STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE:	**April 30, 2026**
SUBJECT:	**Receive Presentation on Unmet Transit Needs Process, Hold Fiscal Year 2026/27 Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearing, and Review Draft Transit Needs Assessment**
AGENDA ITEM:	**10**
STAFF CONTACT:	**Jennifer Pollom, AICP, Senior Transportation Planner**

SUMMARY:

Transit funding in the Shasta Region comes from federal and state sources. A presentation regarding transit funding will be provided along with the draft annual transit needs assessment (weblink in Attachment A). A public hearing is required to receive comments on unmet transit needs in the region.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the SRTA Board of Directors:

1. Receive a presentation on the Unmet Transit Needs process;
2. Hold a public hearing to receive public comments on unmet transit needs;
3. Provide direction to staff regarding the preliminary Fiscal Year (FY) 2026/27 Unmet Transit Needs recommendation; and
4. Direct staff to prepare responses to any comments provided during the public hearing or additional comments received by the May 18, 2026, deadline.

DISCUSSION:

Background – Each year SRTA assesses and makes determinations regarding unmet transit needs in the Shasta Region. The draft FY 2026/27 Transit Needs Assessment will be presented to the board of directors. A public hearing is required. The final report and unmet transit needs recommendations will be presented at the June 24, 2026, meeting, alongside the FY 2026/27 Transportation Development Act (TDA) budget, for consideration by the board of directors.

Over the last decade, staff at Caltrans, the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), and local transit agencies statewide have been working with the California Association for Coordinated Transportation (CalACT) and California Transit Association (CTA) on changes to the TDA. One significant change in 2021 allowed the inclusion of non-State grants in the farebox ratio calculation. This change results in RABA meeting:

- The region's farebox goal of 18 percent for fiscal years 2021/22 through 2024/25; and
- The absolute minimum TDA requirement of 15 percent farebox recovery.

Continuing from prior years, SRTA will work with regional partners to explore key strategies from the 2040 Long-Range Transit Plan (weblink in Attachment B), RABA's Short Range Transit Plan (weblink in Attachment C), the Shasta Coordinated Transportation Plan (weblink in Attachment D), and SRTA's FY 2021/22 through 2023/24 Triennial Performance Audit (weblink in Attachment E) recommendations to address the region's transit performance. Staff acknowledges several strategies have been implemented in the last couple of years by RABA, or are planned, and would like to see if those strategies result in positive performance improvements.

As the agency responsible for overseeing the apportionments of Local Transportation Funds (LTF) under TDA law, SRTA is required to administer the annual unmet transit needs process. The purpose of this process is to identify potential unmet transit needs and certify that all reasonable-to-meet transit needs have been met. This certification must be performed prior to allocating any remaining LTF dollars *"not directly related to public transportation services, specialized transportations services, or facilities provided for the exclusive use of pedestrians and bicycles" (Public Utilities Code (PUC) § 99401.5)* to local streets and roads or other eligible uses. Key elements of the transit needs assessment include:

- An assessment of likely transit-dependent populations (i.e., location, distribution, and relative need) and the adequacy of existing transit services in meeting their transit needs;
- Public outreach to determine if there are any unmet transit needs; and
- A preliminary assessment to determine whether the identified needs are consistent with SRTA's adopted reasonable-to-meet definition.

When determining unmet transit needs and their reasonableness to be met, including against available funding, SRTA, as the transportation planning agency, is constrained by the following under *PUC § 99401.5(c)*: *"The fact that an identified transit need cannot be fully met based on available resources shall not be the sole reason for finding that a transit need is not reasonable to meet. An agency's determination of needs that are reasonable to meet shall not be made by comparing unmet transit needs with the need for streets and roads."*

The draft FY 2026/27 Transit Needs Assessment will be presented to the board and in accordance with TDA statutes. The board of directors will hear potential unmet transit needs during the public hearing.

Public Transportation Performance Evaluation – Overall, transit performance declined for fixed route service and improved for the demand response service. As shown in the table on page three of the staff report, RABA operations from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, saw a 10 percent decline in total trips on fixed route service compared to the prior year, while demand response trips almost doubled. The TDA subsidy per trip for fixed route increased to $7.33 and decreased to $19.94 for demand response. Overall, SRTA staff observed that very few of RABA's routes or services met desired performance metrics for FY 2024/25. However, RABA also initiated several service changes to try to meet desired performance. Often these changes take time to get information out to riders and for riders to adjust and become familiar with the changes before usage increases and performance improves.

As of this report, staff does not recommend adding any new transit needs in FY 2026/27 to allow several transit services recently implemented or planned to get established and then evaluated. Recent services changes by RABA include:

- RABA Response (formerly Demand Response complementary paratransit service) is now operated by Dignity Health Connected Living (DHCL);
- RABA is the designated CTSA, administering the ShastaConnect Rural Demand Response and operated by DHCL;
- RABA Lifeline Transit Pass Program began July 1, 2025, to enhance transportation access for low-income residents of Shasta County; and

- RABA has several free ride programs (students, veterans, RABA employees) and discounted ride programs (Seniors [65+ years], persons with disabilities, and persons presenting a Medicare card).

