CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MOBILITY ACTION PLAN (MAP) PHASE I IMPLEMENTATION STUDY
FINAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES PUBLIC TRANSIT- HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLANS
VOLUME II
RURAL COUNTIES

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This is the second volume of a report that documents the work activities associated with Subtasks 3.1 and 3.2 of the study work plan. The original request for proposal (RFP) relative to these subtasks required that the project team:

"…review and summarize California's large/small urban areas Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Coordination Plans. The summary must be based on analysis of current providers, assessment of existing needs, strategies and implementation of local priorities".

Moreover, as the MAP study progressed, the project team was subsequently engaged to review and summarize the Public Transit – Human Service Transportation Coordination Plans developed for rural areas within the state.

In response to the study objectives, the project team completed a comprehensive review of the existing Coordination plans for all regions statewide, towards the goal of developing a combined Statewide Executive Plan Summary document.

The review of the plans was conducted for the purposes of:

- Developing a combined document which generally summarizes the Coordination plans of all regions for information sharing and ease of reference;
- Gaining an informed understanding of transportation coordination needs and efforts planned and underway to address those needs in both large/small urban and rural areas;
- Identifying the unique and similar key issues presented in the plans;
- Assessing thoroughness and consistency of the plans with federal and state regulations and guidelines; and
- Providing information that will validate and/or augment qualitative information and data collected during the stakeholder involvement process.

The plan review also allowed the project team to capture information that will be useful in development of the Interregional Gap Analysis (Subtask 3.3 of the MAP study) and that can be translated into a broad, but sufficiently detailed view of existing conditions, challenges and opportunities. This document summarizes the rural county Public Transit – Human Services Coordination Plans prepared statewide.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES – RURAL COUNTIES

ALPINE COUNTY

Transportation Needs and Gaps (Combined)

Projected Transportation Needs

In Alpine County, the projected senior population (age 60 and older) is expected to grow from 362 to 577 individuals between 2010 and 2020, based on California Department of Finance projections. This represents a 59% increase. Therefore, it is assumed that demand for transportation services will increase approximately 59% in the next ten years.

Unmet Needs

Through a process that involved significant stakeholder participation and detailed analysis of existing documentation, the transportation needs and service gaps in Alpine County were identified. These generally fall into the following four categories: coordination, connections, service availability and acquisition and replacement of capital equipment. Further discussion with stakeholders allowed the service gaps and unmet needs identified during phase one of the planning process to be prioritized by rankings of high, medium and low.

The unmet needs as articulated by stakeholders are listed by category below and described further in the following section. They are:

- Coordination – challenges that impede coordination efforts
- Connections – challenges providing transportation links inside and outside Alpine County
- Service Availability – challenges providing service beyond existing limited service
- Capital Equipment – challenges maintaining or expanding the available fleet, both public and private

Coordination:

Stakeholders identified several needs that affect general coordination efforts such as:

- Efforts to develop meaningful coordination activities require a leader or champion
- Overcome barriers to coordination, including lack of staff resources to manage coordination activities and insufficient funds to achieve useful levels to support coordination activities.
- Assist other agencies with grant applications, such as 5310 applications
- Resolve insurance issues for use of County vehicles Connections

The need for connectivity to out of county services or systems was identified, especially for medical services and social service programs. Specific service gaps include:

- Need for bus service to operate reverse of current pattern into Gardnerville
- Coordinate travel on Highway 88 including Reno, Carson City, Minden, Gardnerville, and Jackson Service Availability Stakeholders indicated a need for expanded services. Specific issues include:

- Need to maintain current level of service for pre-schoolers attending the Early Learning Center
- Insufficient service outside the Markleeville – Woodfords area
- Service for veterans
- Need for weekday service to Minden/Gardnerville for Native American adults Acquisition and of Capital Equipment Stakeholders acknowledged the need for replacement vehicles to maintain the operational status and service quality of the public transit fleet. The AMT bus was removed from service in May 2008, due to mechanical failure. The need to replace the vehicle is a priority and efforts are underway to secure a replacement Type III bus. This vehicle would accommodate 16 ambulatory passengers and two wheelchairs.

