus Stop Improvement Program (BSIP)	\$0	\$3,600
Construct a dedicated transit center/dispatch/storage facility	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000

The proposed adjustments to the City’s public transit program involve re-alignment of Routes 1 and 2 to maximize connections with Kern Transit, while still providing timely peak-period service to local trip destinations. At a minimum, two stop locations (one for each route) should be timed so as to provide easy connections with Kern Transit: Taft College (Route 1) and Taft City Hall (Route 2). The majority of ridership onboard Kern Transit is likely to flow from Taft to Bakersfield during a.m. hours. Therefore TAT fixed-routes should arrive before the Kern Transit bus in the morning, and timed to arrive shortly after the Kern Transit bus in the afternoon/early evening. In addition, the Taft-Maricopa route should also be timed to connect with Kern Transit in the morning, and again in the early afternoon.

Fare Adjustment

With the City currently at risk of reduced funding for its public transit program, an adjustment in the fare structure is warranted. Fare increases are proposed for all modes (i.e., fixed-route, Dial-A-Ride, and Taft-Maricopa). We recommend these be implemented using a phased approach across the next two to three years to reduce the possible negative impact to customers. The fixed-route one-way fare would increase to \$1.50 across the next three years, and the Dial-A-Ride would increase to \$2.00 a trip. The transition to general public Dial-A-Ride on weekends would include a premium fare for the general public to \$3.50 a trip by FY 2018.

We recommend eliminating the “free” children fare option (and instituting a 25-cent fare), similar to other transit services in Kern County, (e.g., Shafter and Wasco). In addition, the multi-trip passes on Dial-A-Ride should be revised so as to focus on the “convenience factor” (i.e., eliminate free-trips). Free trips on multi-passes should remain on the fixed-route to provide further incentive for riding. Multi-trip passes on the Dial-A-Ride will require proof of rider eligibility, and would not be available for the general public during weekends. This recommendation also eliminates the “guest” option onboard the Dial-A-Ride, refocusing the service for those incapable of using the fixed-route service during the week, and charging guests the premium fare on weekends. Exhibit 6.2 presents the current and proposed fare structures.

Exhibit 6.2 Current and Proposed Fare Structure

	Taft		Taft		Taft		Taft	
	Current		FY 2016		FY 2017		FY 2018	
	Fixed-route	Dial-A-Ride	Fixed-route	Dial-A-Ride	Fixed-route	Dial-A-Ride	Fixed-route	Dial-A-Ride
Adult	\$1.00	\$1.50	\$1.25	\$3.00 (Weekend only)	\$1.50	\$3.25 (Weekend only)	\$1.50	\$3.50 (Weekend only)
Senior	\$0.75	\$1.25	\$0.85	\$1.50	\$1.00	\$1.75	\$1.00	\$2.00
ADA	\$0.75	\$1.25	\$0.85	\$1.50	\$1.00	\$1.75	\$1.00	\$2.00
Youth	\$0.75	N/A	\$1.00	N/A	\$1.00	N/A	\$1.00	N/A
Child	Free	Free	\$0.25	\$0.25	\$0.25	\$0.25	\$0.25	\$0.25
12-trip pass	\$10.00	\$12.50	\$12.50	---	\$15.00	---	\$15.00	---
10-trip pass	---	---	---	\$15.00	---	\$17.50	---	\$20.00

Fare Elasticity

It is not uncommon for a transit operator to experience some ridership loss during the first year a fare increase is implemented. This negative impact can be calculated by the fare elasticity formula which attributes a 0.4 percent decrease in ridership for every one percent increase in fare. This is applicable to fare decreases as well, resulting in a potential increase in ridership¹.

The proposed fare structure translates to an initial increase of 25 percent on the fixed-route and 20 percent on the Dial-A-Ride (base fares), would likely result in a ridership decrease of 10 and five percent respectively. We projected the proposed fare modifications supported by increased marketing, would yield a greater increase in ridership (projected at 5 percent) on the fixed-route service, resulting in a net increase in fare revenue. Absent any other change in operations, increasing fares is anticipated to improve the farebox recovery by nearly a full percentage point. When paired with the other recommended Preferred Service Plan the City would be on its way towards achieving the required farebox recovery ratio. Absent further reductions in operating costs (either through reduced revenue hours or reduced staff costs) the City is likely to continue to face farebox recovery shortfalls.

Weekend Service

Currently the City's fixed-route transit provides 24 hours of revenue service each Saturday and Sunday, translating to a total of 48 hours each weekend. Ridership during the weekend accounts for only a modest portion of fixed-route ridership, well below sustainable levels for a non-urbanized transit program. Expansion of weekend hours and service was initially possible due to increased federal funding (specifically the Job Access-Reverse Commute and New Freedom programs). While the availability of these funds initially helped to offset the cost, the absence of anticipated ridership and decreased operating efficiencies have impacted the value of the grant funding.

The proposed shift to general-public demand-response during weekends only (limited to not more than two revenue vehicles each weekend day) would reduce the weekend operating cost by nearly one-third (approximately \$53,000 annually) while still providing service coverage. Premium fare pricing would be required for the general public, which could also serve to improve farebox recovery.

