



## Meet › Porterville Transit

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## Embracing New Technology

The City of Porterville, located in central California, is home to a community of nearly 600,000 transit riders. Beginning in 1980 with a demand response service, Porterville Transit is now a comprehensive transit system, offering demand response service and 8 fixed routes with 14 vehicles.

City of Porterville's Transit Manager, Richard Tree, explains the driving factors behind Porterville's technology innovations: "We were a typical paper and pen transit agency, faced with rising operational costs, stagnate ridership, and limited funding streams. We had to embrace technology if we wanted to improve our services and increase community awareness and support." The city's problems are echoed by transit agencies across the nation, but Porterville seems to have found a way through.



## A Creative Solution

In 2013, the City of Porterville unveiled its suite of new transit technologies, signage, and solar amenities to improve service for its community and enhance operational efficiency. Porterville Transit employed a comprehensive approach toward running its fixed route and demand response operations by partnering with passenger transportation technology provider Routematch Software, bus signage provider CHK America, and solar energy provider Urban Solar.

**160**  
bus stops

**600,000**  
transit riders

**2,000**  
unique users

RouteShout, the new traveler information service from Routematch, allows riders to pull up information on bus location at any given time from their smartphone, enabling more convenient trip planning. **Within one month of availability, 2,000 unique users have taken advantage of the RouteShout service.** The agency has also deployed tablet devices within its vehicles as mobile data devices for initiating automated voice annunciators, improving driver and dispatch communications, recording key data such as passenger miles for federal reporting requirements, and monitoring of on-time performance.

To further **enhance customer communications**, Porterville Transit also partnered with CHK America to design and fabricate new transit signage at its Transit Center and at all of its 160 bus stops. CHK America designed a four-sided kiosk to display a new system map, timetables, points-of-interest, service and passenger information, and Routematch's real-time bus arrival displays. The kiosk was designed for superior quality, ease of use, and integrates the transit agency color scheme.





"Before we installed our new signage, our customers thanked us for at least having a sign, but that's all they were—a sign that says the bus stops here," Tree says. "Now our bus stop signage invites customers to use our system, they have everything they need to quickly understand which routes service this stop, at what times, and where they are going. **We also incorporated our RouteShout mobile applications at every stop to allow customers to receive real-time bus arrival** and other important service information by text, mobile app, and call center IVR."

**22%**  
**ridership**  
**increase in**  
**fixed route**  
**service after**  
**the launch of**  
**RouteShout**  
**traveler**  
**information**  
**system service**

**We had to embrace technology if we wanted to improve our services**

Porterville Transit also partnered with Urban Solar Corporation to encourage more, a leading manufacturer of solar powered LED lighting solutions, to provide the city with solar powered lighting at every bus stop in their system. Between the collaboration of the three companies, the City of Porterville was able to find a transit solution to meet all the challenges they faced pre-innovation.

## **Collaboration Means Everyone Wins**

Within one year of introducing the technologies, Porterville Transit has experienced several benefits. **The agency has yielded a 35% decrease in demand response operational costs, while doubling the number of passengers per revenue hour.** Porterville also experienced a 22% ridership increase in its fixed route service after the launch of its RouteShout traveler information system service, new bus stop signage, and new solar bus stop lighting.

Due to easier access to real-time bus arrival times and schedules through the web, smartphone, and call center interactive voice response (IVR) service, "where's my bus" type calls that typically came in at up to 5,000 times per month have been reduced by 80%, freeing up time for their scheduler or dispatcher to focus on operations and other strategic community relations-oriented initiatives.

These new additions have helped further the City of Porterville's vision to improve the experience of traveling on transit for riders and to **establish a foundation of operational sustainability and growth.**

"I applaud the work of our Council and City staff who have worked to expand public transportation services with Tulare County. **The steady increases in transit investment have dramatically improved and expanded public transportation services,** attracting a record number of riders on our state-of-the-art system," states Cameron Hamilton, Mayor of Porterville.

"This extensive transit improvement project conducted by the City of Porterville is one of the largest amenities upgrades for a city of its size. The City of Porterville holds their riders in the highest regards and understands how providing these **critical upgrades** increase the safety and efficiency of their riders getting where they need to go. These system upgrades have also been carefully selected for longevity, so that the City of Porterville's transit agency sees continued savings on all routes for years to come," states Jeff Peters, Urban Solar President. The institutionalization of RouteMatch's traveler information system, CHK's transit signage and Urban Solar's bus stop lighting has allowed the City to expand opportunities and transportation choices for communities they serve.

## Challenges:

- Manual Data Entry
- Stagnate Ridership
- Rising Operation Costs

## Solutions:

- RouteShout
- Mobile Data Services and Tablet

## Results:

- 35% decrease in demand response operational costs
- 22% fixed route ridership increase
- 80% decrease in "where's my bus" call



## Connected in Transit

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