Transportation Resources

Alpine Mountain Transit

Alpine Mountain Transit (AMT) discontinued service July 1, 2008, after negotiations with Douglas County failed to result in a contract extension. The service outlined below operated throughout the planning process. Efforts are underway to develop a plan to re-establish the transit system.

Alpine Mountain Transit (AMT) is the only public transit service in the county. Off-route deviation service is provided within one mile of the designated AMT route. The 22 passenger vehicle utilized by AMT is ADA accessible. Fares for a one-way ride are $2.00 for adults and $1.00 for seniors (55 and older) and youth (12 and younger).

AMT provides weekday transportation to and from Minden, Nevada, where connections to Carson City are available. Service is offered between 7:30 AM and 3:50 PM. Monday through Friday, AMT also transports pre-school children to the Early Learning Center in Markleeville.

Under the agreement with Douglas Area Rural Transit (DART), Alpine County provides the coach and requisite insurance, while DART is responsible for hiring and training drivers, fueling and maintaining the vehicle, and setting routes, schedules, fares, and bus stop locations. Routine oversight of the service is conducted by the County Department of Public Works through the Transportation Coordinator.

Other Transportation Service Providers Area 12 Agency on Aging

The Area 12 Agency on Aging provides services to a multi-county region that includes Alpine County. The Agency on Aging typically provides Title IIIB funds to provide transportation services for adults over 60 years of age. In Alpine County the transportation program chose not to apply for AAA funding due to the complexity of the administrative requirements associated with a relatively small amount of funding.

Alpine County Department of Health and Human Services

Alpine County DHHS operates a fleet of seven cars to transport clients to agency sponsored programs, and therapy, medical, dental or court appointments. Clients include persons with disabilities, individuals with low income, older adults, and children/youth. None of the staff

vehicles are wheelchair accessible. CalWorks purchases AMT tickets for use by its clients on an as needed basis.

Minden Taxi

Minden Taxi is the only private taxi service operating in Alpine and Douglas counties. The company utilizes one all terrain, 4 wheel drive vehicle that is not ADA accessible.

Kirkwood Mountain Resort

Kirkwood is Alpine County's largest employer. The company strongly encourages employee carpools and supports the program by paying drivers in Kirkwood dollars that may be used to purchase gas or other items at the resort. Payments are based on the number of passengers in the in the carpool:

- 1 passenger $10,00
- 2 passengers $20.00
- 3+ passengers $25.00

In addition to year round carpools, Kirkwood provides employee shuttle service during the winter ski season. Employees are picked up in South Lake Tahoe and the Minden/Gardnerville area. A leased fleet of six Dodge Durangos runs daily from November through May while full size charter buses operate December through April. Two weekday coaches and three weekend coaches are used for workers from South Lake Tahoe.

Greyhound, Amtrak and Airline Service

Neither Greyhound nor Amtrak is available in Alpine County. Service can be obtained in Reno, Nevada.

The Alpine County Airport is a general aviation airport. There is no commercial service at this time. Reno International Airport is the closest major airport serving the County.

Medi-Cal Vendors

Extensive inquiry revealed no firms receiving Medicaid reimbursement for transportation of non-emergency medical clients.

Barriers

Major Barriers to Coordination

Transportation providers in rural counties find themselves stretched thin trying to adequately address the growing demand for services. For Alpine County, with no incorporated cities and population density of 2 persons per square mile, this challenge is greater than for other rural counties in the state. Recognizing the need for agencies to work together is a vital step towards achieving more efficient, cost effective transportation services. However, coordination efforts can be impeded by a wide range of obstacles, including:

- Lack of a designated agency to serve as CTSA (leader/champion)

- Lack of dedicated resources: staff, funding, equipment to support coordination efforts
- Rural counties often do not have the large number of public and private agencies that can share resources. Coordination opportunities can be limited simply by the number of organizations operating within the region. In a small county like Alpine, this can be a significant factor.
- Different client eligibility requirements
- Service area boundaries that limit connectivity
- Inter-county and intra-county jurisdictional issues
- Lack of software/technology or incompatibilities with software/technology prevent sharing of scheduling and dispatching, client eligibility data, and reports
- Liability/insurance issues
- Privacy requirements, such as HIPPA, prevent sharing client information
- Reporting requirements that vary for federal, state and local funding sources

In discussions with stakeholders in Alpine County as well as other rural counties in central and eastern California, a significant barrier to increased coordination was identified as the lack of resources to pursue such activities. Leadership is a basic resource needed to further coordination efforts in the county. Without a designated leader, such as a CTSA, the energy to create true coordination will be difficult to harness.