Bus Stop Improvement Program (BSIP)

A successful Bus Stop Improvement Program (BSIP) is inclusive of not only a prioritized list for installing bus stop amenities, but should also factor in the design of stop equipment, signage, and information to be displayed to customers:

¹ McCollom, Brian E. and Richard H. Pratt. Transportation Research Board. TCRP Report 95 Transit Pricing and Fares, "Chapter 12, Traveler Response to Transportation System Changes." (Washington D.C., 2004)

Design Standards

The City of Taft would apply existing City design standards for basic equipment to all TAT capital. Recent branding enhancements should be incorporated throughout all elements of the BSIP. Best practices for bus stop design should also be adhered to, including minimum font sizes and color considerations (for the visually impaired), and optimum display heights. These standards should be tied to all TAT marketing and branding to convey a consistent image.

Amenities Catalog

This catalog would include a listing of current amenities available, by type, and location, as well as a brief description of each. In addition, the catalog would present recommendations for installation based on quantifiable factors (e.g., ridership, stop activity). Items detailed within the catalog would include at a minimum:

- Bus stop signs,
- Info-posts,
- Benches,
- Shelters,
- Trash receptacles,
- Lighting (solar or other), and
- Display kiosks.

Existing conditions and recommendations

A successful BSIP would not only inventory current amenities, but also present a phased plan for future stop enhancement. The existing conditions narrative would discuss equipment age, condition and safety, ADA accessibility, proximity to trip generators, and historic activity (level of use). Through this assessment, a hierarchy of stops and improvements can be developed which will guide the City in future procurement and installations.

The development of a BSIP for the TAT program is estimated to cost \$5,000.

Dedicated Facility

The City of Taft has been awarded funding to begin the development of a dedicated transit facility on Supply Row adjacent the Oil Workers Monument near downtown Taft. This facility will house all TAT day-to-day functions, including dispatching, driver breaks, meetings, and customer service. In addition, the site of this new facility will also include maintenance facilities and equipment, bus washing capabilities, and secured overnight storage for the vehicles. The site will feature three spaces for vehicles to load passengers, allowing for both TAT fixed-routes and a Kern Transit bus to access the facility simultaneously, facilitating transfers between routes and services.

Customer amenities planned include restrooms, customer service and information, opportunities for retail (food and/or other sales – dependent on vendors), and a covered patio area. Implementation of a pass sales program would also allow customers to purchase TAT passes, and could possibly be extended to include Kern Transit fare media as well.

Being developed concurrently with this facility will be a 42-space park and ride lot adjacent to the transit facility. This lot will allow customers interested in not only regional trips to Bakersfield, but potentially those interested in using TAT to access areas where parking is either limited or difficult to access (Taft College). It would also provide space for those interested in ride-sharing to leave their personal vehicles as they rideshare to their destination.

These facilities combined are estimated to cost a combined \$1.4 million. The projects were submitted separately through different funding sources, with the transit facility being awarded \$1 million in PTMISEA funds, and the park and ride lot \$400,000 in CMAQ funding. Though not finalized, the project schedule aims to complete construction by the end of calendar year 2016. For planning purposes, impacts to TAT operations are estimated to begin in FY 2017.

Overview of Current and Potential Funding Sources

Currently the Taft Area Transit program is funded through a combination of various sources (federal, state, and local). Below is a summary of potential funding sources to support the operation of the City's transit program. Additional sources of funding may become available within the horizon of this study.

Federal

There are a number of available federal funding programs for which the City could apply which are regulated under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). MAP-21 is set to eclipse on May 31, 2015. It is anticipated that the funding measure will either be replaced with a new multi-year bill, or be granted a short-term extension. An extension of MAP-21 would not significantly impact the federal funding outlook for the City of Taft. It is difficult to anticipate the nature of a new funding bill, though a few key elements can be reasonably anticipated, such as the program being a compilation of primarily formula-based grants with established eligibility and disbursement parameters. Federal funding is often accompanied by local match requirements which must be made with funds other than federal such as state or local dollars, or services in kind.

FTA Section 5311

These funds are apportioned to the state on a formula basis, providing funding to support the administrative, operating, and capital costs of public transit services in urbanized areas. The direct recipient for these funds is the Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG), which has the primary responsibility to provide for the fair and equitable distribution of funds to qualified applicants by developing and submitting applications under the Calls for Projects process.

Sections 5316 and 5317 (JARC and New Freedom)

The City of Taft received significant grant funding to expand its transit program in 2009. This funding was provided primarily through the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom grants program. These programs have subsequently been absorbed into the Section 5311 program, with similar/eligible projects receiving funding from the 5311 “pot.”

Federal (Capital)

Given the strict requirements for application for, draw down of, and reporting of federal transit dollars, as well as the numerous other state and local options available, we do not recommend the City seek direct federal funding for capital projects at this time.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds are disbursed to “non-attainment” areas where levels of certain pollution and particulate matter exceed federal standards. Non-attainment status is determined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). CMAQ funds aim to help non-attainment areas meet federal air quality standards by helping to finance transportation projects that reduce air pollution. Collectively, Kern County (via Kern COG) receives \$9.9 million in funding annually for CMAQ-eligible projects.

