

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	April 28, 2020
SUBJECT:	Review Fiscal Year 2020/21 Annual Transit Needs Assessment and Preliminary Recommendations (Public Hearing)
AGENDA ITEM:	8
STAFF CONTACT:	Daniel Wayne, Senior Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

The FY 2020/21 Transit Needs Assessment is complete. This process, including all public comments received and SRTA's responses, have been documented in the attached report. SRTA staff and the Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC) recommend no *new or expanded* TDA-funded services due to current services performing below the TDA's minimum farebox recovery and regionally set performance targets. It is recommended, however, that all *existing* TDA-funded services be maintained until alternative transit service delivery options can be considered in the long-range transit plan (anticipated completion February 2021). For the time being, grants and other non-TDA funding are helping the region address a number of unmet transit needs, including the need for Sunday service, intercity service, and the seasonal Whiskeytown Beach Bus.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the SRTA Board of Directors:

1. Hold a public hearing to receive public comments on FY 2020/21 unmet transit needs findings (Attachment B);
2. Provide any further direction to staff regarding FY 2020/21 Unmet Transit Needs recommendations;
3. Direct staff to prepare responses to any additional public comments received; and
4. Direct staff to prepare a corresponding TDA budget for consideration at the June 23, 2020, board of directors meeting.

DISCUSSION:

Background – As a recipient of Local Transportation Funds (LTF), SRTA is required to administer an annual transit needs assessment and certify that all reasonable to meet needs have been met (see Attachment A, Appendix B for reasonable to meet definition). The Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee reviews and provides an independent recommendation. Once all reasonable to meet needs have been funded, any residual LTF funds may be allocated to local streets and roads or other eligible uses.

FY 2020/21 Transit Needs Assessment – Draft unmet transit needs findings were made available for public comment January 24 through March 4, 2020, and a public hearing on the draft findings was held on February 25, 2020. All public comments received have been documented and responded to in the final draft FY 2020/21 Unmet Transit Needs (attached by weblink). In summary, the final report makes the following key findings:

Finding #1: Current public transportation services have fallen below regional and state standards and are trending downward – Key performance statistics for the most recent full year of data (FY 2018/19) include the following:

- Redding Area Bus Authority (RABA) fixed route and paratransit services fell by 5.07% to 13.71% and is now below the TDA minimum of 15%.
- Burney Express farebox recovery fell by 1.7% to 8.73% and is now 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 exceeds SRTA's goal of no more than \$21.10.

Finding #2: Unmet transit needs are being addressed as funding permits - Where non-TDA grant funds have been acquired, SRTA and RABA have implemented service expansion, including Sunday on-demand transit, Cottonwood Express (discontinued due to low ridership), and Crosstown Express. Intercity bus service is also in development using grant funds. Since the performance of TDA-funded services have all fallen below minimum performance standards, no new or expanded services are recommended at this time using TDA-funds. Unmet transit needs will continue to be solicited and tracked through the annual unmet transit needs process and alternative transit service delivery strategies will be identified and evaluated as part of the Long-Range Transit Plan (anticipated completion early 2021).

Finding #3: All existing public transportation services are essential – Despite not meeting performance standards, existing public transportation services provide mobility for transit dependent populations and should not be discontinued without an alternative in 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). Until such time, it is recommended that TDA funding continue to be provided for all existing public transportation services.

Impact of COVID-19 on Transit – Public transportation performance everywhere is being severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The extent of these impacts at the local level is not yet fully known; however, early data indicates a drop in ridership of at least 50% for both fixed route and paratransit services. At the writing of this report, all services except the School Express are operating. RABA has enhanced cleaning procedures, closed offices, and instituted social distancing in the form of no more than two paratransit riders per van and passenger limits on fixed route buses. Other services have likewise been impacted. CTSA service is operating with a limit of two riders at a time. Sunday on-demand transit service was suspended on April 5, 2020, for an estimated 6-8 weeks. The board of directors approved Whiskeytown Beach Bus service this summer, however, the starting date for the season may be postponed or possibly deferred to next year.