Priorities

High Priority Strategies

Coordination Opportunity:

Efforts to develop meaningful coordination activities require a leader or champion.

Strategy:

Develop leadership for coordination efforts through the designation of Alpine County as CTSA The importance of a leader or champion for coordination efforts became very clear during discussions with local participants. In Alpine County there is no designated CTSA. While not necessarily responsible for all coordination activities, the CTSA is an appropriate focal point for achieving results. Without leadership, it will be difficult to achieve meaningful coordination outcomes.

The County would be designated as the CTSA. Within the County there may be options as to where to assign the responsibility to perform CTSA tasks. This could be in the Public Works Department, Human Services Department, or some other appropriate place in the County administrative structure. The key would be to assign the responsibilities to a Department that would embrace the challenge and pursue real results.

Coordination Opportunity:

Overcoming barriers to coordination, including:

- Lack of staff resources to manage coordination activities
- Insufficient funds to achieve useful levels to support coordination activities

Strategy:

Enhance CTSA management to allow for negotiation of interagency agreements, providing for coordinated use of assets and operating funds. Research revealed that while most rural counties have a designated CTSA, many CTSAs are not very active in pursuing coordination opportunities. This situation often is the result of two local conditions:

1. Lack of Staff Resources to Pursue Coordination - Small transit agencies are frequently the designated CTSA for its county. While such designation is intended to carry with it the responsibility to work actively to coordinate the services of local organizations including the transit operator, small agencies often do not have the staff to carry out this task. Existing staff is focused on day-to-day operations management, service planning, and overall compliance with regulations. While supporting the concept of coordination, small agencies do not have sufficient personnel to dedicate to outreach, planning and organizing that is required for effective coordination.

Completing grant applications can be confusing and overwhelming. While larger agencies often have staff dedicated to the preparation of grant applications, smaller agencies usually assign this responsibility to the transit manager or other administrative personnel. These individuals may not have the time or the expertise to seek out grant opportunities and submit applications.

2. Lack of Sufficient Funds to Accomplish Meaningful Results - Grant amounts available to rural counties are usually significantly less than those awarded to larger urban counties. The small size of the award can make it difficult to achieve “critical mass” or sufficient funds to realize meaningful outcomes. Agencies in rural counties weigh the value of the grant amount against the staff time required to prepare the grant application and manage the grant once an award is made. Often, agencies find the reward is not worth the effort especially because government grants are highly competitive.

Alpine County does not have a CTSA to promote coordination, which led to the recommendation to establish a CTSA and that the designated agency be supported through dedicated funding for that purpose. Workshop participants rated as a high priority the ability to:

- Add staff devoted to CTSA activities; or
- Contract for CTSA management services from an outside expert source

The dedication of resources to achieving coordination results was universally recognized by stakeholders as the starting point. In Alpine County TDA fund are not being fully dedicated to transit. Thus current transit resources could be reallocated to CTSA activities. It may be reasonable for Alpine County to share CTSA management responsibilities with neighboring counties utilizing New Freedom grants for mobility management purposes.

Coordination Opportunity:

Maintain current level of service for pre-school age children attending the Early Learning Center

Strategy:

Establish a commitment to funding pre-school transportation to the Early Learning Center Alpine County stakeholders repeatedly stated their support for the Early Learning Center, which

provides programs for pre-school age children from low income families. Minutes of the ACLTC meeting held Jan. 15, 2008, report that First 5 Alpine Executive Director John Fisher said," …continuing Alpine Mountain Transit services to the Early Learning Center was crucial for participants." Alpine County Unified School District Governing Board Member Arthur Bell commented that "the School District was very supportive of the transportation requirement for the Early Learning Center. This level of commitment was exhibited throughout the planning process.