State

The California Transportation Development Act (TDA) is comprised of two primary funding sources: Local Transportation fund (LTF) and State Transit Assistance (STA) fund. Future STA funding is not anticipated throughout the horizon of this Transit Development Plan.

TDA

TDA funds are collected by the state through a one-quarter-cent sales tax and a state-wide sales tax on diesel fuel, and distributed within each jurisdiction through a formula-based on total population. TDA funds are flexible and are used for both the operation of public transit throughout Kern County as well as for the required federal match for capital expenditures. Through an annual call for projects, these funds are managed and disbursed by Kern COG and have regular reporting and performance monitoring requirements. In addition, TDA funds are tied to farebox recovery ratios. As a non-urbanized transit operator, the City of Taft is required to meet a (minimum) ten-percent ratio.

Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP)

This program has a primary goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions through a variety of means. This program is funded through auction proceeds from the California Air Resource Board's cap-and-trade program. \$25 million is available statewide for FY 2015, with five percent continuously apportioned annually beginning in FY 2016.

PTMISEA

The PTMISEA program is managed locally by the Kern COG, and provides funding for capital projects requested by qualifying transit providers. Funding availability is contingent upon state bond sales. The PTMISEA program awarded the City of Taft \$1 million for the design and construction of a new transit facility. The final appropriation of program funds was made in FY 2015. Another Call for Projects funding opportunity may become available in FY 2016.

Local

Local funding is comprised of a various local funding pools, primarily the fare revenues collected from the City's public transit program, sales of surplus vehicles/equipment, and interest income. No additional local funding sources are proposed or anticipated throughout the horizon of this plan.

Public-Private-Partnerships

As the name indicates, this funding source is dependent upon the creation of partnerships with (historically) local organizations and businesses. The scale of the cooperatives varies based on the desired outcome. One such example could be the recommended pass sales program, where local businesses and organizations benefit from the additional "traffic" of Taft Area Transit customers. For its part, the City would receive customer fares "upfront." Potential partnerships may also extend to simple agreements with local businesses, schools, and organizations to distribute information such as service brochures, or forward electronic notices and advertisements to their clients/customers.

Capital Plan

The Preferred Scenario presented earlier in this chapter focuses primarily on operational and administrative enhancements to increase transit service efficiency. No expansions specific to revenue vehicle requirements are anticipated. Capital costs are limited primarily to infrastructure upgrade and expansion costs.

The following assumptions were made in the development of the Capital Plan:

- Costs in future years are increased by an annual rate of inflation of 2.5 percent from FY 2015 dollars.
- Additional bus stop signs in FY 2016 include installation of two signs at each existing stop.
- Bus stop equipment (for eventual replacement) is budgeted in all years.
- Cutaway vehicles are replaced as they reach the end of their useful life.
- Modified vans in the City's transit fleet have already met their useful life (by age), and are budgeted for phased replacement beginning in FY 2016.
- Future transit facilities are fully funded and complete by the end of FY 2017.

Exhibit 6.3 Capital Plan

	FY 2016			FY 2017			FY 2018			FY 2019			FY 2020		
	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total Cost	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total Cost	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total Cost	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total Cost	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total Cost
Fleet															
17-ft Modified Van	2	\$47,278	\$94,556	3	\$48,460	\$145,380		\$49,672	\$0		\$50,913	\$0		\$52,186	\$0
22-ft Gasoline Cutaway		\$68,291	\$0		\$69,998	\$0	3	\$71,748	\$215,244		\$73,542	\$0		\$75,380	\$0
Subtotal	2		\$94,556	3		\$145,380	3		\$215,244	0		\$0	0		\$0
Bus Stops															
Bus stop signs	40	\$79	\$3,152		\$81	\$0		\$83	\$0		\$85	\$0		\$87	\$0
Info-posts	2	\$158	\$315	2	\$162	\$323	2	\$166	\$331	2	\$170	\$339	2	\$174	\$348
Simme seat	1	\$1,051	\$1,051	1	\$1,077	\$1,077	1	\$1,104	\$1,104	1	\$1,131	\$1,131	1	\$1,160	\$1,160
Benches	1	\$3,152	\$3,152	1	\$3,231	\$3,231	1	\$3,311	\$3,311	1	\$3,394	\$3,394	1	\$3,479	\$3,479
Bus shelters	1	\$15,759	\$15,759	1	\$16,153	\$16,153	1	\$16,557	\$16,557	1	\$16,971	\$16,971	1	\$17,395	\$17,395
Subtotal	45		\$23,429	5	\$20,703	\$20,784	5		\$21,304	5		\$21,836	5		\$22,382
Facilities/Equipment															
Transit facility (Supply Row)		\$0	\$0	1	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000		\$1,025,000	\$0		\$1,050,625	\$0		\$1,076,891	\$0
Park & ride lot		\$0	\$0	1	\$400,000	\$400,000		\$410,000	\$0		\$420,250	\$0		\$430,756	\$0
Small office equipment	1	\$525	\$525	1	\$538	\$538	1	\$552	\$552	1	\$566	\$566	1	\$580	\$580
Subtotal	1		\$525	3		\$1,400,538	1		\$552	1		\$566	1		\$580
	Total		\$118,511	Total		\$1,566,703	Total		\$237,099	Total		\$22,402	Total		\$22,962

Operating Budget

The following assumptions were made in the development of the Preferred Service Plan presented in Exhibit 6.4.

