

## Spring 2024 Newsletter



### BCAG Regional Projects

Every two (2) years, BCAG receives funding from the State to be utilized for capital and infrastructure projects as developed by our member jurisdictions (Butte County, Chico, Oroville, Paradise, Biggs, and Gridley).

Many of the projects in our region continue to repair, replace, and upgrade existing infrastructure. They also work to integrate the new project construction in cooperation with area development patterns. These patterns are intended to support more efficient use of multi-modal transportation solutions in growing areas of all Butte County communities.

Notable projects receiving regional funding are the Eaton Road Roundabout at SR 99 in Chico and a Safe Routes to School project for the community of Palermo. Other projects being considered for funding are a "Complete Streets" project in Oroville and Safe Routes to school improvements in Biggs.

### North Valley Rail Plan Nearing Completion

Development of the North Valley Passenger Rail Strategic Plan is nearing completion, with a final document expected to be completed in April 2024. The next step is to initiate work on the environmental and design phase of project development. The project advances the recommendations of the Draft 2023 State Rail Plan by extending passenger rail service north of the Sacramento area into the Northern Sacramento Valley ("North Valley") to serve population centers in Yuba, Sutter, and Butte Counties. Currently, passenger rail service in these areas is provided by the Coast Starlight, which only operates one daily roundtrip that stops only in Chico.



By building off of future planned expansions of the statewide passenger rail network (the "Valley Rail Program"), this Project will improve transit connections for the underserved North Valley Region, providing direct, one-seat rides to/from Sacramento and other major rail hubs across the Northern California Megaregion. In Merced, North Valley Rail trains will provide seamless connections with high-speed rail (HSR) service on the Early Operating Segment (EOS) between Merced and Bakersfield, allowing connections to Los Angeles and beyond. Linking our communities in Butte County to the Northern California Megaregion and the larger statewide rail network provides major benefits by reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions; expanding equity through improved access to housing, high-quality jobs, and higher education; and promoting economic development and tourism.

BCAG is leading preparation of the plan. Development of the Strategic Plan is a multi-agency partnership with the California Department of Transportation ("Caltrans"); the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRR) and San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA), which manage ACE and the San Joaquins services, respectively; and Union Pacific Railroad ("UP" or "UPRR"), the owner of the rail corridor.

For more information, see the project website at [www.northvalleyrail.org](http://www.northvalleyrail.org).



## 2024 RTP/SCS UPDATE

BCAG is required to update the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) every four years. Development of the 2024 RTP/SCS is well underway and on track for approval by the BCAG Board of Directors in December 2024. The RTP/SCS document is designed to support the integration of land use, housing, and transportation with a required goal of reducing

GHG emissions from passenger vehicles to meet regional emission reduction targets assigned to BCAG for the Butte County region. This includes the goal of a 7% reduction in per capita GHG emissions by the year 2035 as required by the California Air Resources Board.

The RTP/SCS update is a two-and-a-half-year process and has many facets. Some of the work completed to date includes updated traffic counts to calibrate the regional travel demand model, updated land use models, development of the Regional Transit Survey and Regional Growth Forecasts. BCAG staff also conducted public outreach such as attending area community events, holding virtual community workshops to share information about the update, keeping the project website updated and encouraging anyone to participate by completing the community survey online.

Current work on this project includes developing four land use and transportation scenarios. Community input on scenario development occurred last fall via a virtual public workshop and community survey. Additional input is being received via BCAG's member jurisdictions through the Planning Directors Group and the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). The four scenarios include:

1. No project
2. Apply new regional growth forecasts and 2023 B-Line Routing Study findings. Land use and transportation strategies unchanged. Consistent with local general plans.
3. Increase housing mix as well as ratio of forecasted housing in the "Center" and "Established Growth" areas. Emphasis on new housing elements and recent development trends. Updated transportation project list. Consistent with local general plans and new housing elements.
4. Include additional VMT/GHG reduction strategies to achieve greater reductions towards meeting the CARB target.

Following selection of a preferred scenario by the BCAG Board, the next steps and estimated timings in the development of the SCS will include:

- Development of actions and policies that support implementation of the preferred scenario (Spring 2024)
- Completion of the required equity analysis identifying any disparate impacts of the proposed SCS components in regard to race, color, or national origin as well as any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on other priority populations including low income and disadvantaged populations (Spring 2024)
- Completion of draft RTP/SCS document, draft supplemental EIR, and associated community workshops along with required public review period (Late Summer/Early Fall 2024)
- Final RTP/SCS document and supplemental EIR approval by BCAG Board of Directors (December 2024)

Additional information on the 2024 RTP/SCS update can be found on the project website at <https://www.bcag.org/Projects/RTP--SCS/2024-RTPSCS-Update/index.html>

## B-Line Improvements

B-Line is working on various system upgrades to improve efficiency and better meet the needs of Butte County riders. Some of the projects underway are zero-emission technology deployment, bus shelter enhancements, modifications to routes and stops, enhanced software and ticketing platforms, and an update to the Rider Rules of Conduct.



As a result of the B-Line Routing Study completed last year, staff is considering development of on-demand microtransit service in Chico, Oroville, and Paradise. B-Line continues to take steps toward implementation of a non-emergency medical transportation service that would provide transportation access to additional users across jurisdictions. For future updates on these items, please visit the B-Line website at [www.blinetransit.com](http://www.blinetransit.com).



# Paradise Transit Center

B-Line is in the process of constructing the Paradise Transit Center on Almond Street between Birch and Cedar Streets. This project consists in general of grading, paving, utilities, demolition, landscaping and general civil work to construct bus bays, parking lots, pedestrian facilities, lighting, a storm drain system, new transit shelters, a storage building, and ancillary improvements for improved integration of public transportation in Paradise.

Following the advent of COVID-19, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA) was identified as a viable source for funding to construct the transit center. Construction is anticipated to be completed in the Fall of 2024.

*BCAG is a Joint Powers Authority of the cities of Biggs, Chico, Gridley, and Oroville, the Town of Paradise, and the County of Butte. BCAG is the operating administrator for Butte Regional Transit, known as B-Line.*

B-Line Website



Have questions or need more BCAG or B-Line info?  
Just email us at:  
[info@bcag.org](mailto:info@bcag.org)

BCAG Website

