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AGENDA ITEM 6a
SCC Meeting
December 16, 2019

DATE: December 4, 2019
TO: Service Coordination Committee (SCC)
FROM: Philip Johnson, Associate Planner
SUBJECT: **Blue Lake Rancheria Transit Study**

INFORMATIONAL REPORT

Contents:

- Staff Summary
- “Blue Lake Rancheria Transit Study Report: Analyzing Potential New Service to Fieldbrook, Western Glendale, and Korbel”

Staff Summary:

HCAOG has completed the transit study for the Blue Lake Rancheria, which analyzed potential new service to the communities of Fieldbrook, Western Glendale Drive, and Korbel. The study’s funding sources include a 2014 Federal Transit Administration Tribal Transportation Planning (FTA TTP) grant, HCAOG Regional Planning Assistance (RPA) funds, and Blue Lake Rancheria funds. The Blue Lake Rancheria contracted with HCAOG to deliver this project, with the Rancheria overseeing the project.

HCAOG analyzed various transit scenarios feasibility in the study area, based upon surveys, identified needs, budget constraints, modeled farebox performance, existing conditions, partnering opportunities, socio-economic and demographic data, committee and council input, and a public workshop.

HCAOG leveraged a portion of its own funds (in partnership with the FTA grant and the Rancheria) to deliver a calibrated transit forecasting model to aid in this study. Service Edge Solutions, LLC (the consultant used on the project), used existing conditions, land-uses, demographics, and socio-economic inputs to deliver the calibrated transit model. Staff used the model to measure the potential transit scenario feasibility. The software allowed for a new data-based approach to route planning. Staff will utilize TBEST in the future when practical, including for the HCAOG Unmet Transit Needs (UTN) process.

The study’s key takeaways include (for more details please refer to the report):

- Fieldbrook: Limited Blue Lake Rancheria Transit Service (BLRTS) service to Fieldbrook is feasible in Scenario 1.1 and 2.1 on the attached chart. They are the only two scenarios that met the minimum Transit Development Act (TDA) farebox requirements. Both scenarios include an assumption that the Humboldt Transit Authority’s (HTA’s) Willow

Creek bus would stop in Blue Lake on all its runs. Scenario 1.1 involves four BLRTS runs to Arcata and back, and two deviations to McKinleyville via Fieldbrook (returning to Blue Lake the same way in which it came). Scenario 2.1 involves four BLRTS runs to Arcata and back, and two deviations to McKinleyville via Fieldbrook, ending at the Arcata Transit Center. On these deviations, the BLRTS “express returns” to Blue Lake, resulting in higher ridership (14.9% farebox according to the TBEST model), but an inconvenient return for Fieldbrook riders (Fieldbrook residents would need to take BLRTS back to Blue Lake, then wait for the afternoon outbound trip to McKinleyville to return to Fieldbrook).

- Western Glendale Drive: Because BLRTS currently has a bus stop 0.4 miles from this location, a stop at Western Glendale Drive is not crucial, but is projected to lead to a 5.5% ridership increase, so the Rancheria should consider adding the stop. Additionally, the report recommends always stopping in Glendale on return trips (as opposed to the existing “call stop”). TBEST projects that always stopping in Glendale on the return trip will lead to a 3.9% boost in fares for the route. A consistent stop would better serve riders in Glendale, including Western Glendale Drive riders, as it would provide a consistent connection between Glendale and Blue Lake.
- Korbek: Due to ridership forecasts, the negative impact on farebox performance, survey responses, the community’s small size, and population and demographic trends in the area, the report does not recommend service to Korbek as feasible.

The report details the reasons why various other scenarios, despite their sensibleness and potential benefits, are not feasible. This includes Scenario 3 and 3.1 (which did not meet farebox in modeling), which would provide four Blue Lake trips, with two Fieldbrook deviations, with the bus turning around in Fieldbrook and continuing to Arcata. In Scenario 4 (which also did not meet farebox in modeling), BLRTS service transformed into a rural feeder route, traveling throughout the day between Fieldbrook, Glendale, Blue Lake, and Korbek. Riders would then connect to Arcata on HTA’s Willow Creek route.

Since BLRTS would potentially be providing service in an unincorporated County area under these scenarios, and HTA would be providing the City of Blue Lake a benefit by stopping in Blue Lake, the report includes a cost-benefit analysis exploring this.

The report also analyzes potential stop locations, as well as scheduling optimization considerations, the outreach process, and implementation considerations.

HCAOG delivered the final draft of the report to the Blue Lake Rancheria at the end of November. Staff will share any Blue Lake Rancheria Tribal Council comments about the report at the SCC meeting.

Blue Lake Rancheria Transit Scenarios

Likely Feasible?	Scenario #	Scenario Name	WC BL Stop	Validated Weekday Boardings	BL to Arcata x per day (stand alone + combined with WC route)	BL to McKinleyville x per day	WC Validated Boardings	Trip time in one direction	Daily BLR Runs	Service Span Hours	Revenue Service Hours	Express Return	TBEST Cost	Adj. Cost	TBEST Annual Cost	Adj. Annual Cost	Cost difference	Cost Per Passenger	Service Miles	Farebox
		Base Scenario																		
		Current service	No	50	8	0	48	30	8	11	8	Yes	654	539	\$ 170,040	\$ 140,033	0%	6.9	171	10.3%
		Final scenarios																		
		Arcata direct 5x/day, Direct to																		
No	1.1	McKinleyville 2x/day	No	42	5	2	47	25-48	7	12	7.7	No	646	532	\$ 167,960	\$ 138,320	-1%	19.1	154	8.8%
		Arcata direct 4x/day, Direct to																		
Yes	1.1	McKinleyville 2x/day + WC BL Stop	Yes	58	8	2	63	25-48	6	11.7	6.8	No	671.2	553	\$ 174,512	\$ 143,716	3%	12.2	133	11.7%
No	2	Arcata direct 5x/day, Mck-Arcata 2x/day (Express return)	No	44	7	2	48	25-64	7	12.1	7.9	Yes	662	545	\$ 172,120	\$ 141,746	1%	16.5	161	9.0%
		Arcata direct 4x/day, Mck-Arcata 2x/day (Express return) +																		
Yes	2.1	WC BL Stop	Yes	64	10	2	64	25-64	6	12	7	Yes	578	476	\$ 150,280	\$ 123,760	-12%	9.6	139	14.9%
No	3	Arcata direct 5x/day, Fieldbrook 2x/day (Express return)	No	47	7	0	48	25-64	7	11.7	8.3	Yes	696	573	\$ 180,960	\$ 149,026	6%	16.3	160	9.1%
		Arcata direct 4x/day, Fieldbrook 2x/day (Express return) +WC BL																		
No	3.1	Stop	Yes	36	10	0	64	25-64	6	11.7	7	Yes	587	483	\$ 152,620	\$ 125,687	-10%	18.7	139	8.3%
		Blue Lake Rural Service Feeder																		
No	4	Route	Yes	47	4	0	81	32-43	6	10.7	8.7	No	729.9	601	\$ 189,774	\$ 156,284	12%	18	106	8.7%

WC=Willow Creek
 BL=Blue Lake
 TBEST Cost=Estimated cost of route from TBEST
 Adj. Cost=Manually adjusted cost of route, using BLR's current operating cost per mile