Assumptions

- Each of the proposed recommendations in the Preferred Service Plan is implemented.
- Ridership and respective fare revenues would increase at not less than five percent/annum.
- Anticipated fare revenues are met in all years.
- A 2.5-percent rate of inflation² has been applied to all expenses except as specifically noted.
- Five-year useful life for light-duty transit vehicles.
- Vehicle costs in future years are calculated using a 2.5-percent/year rate of inflation.
 - Details in the Capital Plan (Page 6-12).
- Farebox recovery deficits reflect reduction in TDA and shown as an expense.
- All revenue and expenditure figures based on City- or Kern COG-provided data.

Exhibit 6.4 Preferred Service Plan Budget

	FY 2014/15*	FY 2015/16	FY 2016/17	FY 2017/18	FY 2018/19	FY 2019/20
Revenue						
Farebox	\$47,369	\$49,737	\$52,224	\$54,836	\$57,577	\$60,456
Federal Grant - 5311	\$35,194	\$36,074	\$36,976	\$37,900	\$38,848	\$39,819
Federal Grant - Capital		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$22,402	\$22,962
Federal Grant - CMAQ		\$94,556	\$545,380	\$215,244	\$0	\$0
Federal - Other (JARC/NF)	\$100,000	\$102,500	\$105,063	\$107,689	\$110,381	\$113,141
State - TDA	\$590,813	\$605,583	\$620,723	\$636,241	\$652,147	\$668,451
State - LCTOP		\$4,913	\$5,036	\$5,162	\$5,291	\$5,423
State - Capital (PTMISEA)		\$0	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Transfers to/from Reserves	\$26,541	\$56,842	\$16,798	\$14,608	-\$10,171	-\$42,339
Local - Taft		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local - Kern County	\$275,000	\$281,875	\$288,922	\$296,145	\$303,549	\$311,137
Local - Maricopa	\$25,843	\$26,489	\$27,151	\$27,830	\$28,526	\$29,239
Total	\$1,100,760	\$1,258,570	\$2,698,272	\$1,395,654	\$1,208,549	\$1,208,289
Expenses						
Operating	\$844,071	\$810,741	\$831,010	\$851,785	\$873,080	\$894,907
Maintenance	\$103,852	\$106,448	\$109,110	\$111,837	\$114,633	\$117,499
Depreciation/Debt	\$152,837	\$156,658	\$160,574	\$164,589	\$168,703	\$172,921
Capital - Vehicles	\$0	\$94,556	\$145,380	\$215,244	\$0	\$0
Capital - Equipment	\$0	\$23,429	\$20,784	\$21,304	\$21,836	\$22,382
Capital - Facilities	\$0	\$525	\$1,400,538	\$552	\$566	\$580
Impact from Preferred Service Plan	---	\$34,875	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Farebox Deficit (From TDA)		\$31,337	\$30,877	\$30,343	\$29,731	\$29,034
Total	\$1,100,760	\$1,258,569	\$2,698,273	\$1,395,654	\$1,208,549	\$1,208,289

² Based on U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Implementation Plan

The recommendations within the Preferred Service Plan are intended to increase ridership, improve farebox recovery, and reduce operating costs. With the City's transit program struggling to achieve performance goals and requirements in recent years, the recommended improvements should be implemented as quickly as is feasible. The matrix below identifies the timeframe for implementation of each recommendation in the Preferred Service Plan.

Exhibit 6.5 Implementation Timetable

Recommendation	Begin		Complete	
	Year	Quarter	Year	Quarter
Administrative				
Develop a Taft Area Transit ticket/pass sales program	FY 2016	1	FY 2016	4
Implement all Title VI strategies	FY 2016	1	FY 2016	1
Operational				
Increase marketing budget and level of activity	FY 2016	1	FY 2016	4
Replace weekend fixed-route service with general public Dial-A-Ride	FY 2016	2	FY 2016	2
Promote connectivity with Kern Transit	FY 2016	2	FY 2016	2
Adjust fares for fixed-route and Dial-A-Ride services	FY 2016	2	FY 2018	2
Capital				
Develop and implement a Bus Stop Improvement Program (BSIP)	FY 2016	3	FY 2016	4
Construct a dedicated transit center/dispatch/storage facility	FY 2015	1	FY 2017	4


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APPENDIX

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Exhibit A.1 Transit Community Survey



Transit Community Survey

- Are you aware the City of Taft operates a public transit program?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- Have you ridden Taft Area Transit within the past 90 days?
☐ Yes ☐ No (skip to Question 2c)
- If yes, which service did you use?
☐ Taft Area Transit fixed-route service
☐ Taft Dial-A-Ride
- Please indicate your satisfaction with respect to the following. Scale of one to four, wherein one is very dissatisfied and four is very satisfied.

