

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	February 25, 2020
SUBJECT:	Review Fiscal Year 2020/21 Annual Transit Needs Assessment and Preliminary Recommendations (Public Hearing)
AGENDA ITEM:	11
STAFF CONTACT:	Daniel Wayne, Senior Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

Each year SRTA assesses and makes determinations regarding unmet transit needs in the Shasta Region. The Draft Transit Needs Assessment for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020/21 was posted to SRTA's website on January 24, 2020, and advertised. A public hearing is required. Final unmet transit needs recommendations will be presented in April alongside the FY 2020/21 Transportation Development Act (TDA) budget for consideration by the board of directors.

The combined farebox recovery ratio for Redding Area Bus Authority (RABA) fixed route and demand response services for FY 2018/19 is 13.71%. Since this is below the TDA minimum of 15%, no expansion to services are recommended using TDA funds at this time. Burney Express farebox recovery fell to 8.73%, which is below the TDA minimum of 10% for rural services. Coordinated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA) service had a TDA subsidy per trip of \$23.90, which is above SRTA's goal of \$21.10. Despite current services not meeting performance standards, existing services provide essential mobility for transit dependent populations and should not be discontinued without something in its place. Options and recommendations for improving performance, including possible alternative public transportation service delivery strategies, will be explored through the Long-Range Transit Plan (anticipated completion early 2021).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the SRTA Board of Directors:

1. Hold a public hearing to receive public comments on unmet transit needs;
2. Provide any further direction to staff regarding preliminary FY 2020/21 Unmet Transit Needs recommendations; and
3. Direct staff to prepare responses to any additional public comments received.

DISCUSSION:

Background – As a recipient of Local Transportation Funds (LTF), 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 residual LTF funds to local streets and roads or other eligible uses. Key elements of the transit needs assessment include:

- An assessment of likely transit-dependent populations and the adequacy of existing transit services in meeting their needs;
- Public outreach to determine if there are any unmet transit needs; and
- A preliminary assessment to determine if any such needs are consistent with SRTA's adopted reasonable to meet definition (see Appendix 2 of the attached Transit Needs Assessment).

The Draft FY 2020/21 Transit Needs Assessment (attached) has been conducted in accordance with the TDA. Key findings are highlighted in this staff report.

Public Transportation Performance – Select performance metrics and trends for the region’s public transportation services are shown below. Additional detail is provided in the full Transit Needs Assessment (attached).

RABA Fixed Route and Demand Response Service Performance

Performance Measure	FY 2018/19	5-Year Average	FY 2018/19 vs. 2017/18
Total Number of Trips	575,978	664,410	-83,719
Operating Cost/Passenger Trip	\$8.89	\$7.71	+\$1.19
Operating Cost/Service Hour	\$100.37	\$93.19	+\$4.86
Passengers/Service Hour	14.52	13.26	-0.24
Farebox Recovery	13.71%	16.67%	-5.07%

Burney Express Service Performance

Performance Measure	FY 2018/19	5-Year Average	FY 2018/19 vs. 2017/18
Total Number of Trips	4,981	5,549	-1,057
TDA Subsidy Per Trip	\$44.98	\$35.30	-\$8.37
Farebox Recovery	8.73%	11.22%	-1.7%

**Coordinated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) Service Performance
(Operated by Dignity Health Connected Living (DHCL) Under Contract with SRTA)**

Performance Measure	FY 2018/19	3-Year Average	Contract Goal for FY 2018/19
TDA Subsidy Per Trip	\$23.90	\$19.79	\$21.10

Service Recommendations – The following table outlines transit service requests submitted to date under the current FY 2020/21 cycle, as well as recurring requests from prior cycles. Where non-TDA grant funds have been acquired, SRTA and RABA have implemented service expansion, such as Sunday on-demand transit and express services, including Crosstown and Cottonwood. Intercity bus service is also in development using grant funds. However, since the performance of fixed route, demand, express, and CTSA services have all fallen below minimum performance standards, no expansion of services is recommended at this time. Requests will continue to be tracked and alternative transit service delivery strategies will be identified and evaluated as part of the Long-Range Transit Plan (anticipated completion early 2021).

