

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	April 26, 2016
SUBJECT:	FY 2016/17 Annual Unmet Needs Hearing (Public Hearing)
AGENDA ITEM:	7
STAFF CONTACT:	Keith Williams, Associate Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

Each year, SRTA assesses and makes recommendations regarding unmet transit needs in the Shasta Region. The Draft Transit Needs Assessment for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016/17 was posted to SRTA's website on March 25, 2016, and the public comment period will end on May 2, 2016. A public hearing is also required. Requests for additional transit services will be evaluated against the agency's definition of 'unmet transit need' and 'reasonable to meet' criteria. Final unmet transit needs recommendations will be presented in June, alongside the FY 2016/17 Transportation Development Act (TDA) budget and jurisdictional allocations, for consideration by the board of directors.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. Hold a public hearing to receive public comments on unmet transit needs;
2. Hear a brief presentation on the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council's 2016/17 Unmet Transit Needs recommendation from Chair Steve Smith; and
3. Direct staff to prepare responses to public comments as part of the Unmet Transit Needs findings, prerequisite to approving the TDA budget in June.

DISCUSSION:

As a recipient of TDA funds, SRTA is required to administer the annual Unmet Transit Needs process. The purpose of this process is to:

1. Identify potential unmet transit needs in each jurisdiction; and
2. Certify that all reasonable-to-meet transit needs have been met in each jurisdiction, prior to allocating any residual TDA funds for other eligible uses, including local streets and roads.

SRTA's annual Unmet Transit Needs process – and the status of the FY 2016/17 unmet transit needs cycle – is provided below.

Overview of the Annual Unmet Transit Needs Process

Activity	Schedule			
	Jan-Mar	Mar-May	May-Jun	Beyond
1. Assess current conditions and gather input				
Consult with Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC)	☒			
Review most recent transit plans and prior year Unmet Transit Needs findings	☒			
Review (and update as needed) analysis on the size and location of populations that are likely to be transit dependent	☒			
Solicit public comments via 'Shasta Transit Brainstorm' (social media, interviews, etc)	☒			
Develop transit service priorities survey (based on findings from above activities) and administer through SRTA website, social media, and other methods		☒		
2. Draft Transit Needs Assessment				
Prepare and publish draft Transit Needs Assessment for a minimum 30-day public comment period		☒		
Hold a public hearing to receive comments on the draft Transit Needs Assessment		☒		
3. Final Transit Needs Assessment				
Work with appropriate transit provider(s) to develop options for meeting identified unmet transit needs and testing against adopted reasonable to meet criteria				
Adopt final Transit Needs Assessment and findings for the upcoming fiscal year (requests requiring additional analysis are continued to the next fiscal year)			☒	
Allocate TDA funds for transit and non-transit purposes for the upcoming fiscal year			☒	

Each year, unmet transit needs are identified through transit demand analysis and public input. Interagency consultation and technical analysis of those needs lead to possible solutions. Special studies may necessitate postponing SRTA's reasonable-to-meet test (see Attachment A) of alternatives

beyond the current cycle. In such cases, needs are determined 'not reasonable to meet' for the current cycle but may be presented with any new analysis for possible funding at a later cycle. A summary of active Unmet Transit Needs is provided below.

Summary of Active Unmet Transit Needs

FY 2015/16 Unmet Transit Needs			
Transit Service Request	Unmet Transit Need?	Reasonable to Meet?	Response
Additional mid-day Burney Express run from Redding to Burney	Yes	Yes	RABA and the county of Shasta introduced an additional mid-day Burney Express run in August, 2015. Burney Express ridership increased by 28% in the first six months of operating the additional run.
Public transit service to Cottonwood	Yes	Yes	RABA is scheduled to begin service to Cottonwood on April 28, 2016.
Additional transit service along Airport Rd. to include Redding Electric Utility	Yes	No	RABA and SRTA analysis indicate insufficient funding and potential passengers. This need may be revisited in future if requests are received.
Explore transit options to serve the WE-CARE-A-LOT Foundation in order to meet the mobility needs of clients with developmental disabilities and employees	Yes	No	SRTA and RABA staff consulted with WE-CARE-A-LOT employees. Shasta Senior Nutrition Program will service passengers where RABA Demand Response is not able to do so. Expansion of fixed route to this location may be explored in the next Short Range Transit Plan.
Preliminarily FY 2016/17 Unmet Transit Needs			
Transit Service Requests	Response		
More direct transit service between downtown Redding and the Mt. Shasta Mall	RABA and SRTA are currently evaluating service and funding alternatives for a new 'Crosstown Express' service.		
Seasonal service to Whiskeytown Lake	RABA and SRTA are currently evaluating service and funding alternatives for new service between the Redding Transit Center and Whiskeytown National Recreation Area from Memorial Day through Labor Day.		
Sunday service	Requires the development of service alternatives and analysis for consideration during future unmet transit needs cycles. In regards to Sunday service, SRTA is studying the prospect of introducing Sunday CTSA services, as soon as July 1, 2017, as part of a comprehensive transit analysis and developing a Coordinated Transit Plan.		
More frequent service			
Extended service hours			

The Draft FY 2016/17 Transit Needs Assessment (Attachment B) was posted on the SRTA website and circulated to interested individuals and organizations. Comments may be submitted during the public hearing or delivered to SRTA through May 2, 2016.