	1.	2.	3.	4.
Accessibility				
Reliability				
Cost				
Safety				
- If no, why not?
☐ Does not travel WHERE I need to go
☐ Does not travel WHEN I need to go
☐ Too expensive
☐ Prefer to drive myself
☐ Don't know how to ride
☐ Do not have access to service information
☐ Other (specify _____)
- What change may cause you to use public transit more often?
☐ If it was easier to use
☐ If gas got too expensive to drive
 How much per gallon? _____
☐ If it took me directly to work
 Where: _____
☐ If it was paid by my employer
☐ More weekday service (when: _____)
☐ More Saturday service (when: _____)
☐ Nothing could make me ride
☐ Other (specify _____)
- Does anyone in your household use public transit?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- Do you have access to a personal vehicle?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- Do you have a valid driver license?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- What is your primary method of transportation?
☐ Personal vehicle ☐ Public bus
☐ Bicycle
☐ Walking/skateboard/scooter
☐ Taxi
☐ Other
 (specify _____)
- What is your most common trip purpose when riding public transit?
☐ Shopping ☐ Healthcare/medical
☐ Work ☐ School
☐ Social/recreation
☐ Other (specify _____)
☐ I do not ride public transit
- What is your age?
☐ Under 18 ☐ 18 to 24
☐ 25 to 44 ☐ 45 to 64
☐ 65 or older
- What was your annual household income in 2013?
☐ Under \$15,000 ☐ \$15,001 to \$25,000
☐ \$25,001 to \$35,000 ☐ \$35,001 to \$50,000
☐ \$50,001 to \$75,000 ☐ Over \$75,000
- What is your employment status?
☐ Employed full-time
☐ Employed part-time
☐ Student full-time
☐ Student part-time
☐ Homemaker
☐ Retired
☐ Looking for work
- Do you speak a language other than English at home?
☐ Yes (specify _____)
☐ No
- What are the cross-streets nearest your home?

- Do you require assistance to ride public transit?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- Name: _____
 Phone/email: _____

Exhibit A.2 Taft Dial-A-Ride Customer Survey

Taft Dial-A-Ride Customer Survey

As a Taft Dial-A-Ride customer, your opinion is important. Please complete this brief survey and return it using the attached postage-paid envelope no later than December 26, 2014. If you are a caregiver or family member of the Dial-A-Ride customer to whom this survey is addressed, please complete the survey on their behalf. Contact information is required only if you would like to be entered into a random drawing for a \$25 VISA gift card. Thank you.

1. How long have you been using Taft Dial-A-Ride?

- ☐ 1 Less than 6 months
☐ 2 6 months to 1 year
☐ 3 1 to 2 years
☐ 4 More than 2 years

2. On average, how many Taft Dial-A-Ride trips do you take each week? (A round trip is considered one trip)

- ☐ 1 I don't ride every week
☐ 2 1 to 2 trips per week
☐ 3 3 to 4 trips per week
☐ 4 5 or more trips per week

3. Is Taft DAR your primary method of transportation?

- ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No

4. Where do you typically travel using Taft Dial-A-Ride?

Specify: _____

5. How would you travel if Taft DAR was not available?

- ☐ 1 Taft fixed-route bus
☐ 2 Kern Transit
☐ 3 Get a ride from a friend
☐ 4 Get a ride from family
☐ 5 Social service transportation
☐ 6 Church transportation
☐ 7 Other (specify): _____

6. What is your primary reason for using Taft Dial-A-Ride? (check only one)

- ☐ 1 No or limited access to a personal vehicle
☐ 2 Don't drive/no longer drive
☐ 3 Other transportation services are too expensive (i.e., taxi)
☐ 4 Convenient
☐ 5 Don't know about other options
☐ 6 Prefer DAR over other options
☐ 7 Other (specify): _____

7. Have you ever used the Taft Area Transit Fixed-Route?

- ☐ 1 Yes
☐ 2 No

8. How much would you be willing to pay for a DAR trip (one way)?

- ☐ 1 \$2.00
☐ 2 \$2.25
☐ 3 \$2.50
☐ 4 \$2.75
☐ 5 \$3.00

9. Do you have an impairment that impacts your personal mobility?

- ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No

10. When traveling, are you typically accompanied by a companion, personal care attendant (PCA), or service animal?

- ☐ 1 Companion
☐ 2 Personal care attendant (PCA)
☐ 3 Service animal
☐ 4 None of the above

11. Please indicate your satisfaction with the following Taft Dial-A-Ride service characteristics by checking the appropriate box.

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
A	On-time performance				
B	Customer service: dispatch				
C	Customer service: drivers				
D	Dependability				
E	Cost				
F	Overall quality				

12. How would you improve the Taft Dial-A-Ride service? (select up to 3 responses)

- ☐ 1 Saturday service from _____ to _____
☐ 2 Sunday service from _____ to _____
☐ 3 Customer phone support
☐ 4 New destinations: _____
☐ 5 Longer service hours from _____ to _____
☐ 6 Other (specify): _____
☐ 7 No improvements desired


13. Contact information (optional)

Name: _____

Phone/email: _____

Questions about the survey? Call (888) 743-5977.