RABA Performance Review Table for Fiscal Years 2022/23 through 2024/25

Redding Area Bus Authority					
Performance Indicator	**2022/23**	**2023/24**	**2024/25**	**2023/24 vs 2024/25**	**Percent Change from 2023/24 to 2024/25**
Fixed Route					
Total Trips	375,475	476,326	425,539	(50,787)	-10.66%
Veh Service Miles	591,971	644,944	918,597	273,653	42.43%
Vehicle Hours	38,970	43,191	48,155	4,964	11.49%
Total Expenses (minus exclusions)	$ 4,732,037	$ 5,712,831	$ 5,528,126	$ (184,705)	-3.23%
Farebox Revenue (minus exclusions)	$ 2,829,770	$ 2,883,979	$ 2,406,978	$ (477,001)	-16.54%
Farebox Ratio	59.80%	50.48%	43.54%	-6.94%	-13.75%
TDA Subsidy Per Trip	$ 5.07	$ 5.94	$ 7.33	$ 1.40	23.50%
Operating Cost/Passenger Trip	$ 12.60	$ 11.99	$ 12.99	$ 1.00	8.32%
Operating Cost/Service Hour	$ 121.43	$ 132.27	$ 114.80	$ (17.47)	-13.21%
Passengers/Service Hour	9.63	11.03	8.84	(2.19)	-19.87%
Passengers/Service Mile	0.63	0.74	0.46	(0.28)	-37.28%
Demand Response					
Total Trips	27,713	25,358	48,150	22,792	89.88%
Veh Service Miles	166,262	169,680	306,940	137,260	80.89%
Vehicle Hours	9,969	10,239	18,488	8,249	80.56%
Total Expenses (minus exclusions)	$ 1,264,862	$ 1,473,972	$ 1,624,006	$ 150,034	10.18%
Farebox Revenue (minus exclusions)	$ 773,410	$ 806,925	$ 663,685	$ (143,240)	-17.75%
Farebox Ratio	61.15%	54.74%	40.87%	-13.88%	-25.35%
TDA Subsidy Per Trip	$ 17.73	$ 26.31	$ 19.94	$ (6.36)	-24.18%
Operating Cost/Passenger Trip	$ 45.64	$ 58.13	$ 33.73	$ (24.40)	-41.97%
Operating Cost/Service Hour	$ 126.88	$ 143.96	$ 87.84	$ (56.12)	-38.98%
Passengers/Service Hour	2.78	2.48	2.60	0.13	5.16%
Passengers/Service Mile	0.17	0.15	0.16	0.01	4.97%

Public Involvement – SRTA partnered with RABA to ask riders about any unmet needs. RABA included the question, “Do you have any unmet transit needs?” in their October 2025 customer survey. For fixed route service, 27 percent of respondents stated that they had unmet transit needs. For those needs expressed, a vast majority are met by recent changes to the transit system, such as RABA Runabout weekend and evening service, RABA Runabout Cottonwood service, and RABA Rideshare (voucher program).

The draft Transit Needs Assessment was released on April 24, 2026, and will be out for public review through May 18, 2026, providing over three weeks for public and regional partners to review and provide feedback.

Next Steps – Unmet transit needs findings, including the results of any additional technical analyses and recommendations for items to study further, and documentation of public input will be presented alongside the proposed FY 2026/27 TDA budget at the June 24, 2026, meeting of the SRTA Board of Directors.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may suggest transit services and other ideas for consideration for the draft FY 2026/27 Transit Needs Assessment, including any unmet transit needs findings and recommendations.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The unmet transit needs process is developed in consultation with the county of Shasta; the cities of Anderson, Redding, and Shasta Lake; RABA; and the SSTAC. Documentation of the unmet transit needs process is approved by Caltrans. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on April 15, 2026, to review and discuss the annual transit needs assessment process, preliminary recommendations, and concurs with the staff recommendation. The SSTAC met on April 8, 2026, and agreed with staff that no new transit should be added in FY 2026/27 to allow time for the recent service changes by RABA to be established.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Unmet transit needs and their reasonableness to be met govern the use of LTF for public transportation and subsequent surplus allocations for other eligible non-transit uses (e.g., local streets and roads). The TDA budget, as well as the FY 2026/27 Unmet Transit Needs Findings and Recommendations will be provided to the board of directors in June for consideration.

Sean Tiedgen, AICP, Executive Director

Attachments:

A. DRAFT FY 2026/27 Transit Needs Assessment can be found at (weblink: https://www.srta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10204/DRAFT-202627-Transit-Needs-Assessment-and-Unmet-Transit-Needs-Findings-PDF)

B. 2040 Long-Range Transit Plan can be found at (weblink: www.srta.ca.gov/341/2040-Long-Range-Transit-Plan)

C. RABA Short-Range Transit Plan can be found at (weblink: https://rabaride.com/resources/resources/planning_for_the_future.php)

D. Shasta Coordinated Transportation Plan can be found at (weblink: https://www.srta.ca.gov/276/Shasta-Coordinated-Transportation-Plan)

E. TDA Triennial Performance Audit of SRTA as the RTPA for FY 2021/22 - FY 2023/24 can be found at (weblink: https://srta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9788/FY-2022-2024-Triennial-Performance-Audit-of-SRTA)