



August 2016



SENIOR FARE & DIAL-A-RIDE AGE ELIGIBILITY INCREASING TO 64 ON SEPTEMBER 1ST

The minimum age for senior eligibility for any discount fares and Dial-A-Ride service will increase from 63 to 64 on September 1st. This change was approved in 2015 as part of a multi-year increase in the minimum age eligibility that will ultimately match the Federal standard of 65 for any half-fare discounts. The final increase will be effective September 1, 2017 when the minimum will be set at 65 years of age.

To reduce the impact of this change on our existing riders, anyone who has a currently valid Yuba-Sutter Transit senior eligibility photo identification card will remain eligible whether you have reached age 64 or not. If you are now 63 years old (or will be before September 1st) and have never registered for a photo ID card because you use alternate identification such as a driver's license or State ID card for proof of age, you have until August 31st to get a Yuba-Sutter Transit senior ID card to maintain your senior eligibility.

Discount photo ID cards are available only at the Yuba-Sutter Transit Administrative Office in Marysville. Call (530) 634-6880 for more information.



LABOR DAY HOLIDAY NOTICE

Yuba-Sutter Transit will not be in operation and the Administrative Office will be closed on Monday, September 5, 2016 in observance of Labor Day. Regular service will resume on Tuesday, September 6th.

SOFT LAUNCH VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT HAS BEGUN

The regional Connect Transit Card is almost here and we need your help! The Sacramento region will soon begin transitioning to the new smart fare card payment system introducing an easy new way to pay your fare using just one card on any of the nine participating systems including Yuba-Sutter Transit.

This process will start with a “soft launch” of the new system first in Sacramento followed shortly thereafter by the remaining eight systems. This is where our passengers come in as we are now recruiting volunteers to test the Connect Card system during the soft launch period.

Are you willing to help make the Connect Card the best it can be? We need feedback from regular transit riders just like you, but soft launch participants must be willing to:

1. Take a short survey by using or clicking on this link: connecttransitcard.com/softlaunch
2. Receive and load your new Connect Card
3. Tap and go!
4. Provide feedback

If you would like to apply to participate in the soft launch, simply visit or click on connecttransitcard.com/softlaunch and complete a brief survey or call the Regional Transit Customer Service Center at (916) 321-2877 to request information by mail. As a thank you, all Connect Card soft launch participants will be entered to win one of many \$20 Amazon gift cards.

Whether you participate in the soft launch or not, watch this newsletter for future Connect Card updates or contact Matt Mauk at matt@yubasuttertransit.com or (530) 634-6880 for more information. The Connect Card is coming!

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

After a quarter century of increases, systemwide Yuba-Sutter Transit ridership dropped significantly over the year ending June 30, 2016 (FY 2016) compared to the previous 12 month period – the worst one year percentage decrease since FY 1989. Overall ridership for FY 2016 was 1,192,265 passenger trips which was 8.0 percent less than the record 1,296,622 annual boardings in FY 2015.

While similar or worse ridership declines were experienced by many transit agencies last year including several in the Sacramento region, contributing factors for Yuba-Sutter Transit's loss likely include the September 2015 policy change to no longer allow local fixed route transfers to be exchanged for a transfer; the change in the maximum age for youth cash fare eligibility from 12 to 18; and, extremely low fuel prices. Other potential factors include the September 2015 changes to Route 4; continuing on-time performance challenges; chronic reliability problems with older buses; and, the general lack of population and employment growth.

Individually, most of the systemwide ridership decrease was on the local fixed route system where boardings dropped by nearly 95,000 passenger trips (-8.9 percent) compared to FY 2015. Most of the remaining decrease was seen on Yuba-Sutter Transit's Sacramento services with Commuter ridership off 5.8 percent and Middyay ridership off 16.1 percent compared to FY 2015.

Despite an increase in the minimum age for senior eligibility and a contraction in the service area boundary, Dial-A-Ride ridership was unchanged in FY 2016 compared to FY 2015. Ridership on the three rural routes was decidedly mixed with the expanded Live Oak and Wheatland Routes seeing significant gains (71.9 and 58.0 percent respectively) while ridership on the unchanged Foothill Route dropped by 18.8 percent compared to FY 2015.

With the reduction in ridership, it is not surprising that key systemwide financial performance indicators were also down in FY 2016 compared to the previous year. Total fare revenue was off 8.0 percent and fare revenue per hour of service was down 9.5 percent while the estimated farebox recovery ratio (the percentage of operating costs covered by passenger fares) was down 9.5 percent to 19.9 percent. Almost all of these reductions were due to the previously mentioned ridership decreases on the local fixed route and Sacramento services.

Looking to the future, the most significant near-term initiative will be the upcoming implementation of the new Connect Card electronic fare system (see related article). While other policy changes and physical improvements are also being planned, system performance for FY 2017 will be largely determined by how the Connect Card system affects both ridership and fare receipts; whether the discount monthly youth, senior and disabled pass grant programs are extended beyond December 2016; and, how economic conditions impact ridership both locally and to Sacramento.

NEW RIDE GUIDES ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR SEPTEMBER

Yuba-Sutter Transit's service information materials are being revised to reflect the September 1st change in the senior age eligibility requirement (see related article). New Ride Guides are now available from the Yuba-Sutter Transit office and they will be on all buses by August 30th. Other service brochures will be modified as soon as possible to reflect the change in senior eligibility along with other minor edits as necessary.

Contact Sandra Anderson (sandra@yubasuttertransit.com) at (530) 634-6880 to request copies by mail.

BUS PASSES & TICKET BOOKS

Monthly passes, discount ticket books and Sacramento punch cards are available throughout the month during normal business hours and by mail in the Yuba-Sutter Transit office at 2100 B Street in Marysville.

- **Yuba-Sutter Transit Office – Marysville**
Ticket Books / Monthly Fixed Route Passes / Sacramento Commuter Passes & Punch Cards / Single Ride Tickets for All Services [Cash, Check, Credit or Debit]

Fare products are also available in limited quantities at the following locations. Monthly passes are available in these outlets from the 24th of the month until the 7th of the following month. Ticket books and punch cards are available all month while supplies last.

- **Bel Air Market Customer Service Center – Yuba City**
Ticket Books / Monthly Fixed Route Passes / Sacramento Commuter Passes & Punch Cards [Cash or Check Only]
- **Yuba College Bookstore – Linda**
Ticket Books / Monthly Fixed Route Passes / Sacramento Commuter Passes & Punch Cards [Cash, Check, Credit or Debit]

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