It is anticipated that stimulus funds will help offset losses in essential transit revenue due to the pandemic. Additional information will be presented to the board of directors as it becomes available.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may direct staff to include new or expanded transit services as part of the TDA budget process, which will be presented for approval at the June 23, 2020, board of directors meeting.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The unmet transit needs process is developed in consultation with the county of Shasta, the cities of Anderson, Shasta Lake, and Redding, SSTAC, DHCL, and RABA. The SSTAC provides an independent recommendation (Attachment D). Documentation of the unmet transit needs process is approved by Caltrans.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The unmet transit needs findings govern the use of Local Transportation Fund (LTF) for public transportation and subsequent allocations for other eligible non-transit uses (e.g. local streets and roads). If no new or expanded TDA-funded services are added, the TDA budget will not be directly impacted. The TDA budget will be provided to the board of directors in April for consideration.

Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

Attachments:

A: FY 2020/21 Transit Needs Assessment

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

B: Summary of FY 2020/21 Unmet Transit Needs and Responses

C: Summary of Most Recent Transit Performance Measures for TDA-Funded Services

D: Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee Recommendation

ATTACHMENT B: Summary of Unmet Transit Needs Requests and Responses

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/from 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/from Riverland Drive	Yes	Further analysis required	Riverland Drive is in RABA's Paratransit service area. Additional analysis, outreach, and planning will need to be performed to determine what additional service(s), including potentially fixed route, should be funded with TDA or potentially other sources such as Low-Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP). The analysis may be performed as part of, or concurrent with, the upcoming Long-Range Transit Plan (anticipated completion early 2021).
One request for service to/from Anderson	No	Already being served by RABA	Parts of the city of Anderson are currently served by RABA (fixed route and paratransit). Qualifying seniors and mobility impaired individuals may request service through ShastaConnect. Additional information regarding the specific destination is needed.
One request for service to/from Sacramento Airport	Yes	Service is currently in development	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.

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. <i>Note: Due to COVID-19 pandemic, it is now recommended that this service be deferred to the 2021 season.</i>
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.

ATTACHMENT C: Summary of Most Recent Performance Measures for TDA-Funded Services

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

**ATTACHMENT D: Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee FY 2020/21 Unmet Transit
Needs Recommendation**



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Daniel S. Little, Executive Director

To: Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) Board of Directors
Date: April 28, 2020
Subject: SSTAC 2020/21 Unmet Transit Needs Recommendation

The Shasta Region's Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) meets at least biannually to review transit needs in the Shasta Region. The SSTAC is responsible for preparing an unmet needs recommendation to the SRTA Board of Directors as part of the annual unmet transit needs process. The primary public transportation provider in the region is the Redding Area Bus Authority (RABA).

The SSTAC reviewed and concurred with the following SRTA staff recommendations:

- 1) Continue Sunday On-Demand Transit Service – Begun in October 2019, the SSTAC recommends continuation of this pilot project.
- 2) Provide Whiskeytown Summer Service – Work with RABA and the National Park Service to offer Summer 2020 service to Whiskeytown National Recreation Area.
- 3) Defer Extended Service Hours, More Frequent Services, and Extended Service Areas – RABA's farebox recovery ratio has fallen below the minimum 15%. Adding these service scenarios would negatively impact the ratio using the existing service delivery model.
- 4) Continue to Provide Existing RABA Service – Even though RABA's farebox has fallen below required minimum farebox recovery ratios, continue transit service as a community need.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Geagan

Patrick Geagan (Chair)	- Disabled Transit User
Hallie Fonseca (Vice Chair)	- Local Social Service Provider for Seniors (Transportation)
Sharon Gatt	- Transit User 60 Years of Age or Older
Theresa McCausland	- Local Social Service Provider for Seniors (Non-Transp)
Sou Saechao	- Local Social Service Provider for the Disabled (Transp)
Del Lockwood	- Local Social Service Provider for the Disabled (Non-Transp)
Vacant	- Social Service Provider for Persons of Limited Means
Vacant	- Local CTSA Representative (Administrator)
Elizabeth Duarte	- Local CTSA Representative (Operator)
Steve Smith	- Help, Inc.
Susan Morris Wilson	- Citizen
Robert Hale	- Citizen
Holly Leaf	- Shasta County Opportunity Center
Anne Thomas	- Shasta Living Streets
Christina Prosperi	- Citizen