Coordination Opportunity:

Need for replacement vehicles for Alpine Mountain Transit as well as additional capital equipment to enhance service delivery

Strategy:

Coordinate arrangements for purchase and maintenance of capital equipment to help tap funding, e.g. FTA Section 5310

Stakeholders acknowledged the need for replacement vehicles to maintain the operational status and service quality of the public transit fleet. The AMT bus was removed from service in May 2008, due to mechanical failure. The need to replace the vehicle is a priority and efforts are underway to secure funding. Additional capital equipment such as computer hardware/software, communications, GIS, or maintenance equipment could also be purchased to enhance service.

Coordination Opportunity:

Resolve insurance issues for use of County vehicles

Strategy:

Work with non-profits United to reduce insurance risk and provide coverage for the use of county vehicles.

One significant obstacle to the sharing of vehicles can be insurance requirements. Identifying or creating new insurance programs that eliminate insurance exposure for the County, can remove this obstacle.

The issue of agency liability frequently is raised as an obstacle to the implementation of volunteer driver programs. Efforts are underway through agencies such as Nonprofits United to create special insurance packages for individuals or agencies that offer an initial layer of coverage when a volunteer is operating a vehicle. This would supersede the coverage provided by the individual or agency when not in volunteer service. Early indications from Nonprofits United are that such coverage may be on the horizon.

Coordination Opportunity:

Need for service from Alpine County to Gardnerville in the morning and from Gardnerville to Alpine County in the afternoon/evening

Strategy:

Provide service from Alpine County to Gardnerville area for job access.

Stakeholders frequently discussed the need for travel from Alpine County to Gardnerville in the morning for job access. It may be possible to utilize JARC or other funding to increase bus service from Alpine County to the Gardnerville area.

Coordination Opportunity:

Coordinate travel on Highway 88, including Reno, Carson City, Minden Gardnerville and Jackson

Strategy:

Use County resources to craft agreements for coordination with public and private agencies along Highway 88

Alpine County residents must leave the county in order to access a variety of services. Many of these services are located in communities along Highway 88 to the north or west. Agreements could be established allowing Alpine resident to “piggyback” on other transportation services operating to/from Carson City, Gardnerville and Jackson.

Coordination Opportunity:

Need for weekday transportation to Minden/Gardnerville for Native American adults

Strategy:

Work with tribal representatives to obtain funding to expand transit for Native Americans (possible dedicated tribal funding sources) Representatives of the Washoe Tribe of CA and NV and other county stakeholders indicated a need for transportation for tribal members on weekdays. Tribal representatives also indicated an interest in working with Alpine County to maximize use of dedicated tribal funding sources.

Coordination Opportunity:

Insufficient service outside the Markleeville – Woodfords corridor

Strategy:

Creative use of funding (5311 funds, JARC, etc) to expand service outside the Markleeville – Woodfords corridor.

The AMT route focuses service along the Markleeville – Woodfords corridor. Many stakeholders expressed the need to serve residents outside this area. This need, along with service for the Early Learning Center and increased service for Native Americans, focuses on an area of Alpine County with a high concentration of low income individuals.

Medium Priority Strategies Coordination Opportunity:

Work more closely with the Kirkwood Ski Resort, the county's largest employer, to provide job access opportunities as well as additional transit options for county residents and guests

Strategy:

Coordinate with Kirkwood Mountain Resort to utilize its resources on ridesharing basis. The Kirkwood Mountain Resort has expressed an interest in working with Alpine County on transportation issues facing its employees. This presents an opportunity to enter into agreements that utilize the resources of the area's largest employer for coordination activities.

Coordination Opportunity:

Assist other agencies with grant applications, including but not limited to 5310 applications

Strategy:

Through the proposed CTSA, provide support, such as grant preparation assistance, driver training, alcohol/drug testing for human service organizations, etc, for human service organizations. An agency devoted to coordination, typically the CTSA, often can provide a variety of support services to community organizations that lack the resources or the expertise to provide them internally. Many social service agencies are too small to have dedicated technical resources on staff. This sets the stage for the provision of support services by a centralized agency.