The SSTAC has reviewed the Draft FY 2016/17 Transit Needs Assessment and concurs with SRTA staff's initial recommendations. It also recommends SRTA staff carry out analysis on several unmet needs and report the results of that analysis to SSTAC by next year's unmet transit needs cycle so as to inform SSTAC's unmet transit needs recommendation next year.

The Final Transit Needs Assessment – including all comments received, findings, and recommendations – will be presented at the June meeting alongside the proposed FY 2016/17 TDA budget and jurisdictional allocations for consideration by the board of directors.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may extend the public comment period beyond May 2, 2016.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The unmet transit needs process is developed in consultation with the county of Shasta, the three cities, SSTAC, Shasta Senior Nutrition Program, and RABA. Documentation of the Unmet Transit Needs process is approved by Caltrans.

FINANCING:

In a typical year, where transit needs have been identified and funded, approximately \$3,011,000 in TDA funds are used for transit and \$4,550,000 are used for non-transit purposes, i.e. streets and roads.

Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

Attachments:

A: SRTA Resolution Number 00-21, Definition of Unmet Transit Needs & Reasonable to Meet

B: Draft 2016/17 Transit Needs Assessment available at:

<http://srta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2816>

RESOLUTION NO. 00-21

DEFINITION OF UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS AND REASONABLE TO MEET

WHEREAS, the Transportation Development Act (TDA) requires each transportation planning agency to find, prior to any allocation of Local Transportation Fund (LTF) monies for streets and roads, (1) that there are no unmet transit needs, or (2) that there are no unmet transit needs which can reasonably be met, or (3) if there are unmet transit needs, including some such needs that are reasonable to meet, that those needs determined reasonable to meet have been funded (California Public Utilities Code (PUC) Section 99401.5); and

WHEREAS, the TDA further permits the agency to define the terms "unmet transit needs" and "reasonable to meet" as it determines appropriate, consistent with PUC Section 99401.5(c); and

WHEREAS, Shasta County Regional Transportation Planning Agency staff, having consulted with claimant jurisdiction representatives and the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee and have concluded that minor technical changes consistent with the TDA and prior RTPA practice are appropriate, and have therefore recommended the following revised definitions:

Unmet Transit Needs. An "unmet transit need" under the Transportation Development Act shall be found to exist only under the following conditions:

1. A population group in the proposed transit service area has been defined and located which has no reliable, affordable, or accessible transportation for necessary trips. The size and location of the group must be such that a service to meet their needs is feasible within the definition of "reasonable to meet" as set forth below.
2. Necessary trips are defined as those trips which are required for the maintenance of life, education, access to social service programs, health, and physical and mental well-being, including trips which serve employment purposes.
3. Unmet transit needs specifically include:
 - (a) Transit or specialized transportation needs identified in the transit system's Americans with Disabilities Act Paratransit Plan or short-range Transit Plan which are not yet implemented or funded.
 - (b) Transit or specialized transportation needs identified by the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council and confirmed by the RTPA through testimony or reports which are not yet implemented or funded.

4. Unmet transit needs specifically exclude:
 - (a) Minor operational improvements or changes, involving issues such as bus stops, schedules and minor route changes.
 - (b) Improvements funded or scheduled for implementation in the following fiscal year.
 - (c) Trips for any purpose outside of Shasta County, in accordance with PUC Section 99220(b).
 - (d) Primary and secondary school transportation.

Reasonable to Meet. An identified unmet transit need shall be found "reasonable to meet" only under the following conditions:

1. It has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Agency that transit service adequate to meet the unmet need can be operated with a subsidy not to exceed 80% of operating cost in urbanized areas and 90% in nonurbanized areas. It must also have been demonstrated that the unsubsidized portion of operating costs can be recovered by fare revenues as defined in the State Controller's Uniform System of Accounts and Records. The "Cost Allocation Method" as shown in Exhibit (A) is the method to be used for determining fare box ratio.
 - (a) Transit service subsidy maximums may be determined on an individual route or service area, or an individual proposed route or service area, basis.
2. The proposed expenditure of Transportation Development Act funds required to support the transit service does not exceed the authorized allocation of the claimant, consistent with Public Utilities Code Sections 99230-99231.2 and TDA Regulations Sections 6649 and 6655.

The fact that an identified need cannot fully be met based on available resources, however, shall not be the sole reason for finding that a transit need is not Reasonable to Meet.
3. The proposed expenditure shall not be used to support or establish a service in direct competition with an existing private service, nor to provide 24-hour service.
4. Where transit service is to be jointly funded by two or more of the local claimant jurisdictions, it shall be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Commission that the resulting inter-agency cost sharing is equitable. In determining if the required funding equity has been achieved the Commission may consider, but is

not limited to considering whether or not the proposed cost sharing formula is acceptable to the affected claimants.

5. Transit services designed or intended to address an unmet transit need shall in all cases make coordinated efforts with transit services currently provided, either publicly or privately.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the definitions set forth above shall govern the RTPA's determinations of unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet pursuant to applicable TDA statutes and regulations, and the resulting allocation of TDA funds by this Commission;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Resolution 10-97 of the Shasta County Regional Transportation Planning Agency dated December 16, 1997, is hereby rescinded and superseded.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 12th day of December, 2000, by the Shasta County Regional Transportation Planning Agency.

David L. McGeorge, Chairman
Shasta County Regional
Transportation Planning Agency