# STAFF REPORT

Shasta County
Regional Transportation Planning Agency

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| **MEETING DATE:** | **3/15/12** |
| **SUBJECT:** | **2012/13 Transit Needs Assessment (TNA) and Unmet Transit Needs Hearing (Public Hearing)** |
| **AGENDA ITEM:** | **3** |
| **STAFF CONTACT:** | **Sue Crowe** |


**SUMMARY:**

The RTPA is responsible for administering Shasta County's Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds for public transportation and other uses. The agency must conduct an annual assessment of transit needs within the region prior to releasing funds. The 2012/13 TNA finds that the current level of transit service remains reasonable to meet. Expansion of fixed-route service should only be considered if a positive effect on farebox can be demonstrated.


**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the board:

1. Consider the 2012/13 TNA that discusses transit needs and performance within Shasta County; and
2. Hold a public hearing to take testimony on unmet transit needs in Shasta County; and
3. Direct staff to present the information generated from today's hearing to the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) for formulation of the council's recommendation; and
4. Direct staff to prepare written responses to comments and recommendations for final board action at the April 24, 2012 RTPA 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), now derived from the sales tax on diesel fuel. The state returns tax revenue collected to the RTPAs to fund transportation priorities as follows:

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

Prior to making TDA allocations, the RTPA performs an assessment of existing TDA-funded transit services and the feasibility of expanding these or other services. A public hearing is held to determine if there are any "unmet transit needs" that are "reasonable to meet" consistent with TDA statutes. Shasta County's TDA-funded transit services are: (1) the Redding Area Bus Authority (RABA), providing fixed-route and complimentary paratransit service and (2) the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) who provides specialized community transit service through Shasta Senior Nutrition Programs, Inc.

By RTPA resolution 00-21, 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. Primary and secondary school transportation and services with destinations outside out of the county are not eligible for TDA funding.

When funding is available, new or expanded transit service can be considered under TDA statutes if the RTPA determines that it is "reasonable to meet." In order for a transit need to be found "reasonable to meet," it must be demonstrated that:

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.

The SSTAC prepares a recommendation based on the TNA and comments received during the public hearing and comment period. At the April 24, 2012 RTPA meeting, the board will review responses to comments and determine what unmet needs are "reasonable to meet" for each claimant jurisdiction.

Revenue is apportioned to the jurisdictions based on population. RABA's expenses are apportioned based on an 80% service hour/20% service area population formula. The jurisdictions have discretion over how remaining funds are used and may choose to fund additional transit services that do not meet the RTPA's minimum criteria. Typically, remaining funds are used for local streets and roads. An annual budget is prepared (TNA Appendix 3) before any funds are disbursed.

**Transit Performance**

Funds allocated to RABA are subject to a ratio of fare revenue to operating cost (farebox ratio). For fiscal year 2010/11, RABA's combined farebox ratio was 15.06%, falling short of the RTPA's temporary farebox ratio goal of 16.7%. This places RABA in a penalty cycle. The jurisdictions in Shasta County will be asked to contribute the funds necessary to meet the transit service requirements. There is no reduction in the amount of TDA funds received from the state.

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 meets these requirements.

The county operates Burney Express under contract with RABA. In 2010/11, ridership on Burney Express increased resulting in a farebox ratio of 19.93%. On July 1, 2011, based on declining ridership and recommendations in the 2011/12 TNA, the county implemented a fare increase with a second fare increase schedule for July 1, 2012. The 2013/14 TNA will identify if ridership is affected by these fare increases.

All jurisdictions are meeting their transit obligation. RTPA and RABA staff will work closely to ensure that all agencies can meet their transit obligations with the federal and state funds allocated.

**Public Hearing**

A public hearing is needed to take testimony from citizens and interested agencies. Public notice postings began on February 15, 2012. Comments will be accepted until March 16, 2012.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

The board could choose to not accept the TNA and request revisions. This could delay the TDA budget and payments for 2012/13.

**OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

The 2012/13 TNA was developed in consultation with the SSTAC, CTSA and RABA

**FINANCING:**

Today's action and approval of findings in April will provide a budget for the 2012/13 annual TDA claims.

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

**Attachment:** 2012/13 Transit Needs Assessment