# STAFF REPORT

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| **MEETING DATE:** | **2/26/13** |
| **SUBJECT:** | **2013/14 Transit Needs Assessment and Unmet Transit Needs Hearing (Public Hearing)** |
| **AGENDA ITEM:** | **8** |
| **STAFF CONTACT:** | **Ellen Talbo** |


**SUMMARY:**

The Unmet Transit Needs process is conducted each year to ensure that current transit needs are met before Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds are distributed to the cities and the county for eligible non-transit uses. Before recommending funds for non-transit purposes, staff and the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) evaluate all service requests against the agency's adopted 'unmet transit need' and 'reasonable to meet' criteria.


**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the board:

1. Hold a public hearing to receive testimony on unmet transit needs in Shasta County; and
2. Direct staff to prepare written responses to comments and recommendations for final board action at the April 30, 2013, board meeting.

**DISCUSSION:**

TDA funds consist of two funding sources: 1) the Local Transportation Fund (LTF), derived from one-quarter cent of the general sales tax collected statewide, and 2) State Transit Assistance (STA), derived from the sales tax on diesel fuel. The state returns tax revenue collected to the SRTA for statutorily-required transportation priorities as follows:

1. TDA administration
2. Up to 2% remaining balance for pedestrian and bicycle facilities
3. Up to 5% remaining balance for community transit services
4. Public transportation
5. Other eligible transportation uses, including streets and roads

Before TDA funds may be spent on streets and roads, all "unmet transit needs" deemed "reasonable to meet" must be addressed. By RTPA resolution 00-21 (attached), an "unmet transit need" must be for a defined population group and necessary for the maintenance of life, health or physical and mental well-being. The following criteria are used to determine whether an unmet transit need is "reasonable to meet":

1. The subsidy required to meet the need will not exceed 80% of the operating costs in the claimants urban area, and 90% in non-urban areas (the subsidy maximums may be determined on an individual route or service area basis);
2. The proposed expenditure of TDA funds required to support the transit service does not exceed the authorized allocation of the claimant, city or county;
3. The service proposed to be funded will not compete with existing private service;

4. Where transit service is to be jointly funded by two or more local claimants, the agency cost-sharing must be equitable; and
5. Proposed expenditures must conform to the Regional Transportation Plan.

A Transit Needs Assessment (TNA) evaluates transit needs based on identified transit-dependent populations and their access to public transportation. The SSTAC reviews and prepares a recommendation based on the TNA and comments received during the public hearing and comment period. The final TNA, including SSTAC recommendation and all public comments and responses, will be presented to the board of directors for consideration on April 30, 2013.

**Transit Performance**
All jurisdictions are meeting their transit obligation. Funds allocated to RABA are subject to a ratio of fare revenue to operating cost (also known as farebox ratio). Since 2010, RABA has operated under a schedule of temporary reduced farebox ratio goals established by the board of directors. In 2012, RABA's combined farebox ratio was 17.46%, which met the farebox ratio goal for FY 2011/12.

Shasta Senior Nutrition Program (SSNP) operates as the designated Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA). CTSA services are not subject to farebox ratio requirements but must meet the following performance criteria, as adjusted by the consumer price index: (1) a TDA subsidy of less than $24.78 per passenger trip, and (2) a service hour cost not to exceed $48.70 per service hour. The CTSA currently meets these requirements.

The county provides for the Burney Express under contract with RABA. Ridership has increased slightly over the five years of operation. The farebox ratio exceeds the 10% farebox ratio required for transit serving rural areas.

**Public Hearing**
A public hearing is required to receive testimony from citizens and interested agencies. Public notice postings began on February 1, 2013. Because additional comments may arise from the public hearing, the public comment period will extend to March 4th, 2013.

**ALTERNATIVES:**
The board may approve the TNA with specific modifications.

**OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**
The 2013/14 Transit Needs Assessment was developed in consultation with the County, SSTAC, CTSA and RABA. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) concurs with the staff recommendation.

**FINANCING:**
Pending final board of directors approval of findings in April, a budget will be prepared for the 2013/14 annual TDA claims.

**Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director**

**Attachments:** 2013/14 Transit Needs Assessment - http://www.srta.ca.gov/RTUnmetneeds.htm