In Alpine County, the proposed CTSA could provide centralized support to a variety of agencies in the county. Services could include:

- Assistance in grant preparation
- Consolidated driver training programs for staff or volunteers of social service agencies
- Staff support for technical functions such as drug and alcohol testing (Please Appendix D for additional information on driver training and licensing requirements)

Coordination Opportunity:

- Need for increased service for veterans

Strategy:

Quantify and design non emergency medical transportation for veterans

The need for transportation services for veterans was listed as a high priority. While there no quantitative data available at this time, stakeholder identified non-emergency medical transportation as a key issue.

Recommendations

Implementing the Strategies

Several interrelated activities and decisions need to be addressed to begin implementing the strategies. They are discussed in the following sections.

Program Administration

In Alpine County, a program administrative structure is in place. The Transportation Commission provides funding and direction while the County serves as the transit operator. However, there is no designated CTSA in the County. This key component of the administrative structure could be added to clarify and focus service coordination in a single place. Many counties place transit service management and CTSA responsibility with the same agency. In a rural community, this can help to facilitate overall service integration.

Decision-Making Process

Although the decision-making process in Alpine County is functioning effectively, it could be enhanced. The current structure has the Transportation Commission providing funding and oversight of transportation functions. The County then implements transportation programs. The County is compliant in its involvement of the SSTAC in an advisory capacity in the decision process. The element of the process that is missing in Alpine County is the CTSA. In Alpine County the designation of a CTSA would complete the decision-making structure.

AMADOR COUNTY

Transportation and Gaps Needs (Combined)

Projected Transportation Needs

In Amador County, the projected senior population (age 60 and older) is expected to grow from 11,715 to 15,809 individuals between 2010 and 2020, based on California Department of Finance projections. This represents a 35% increase. Therefore, it is assumed that demand for transportation services will increase approximately 35% in the next ten years.

Unmet Needs

Through a process that involved significant stakeholder participation and detailed analysis of existing documentation, the transportation needs and service gaps in Amador County were identified. These generally fell into the following four categories: coordination, connections, service availability and capital equipment.

Further discussion with stakeholders allowed the service gaps and unmet needs identified during Phase 1 of the planning process to be prioritized by rankings of high, medium and low.

The unmet needs and service gaps as articulated by stakeholders are listed by category in this chapter. For strategies recommended in response to these needs, see Chapter 6 Identification of Strategies/Public Outreach.

- Coordination – challenges that impede coordination efforts

- Connections – challenges providing transportation links inside and outside Amador County
- Service Availability – challenges providing service beyond existing service
- Capital Equipment – challenges maintaining or expanding the available fleet, both public and private; challenges purchasing and maintaining other capital equipment

Coordination:

Stakeholders identified several needs that affect general coordination efforts such as:

1. Overcome barriers to coordination, including lack of staff resources to manage coordination activities and insufficient funds to achieve useful levels to support coordination activities. Combine CTSA and mobility management functions in a more unified way.
2. Develop a vehicle maintenance program to support human service agencies within the County.
3. Develop a system of support services such as driver training and alcohol/drug testing for human service agencies within the county
4. Develop a coordinated volunteer driver program
5. Increase coordination between the County's largest employer, Jackson Rancheria and ARTS

Connections:

The need for connectivity to out of county services or systems was identified, especially for medical services and social service programs. In addition, gaps within the county were outlined.

Specific service gaps include:

1. Insufficient service to Sacramento and the Lodi/Stockton area for non-emergency medical trips

2. Insufficient service for employment in Ione, specifically reverse commute options from Sacramento County

Service Availability:

Repeatedly, stakeholders indicated a need for expanded services during evening and weekend hours. Transit users and human service agencies both expressed concerns over limited or nonexistent transportation outside the typical weekday work schedule.

Specific issues include:

1. Lack of public transportation outside the 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM weekday window is seen as a significant factor limiting employment opportunities, especially for students or people in entry level jobs who often work non-traditional hours.