Exhibit A.3 Taft Area Transit Rider Survey



Taft Area Transit Rider Survey

1. Where did you begin your trip today?
 Landmark: _____
 Cross Streets: _____ and _____
 Neighborhood: _____

2. Where will you end your trip today?
 Landmark: _____
 Cross Streets: _____ and _____
 Neighborhood: _____

3. What is the primary purpose for your trip today?
☐ Work ☐ Health/Medical
☐ School ☐ Social/Recreational
☐ Shopping
☐ Other (specify: _____)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4. Overall, I am satisfied with the City's public bus service.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
5. The bus is generally on time (within 3 minutes of posted schedule).	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
6. The schedule meets my current travel needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
7. I feel safe while riding the bus.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
8. I feel safe while waiting for the bus.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
9. Bus drivers are courteous.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
10. The bus is clean.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
11. I feel safe while waiting at the bus stop.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
12. The bus stops are comfortable.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

Please select the most appropriate answer for each statement.

13. Which improvement would cause you to ride more often? (select one)
☐ Improved on-time performance
☐ More frequent service
☐ Bus stop closer to my house
☐ Expanded service hours
☐ Bus stop closer to my work
☐ Bus stop closer to somewhere else (specify: _____)

14. How did you pay for your bus ride today?
☐ Cash ☐ Senior reduced fare
☐ ADA reduced fare ☐ Transit ticket
☐ General/Senior/ADA/Youth 12-Trip Pass

15. Do you believe the fixed-route is a good value?
☐ Yes ☐ No

16. How much would you be willing to pay for a one-way fixed-route trip?
☐ \$1.50 ☐ \$1.75 ☐ \$2.00 ☐ \$2.25

17. How many one-way trips do you make on the bus in a typical week?
☐ Ten or more ☐ 6-8 times
☐ 2-6 times ☐ Less than two

17. What days of the week do you typically ride the City's fixed-route buses? Select all which apply.
☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday
☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐ Saturday
☐ Sunday

18. How long have you been riding Taft Area Transit?
☐ First time ☐ Less than 6 months
☐ Six months to 1 year ☐ More than 1 year

19. Do you have a disability which impacts your mobility?
☐ Yes ☐ No

20. Which of the following describes you best?
☐ Retired ☐ Student
☐ Employed part-time ☐ Homemaker
☐ Employed full-time ☐ Decline to respond

21. What is your annual household income?
☐ Less than \$19,999 ☐ \$20,000 - \$29,999
☐ \$30,000 - \$39,999 ☐ \$40,000 - \$49,999
☐ \$50,000 - \$59,999 ☐ Greater than \$60,000
☐ Decline to respond

22. What is your gender?
☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Decline to respond

23. In which community do you reside?
☐ Taft ☐ Maricopa ☐ Derby Acres
☐ Fellows ☐ Ford City ☐ McKittrick
☐ Taft Heights ☐ South Taft
☐ Other (specify: _____)

24. Did you have a personal vehicle available for this trip?
☐ Yes ☐ No

25. Do you have a valid driver license?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Thank you for your participation!

Share your contact information to be entered into a random drawing to win a \$25 gift card!

First _____

Phone or email _____

*Note - information will only be used to contact the winner

Exhibit A.4 City of Taft Stakeholder Survey



**City of Taft
Stakeholder Survey**

1. What populations does your organization primarily serve? (circle the letter of any which apply)
 - a. Youth
 - b. Seniors
 - c. Business-to-business services
 - d. Persons with physical disabilities
 - e. Persons with cognitive disabilities
 - f. Low-income or homeless residents
 - g. Persons with limited English proficiency
 - h. A faith-based community
 - i. Other (specify _____)
2. What are your perceptions of the City's public bus service?

3. Does your organization regularly provide transportation for its clients and/or members (i.e., shuttle bus, coordination of volunteer drivers, mileage reimbursement, etc.)?
 - a. If Yes, (please specify _____)
 - b. No
4. Please describe your views on the top transportation issues challenging the City of Taft.

5. In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of public transportation in the City of Taft?
 - a. Strengths: _____
 - b. Weaknesses: _____
6. Do clients or members use the City's local bus service (i.e., Taft Area Transit, Taft Dial-A-Ride) to access your organization's program or services?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure
7. Would your organization be interested in promoting public transportation for the population you serve?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If Yes, what resources do you need? (_____)
8. What is the most significant mobility need you currently observe among your members or clients that is not being met?

9. What do you believe to be the single greatest improvement (regarding local transportation) which the City could make or implement?

10. Which system do you think would benefit Taft residents better?
 - a. The current fixed-route system
 - b. Reverting back to only a Dial-A-Ride system
 - c. Organizing a Vanpool/Shared ride system