Unmet Transit Needs Requests and Recommendations

Current FY 2020/21 Cycle			
Transit Service Request	Unmet Transit Need?	Reasonable to Meet?	Response
Two requests for service to/from Shingletown	Yes	No	Expansion of fixed route service is not recommended at this time given that current services are operating below the minimum farebox recovery. CTSA service was provided to Shingletown in the past but was discontinued due to insufficient ridership.
One request for service to the Redding Airport	Yes	No	Fixed route service to the airport was recently discontinued due to low ridership and revenue. In light of current services operating below the minimum farebox recovery, restarting this service is not recommended at this time. ShastaConnect does, however, serve the airport upon request.
Five requests for service to/from Lakehead	Yes	No	Expansion of fixed route service is not recommended at this time given that current services are operating below the minimum farebox recovery. CTSA service was provided to Lakehead in the past but was discontinued due to insufficient ridership.
One request for service to Anderson	No	Yes	Parts of the city of Anderson are currently served by RABA (fixed route and demand response). Qualifying seniors and mobility impaired individuals may request service through ShastaConnect. Additional information regarding the specific destination is needed.
One request for service to Sacramento Airport	Yes	Yes	Future service is being made possible through grant funds awarded for the Salmon Runner intercity bus. The service start date is pending procurement of zero-emission motor coaches and the successful award of grant funding for operations.

Unmet Transit Needs Requests and Recommendations (continued)

Recurring Requests from Previous Unmet Transit Needs Cycles			
Transit Service Request	Unmet Transit Need?	Reasonable to Meet?	Response
Whiskeytown Summer Service	Yes	Yes	A pilot project was performed in the summer of 2017 (June through August). The SRTA Board of Directors authorized funding for the 2018 season but it was not implemented because the National Park Service (NPS) intended to charge an entry fee per individual (as opposed to per vehicle), thereby rendering the service unfeasible. After working with NPS, RABA, and other potential funding partners, service will be resumed for the 2020 summer season (Memorial Day through Labor Day) – assuming the board of directors remains supportive.
Extended Service Hours	Yes	Not at this time	In light of current services operating below the minimum farebox recovery ratio, expansion of service cannot be recommended at this time. Requests will continue to be tracked and alternatives will be identified and evaluated as part of the upcoming Long-Range Transit Plan (anticipated completion early 2021).
More Frequent Service			
Extended Service Areas			
Sunday Service	Yes	Yes	After repeated and consistent requests for Sunday service, SRTA developed a grant-funded Sunday Service pilot program to serve urban areas in Redding. Service commenced in October 2019. Initial ridership is very close to pre-launch expectations and may, if performance continues to trend upward, continue and potentially be expanded to meet unmet transit needs in areas that might not otherwise be feasible.

Public Involvement – The Draft FY 2020/21 Transit Needs Assessment (attached) was posted to the SRTA website on January 24, 2020, advertised, and circulated to interested individuals and organizations. The eleven comments received to date are documented in Appendix 8 of the Draft FY 2020/21 Transit Needs Assessment, which is available online at www.srta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/4969/FY-2020-21-Transit-Needs-Assessment-Public-Review-Draft?bidId= or by contacting SRTA. Comments may be submitted during the public hearing or delivered to SRTA through March 4, 2020.

Next Steps – Unmet transit needs findings, including all public comments received, the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) recommendations and final staff recommendations, will be presented along with the proposed FY 2020/21 TDA budget at the April 2020 meeting of the SRTA Board of Directors.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may suggest modifications to the preliminary unmet transit needs recommendations or the transit needs assessment document.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The unmet transit needs process is developed in consultation with the county of Shasta, the three cities, the SSTAC, DHCL, and RABA. Documentation of the unmet transit needs process is approved by Caltrans. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) reviewed the Draft FY 2020/21 Transit Needs Assessment. Their feedback, including minor clarifications to the findings, will be incorporated into the final report.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The unmet transit needs findings govern the use of LTF for public transportation and subsequent allocations for other eligible non-transit uses (e.g. local streets and roads). The TDA budget will be provided to the board of directors in April for consideration.



Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

Attachments:

Draft 2020/21 Transit Needs Assessment

www.srta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/4969/FY-2020-21-Transit-Needs-Assessment-Public-Review-Draft?bidId=