Exhibit A.5 2014 Marketing Solutions and Strategies Matrix

Strategy	Tactic	Desired Outcome	Justification	Cost	Steps for Completion	Timeline
Improve accessibility to service Information	Update route brochures and service map	Ensure program information is current and Title VI compliant.	Discrepancies with the brochures were identified in Technical Memo No. 3 as well as opportunities for improvement.	\$480 (8 hours)	Conduct review of all brochure content; Address items previously identified; Update effective date to keep the service "current"; Explore potential for condensing into one bilingual brochure; Revise service map to include key trip generators.	Year 1 ($<$ six months) Frequency: Annually
	Distribute service information to community organizations (plus quarterly stock check-ins)	Increase awareness of TAT, reduce barriers based on lack of/inaccessibility to information, and develop community relationships.	Maintain top-of-mind awareness and establish a "constant presence" and follow-up opportunity at key locations in Taft and Maricopa.	\$1,461 (quote provided in Tech Memo 3)	A targeted list of 25 locations in Taft and Maricopa was included in Technical Memo No. 3; Brochures, brochure holder, and re-order card would be distributed to each location; Quarterly follow-up via phone would be conducted to ensure stock level.	Year 1 ($<$ six months) Frequency: Quarterly
	Update Taft Area Transit website	Improve navigability and information accessibility.	Website represents a valuable first-impression and information hub for transit service, so it is important the site is user-friendly.	\$960 (16 hours)	Conduct a full website review; incorporate Spanish language content on the website; Ensure the URL www.taftareatransit.org redirects to TAT information and not a general City of Taft website.	Year 1 ($<$ six months) Frequency: Ongoing (as needed)
	Improve bus stop signage	Increase visibility of TAT stops and awareness of local service offerings.	Bus stop signage is currently mounted parallel to streets, reducing visibility.	\$2,400 (40 hours); signage at \$50 per sign	Purchase additional supply of bus stop signage. Reposition signs perpendicular to the road and double-sided. Coordinate placement of large-scale infopost at 5 th and Main transfer location.	Year 1 Frequency: Maintain as needed
Targeted outreach and community involvement	Stakeholder outreach and coordination	Foster partnerships with local stakeholders for the promotion of TAT; Increase frequency of public transit fare subsidies through stakeholder organizations.	According to the 2013 Stakeholder survey, 35 percent of respondent organizations' members are not benefiting from transit services, only six entities subsidized public transit, and numerous locations communicated incorrect perceptions regarding service offerings (i.e., lack of service to Maricopa).	\$480 - \$1,440 (8-24 hours)	Establish primary contact list of local stakeholders and schedule appointments to discuss marketing opportunities and potential partnership. Provide/design materials as needed.	Year 1 Frequency: Semi-annually
	Targeted outreach	Increase ridership of local commuters working at employment centers and individuals traveling to healthcare centers served by Taft Area Transit.	According to the 2013 Community Survey, "shopping" received 40 percent of responses regarding trip purposes, while accessing "healthcare/medical services" and "work" represented a combined 33 percent; Given limited number of employment, healthcare, and shopping centers in and around Taft, targeted outreach to these locations could provide a valuable marketing opportunity.	\$480 - \$1,320 (8-22 hours)	Identify primary employment, healthcare, and shopping centers; develop targeted materials (i.e., promotional poster or brochure distribution); contact for distribution and to establish a primary point of contact; and collaborate to establish relationship and potential opportunities.	Year 1 Frequency: Semi-annually
	School/youth outreach	Raise awareness and ridership among students to and from local schools (K-12 and Taft College).	TAT provides services to local K-12 educational facilities as well as Taft College, although only 7 percent of riders surveyed noted using TAT to get to school; additionally, during outreach at Taft College, numerous students communicated a lack of personal transportation.	\$600 - \$1,200 (10-20 hours)	Develop targeted back-to-school materials; Coordinate with local schools and school districts for information distribution; Conduct on-site events during back-to-school week.	Year 1 Frequency: Annually
	Outreach to non-English populations	Increase ridership among local Spanish-speaking residents.	More than 15 percent of the local population cited Hispanic/Latino heritage, according to 2010 Census data. Nearly 15 riders, and 11 percent of non-riders, speak Spanish as their primary language.	\$840 - \$1,440 (14-24 hours)	Ensure all transit materials are available in Spanish; coordinate with Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and with KBDS 103.9 FM (www.campesina.net) for targeted messaging and outreach; and have bilingual staff participate in community events.	Year 1 Frequency: Semi-annually

Exhibit A.5 2014 Marketing Solutions and Strategies Matrix (continued)

Strategy	Tactic	Desired Outcome	Justification	Cost	Steps for Completion	Timeline
Targeted outreach and community involvement (cont.)	Oaxacan Outreach	Increase ridership among Oaxacan community members.	The Oaxacan community (comprised of approximately 600 families) represents an underserved minority in and around Taft, which according to survey data obtained during a community meeting on March 30, 2013, largely doesn't know how to use TAT (43.7 percent), can't read the schedule (11.5 percent), or can't afford it (4.6 percent).	\$960 - \$1,680 (16-28 hours)	Distribute brochures prior to Oaxacan community meetings; Allow for community customization of stop near Jefferson and Adams to provide a non-written, Non-oral identifier (per discussions at March 30, 2013, Oaxacan community meeting); Work with community leaders to distribute additional bilingual information and provide travel training.	Year 1 Frequency: Semi-annually
	Participation at community events	Connect with community members and position TAT as an attractive community partner.	Participation at local events such as the Taft Needs Center Food Bank Drive (monthly), visits to the Taft Senior Center, and Taft College Day (fall and spring semesters), among others, provide valuable insight into community needs, improved visibility of TAT, and allowed handshake-distance interactions with potential riders.	\$840 - \$2,160 (14-36 hours)	Using the events list compiled during 2013 outreach efforts, identify top-priority events; Coordinate TAT participation (booth) based on target demographics; Work with event staff to determine expected attendance and additional marketing needs; Evaluate for future participation.	Year 1 Frequency: Ongoing
	Implement Travel Training Program	Convert DAR riders to fixed-route riders, foster community partnerships, and increase awareness of TAT.	Stemming from feedback received during 2013 community outreach efforts, numerous individuals and stakeholders indicated a lack of awareness regarding TAT or how to use its services, presenting an opportunity to hold travel training in coordination with such events as local food drives, back-to-school, and senior center activities.	\$5,760 (8 hours monthly)	Develop travel training curriculum based on local needs and services; Contact social services organizations in Taft and Maricopa for event scheduling and partnership; Promote and conduct travel training (potentially in coordination with other community events such as food drives or back-to-school); Provide follow-up training.	Year 2 Frequency: Ongoing
Promotions and campaigns	Develop marketing materials and communications positioning Taft Area Transit as the community's local transportation option	Increase ridership on TAT, particularly among "choice" riders. Improve awareness and perceptions, and foster greater differentiation between TAT and Kern Regional Transit.	Despite a high reported awareness of local services, it was noted in the survey report a lack of public understanding/differentiation between TAT and Kern Regional Transit may exist; additionally numerous stakeholders noted a lack of service between Maricopa and Taft, indicating a lack of awareness of current service offerings.	\$1320 - \$2,160 (22-36 hours)	Design and produce posters (bus shelter and for targeted outreach), direct mail pieces, and advertisements for strategic placement around the community and in community-focused publications; Schedule events accordingly.	Year 1 Frequency: Ongoing
	Implement a cost comparison campaign (public transit vs. personal vehicle)	Provide a follow-up campaign options building first campaign to serve as additional outreach/messaging tool to solidify TAT's position within the community, increase ridership, and foster top-of-mind awareness.	According to 2013 survey data, 73.3 percent of respondents were satisfied with the "affordability" of TAT; 60 percent believe affordability of transportation (personal vehicle) is a barrier to their daily activities, indicating a higher level of transit-dependency than anticipated and an open door to promote the affordability of TAT services; additionally, nearly 69 percent of non-riders indicated simply preferring to drive themselves over using transit (necessitating a convincing "sell" – such as cost savings – to mode shift).	\$1320 - \$2,160 (22-36 hours)	Second tier promotion: Build upon lessons learned from initial campaign; Design and produce posters (bus shelter and for targeted outreach), direct mail pieces, and advertisements for strategic placement around the community and in community-focused publications; Schedule events accordingly; Provide materials to Taft Chamber of Commerce to distribute during community events.	Year 3 Frequency: Ongoing
Improved public communications	Periodic media release distribution	Foster relationship with local media, increase awareness and appreciation of TAT's activities and improvements.	While it is important not to "flood the market" with messaging, it is also important for the community to be apprised of transit program happenings and opportunities on a regular basis. Doing so reinforces TAT's role within the community.	\$960 - \$1,440 (16-24 hours)	Develop media release database targeting local print, radio, television, and stakeholders (bilingual outlets/entities); Draft and distribute releases on a monthly basis and/or as needed; Document coverage.	Year 2 Frequency: Monthly

Exhibit A.5 2014 Marketing Solutions and Strategies Matrix (continued)

Strategy	Tactic	Desired Outcome	Justification	Cost	Steps for Completion	Timeline
Improved public communications (cont.)	Implement Taft Area Transit-specific Twitter account	Created additional medium through which to communicate service updates “real-time” as well as promotional messaging.	As part of the 2013 Stakeholder Survey, 75.4 percent of respondents were satisfied with the reliability of the service. If that rating was impacted by vehicle delays that could be easily explained, Twitter would serve as a great medium for communicating such updates as well as opening another communication channel, which according to TCRP 99 ³ was utilized by 91 percent of the transit operators polled (highest among social media outlets). Additionally, 97 percent cited social media as “very important” in communicating with current riders, 85 percent said it was “very important” to improving customer satisfaction, and 76 percent indicated it was “very important” in improving the agency’s image.	\$360 - \$600 (6-10 hours)	Establish a free Twitter account for Taft Area Transit; provide brief training on expectations of call center staff; update as needed (if desired, supplemental content could be drafted and programmed into HootSuite, free online service that provides this functionality).	Year 1 Frequency: Ongoing
Customer satisfaction improvement	Regular vehicle, bus stop, and facilities checks.	Raise customer service satisfaction rate to no less than 90 percent (customer satisfaction/perception plays a major role in TAT’s overall brand/image)	During 2013 survey efforts, 77.3 percent of respondents noted satisfaction with the cleanliness of the vehicles.	\$1,800 (30 hours)	Schedule routine inspections to ensure proper maintenance, cleanliness, and placement.	Year 1 Frequency: Ongoing
	Development of call center scripts and driver training materials to ensure/foster assurance, responsiveness, and empathy.		In the same survey referenced above, 76 percent of respondents were satisfied with the current level of customer service.	\$1,200 - \$1,560 (20-26 hours)	Prepare call center scripts and training materials; conduct sensitivity training; create bilingual phonetic cards for call center staff as well as drivers; formalize the Title VI complaint process; and provide regular in-house check-ins.	Year 1 Frequency: Ongoing

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