2. Extended service on weekends is needed for seniors and disabled individuals for shopping and social activities.

3. Lack of service Upcountry and in other outlying areas of the County

Acquisition and Replacement of Capital Equipment

Stakeholders acknowledged the need for replacement vehicles to maintain the operational status and service quality of the public transit fleet. There is a need to replace vehicles on a regular basis for ARTS.

There may also be a need to replace vehicles belonging to other agencies in the future. This is a critical need as the operating cost of aging vehicles can become prohibitive. Expansion of the number of available vehicles utilized by both the transit agency and human service agencies within the county will allow for increased coordination opportunities that do not rely primarily on traditional transit for transportation services. In addition, other capital equipment may be needed to enhance coordination activities within the county.

The key needs are:

1. New and replacement vehicles, computer hardware/software, maintenance equipment, communication base station/mobile radios and cameras, GIS equipment, and other equipment eligible under 5310 guidelines
2. Develop a Retired Vehicle Program so that vehicles retired by one agency may be used for service by another agency in a less demanding environment.

<u>Transportation Resources</u>

Existing Service and Transportation Amador Regional Transit System (ARTS)

Amador Regional Transit System has been serving Amador County since 1977, and is the only public transit service in the county. ARTS operates seven fixed bus routes including commuter service to Sacramento. General public off-route deviation service is offered within one-half mile of a designated ARTS route. Initial reservations must be made with a minimum of 24 hour advance notice, but subsequent reservations require only one hour advance notice. All ARTS vehicles are wheelchair accessible with lifts and tie-downs.

ARTS provides weekday transportation to and from the Senior Lunch Program at the Amador Senior Services Center in Jackson. Door-to-door service is provided from most areas including Jackson, Sutter Creek, Volcano, Pine Acres, Pine Grove and Pioneer. The Jackson/Sutter Creek Shuttle, which operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 5:35PM, offers connections to Calaveras County via Calaveras Transit.

The Amador Sacramento Express provides service for commuters to the capital city with three round trips daily. Among ARTS' most important roles in social service transportation delivery is its designation as the CTSA for the County. The Transit Agency has held this designation for many years and has taken some steps to fulfill the expectations of the formal coordination role.

Among the actions that ARTS has taken consistent with the CTSA designation are the following:

- Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC) contract: ARTS contracts with VMRC to transport developmentally disabled individuals to Arc of Amador County. This service operates on fixed schedules serving the day program.

- Sacramento County transit contract: ARTS contracts with Sacramento County to operate three (3) trips per day from the Amador County area into Sacramento. This service is primarily designed to serve commuters into central Sacramento. However, with some minor modification, it may offer an inexpensive option for expanded service for purposes such as access to the many medical facilities in the Sacramento area. Stakeholders have proposed some rerouting of the service in order that this existing commuter service might be realigned to meet other non-work objectives.

- Technical Assistance: ARTS has offered to assist local agencies including a Senior Center with the preparation of grant applications for programs such as 5310.

Other Transportation Service Providers

Area 12 Agency on Aging

The Agency on Aging (AAA) for Amador County utilizes Title IIIB funds to provide transportation services for adults over 60 years of age. In 2007, AAA provided funds for the purchase of a wheelchair accessible van by Common Ground Senior Services. AAA, through contracted service providers, is responsible for transportation to and from medical appointments within the County on an as needed and as available basis.

Arc of Amador and Calaveras County

Arc serves developmentally disabled clients in the two county region. Services include a day program in Sutter Creek, an after-hours recreation program and a jobs program. Arc utilizes six vans, two of which are wheelchair accessible, to transport its clients. Program participants also use Blue Mountain Transit and ARTS through a contract arrangement between the agencies and the Valley Mountain Regional Center.

Amador County Unified School District

Amador County Unified School District provides transportation for general and special needs students to and from school throughout the County. The District utilizes 31 vehicles, seven of which are wheelchair accessible.

Amador County Behavioral Health

Amador County Behavioral Health operates two seven passenger vans to transport clients to agency sponsored programs, and therapy, medical, dental or court appointments. Clients include persons with disabilities, low income individuals, older adults, and children/youth.

Amador Support, Transportation and Resource Services (STARS)

Amador STARS oversees cancer patient transportation services to radiation and chemotherapy treatments in Sacramento, Stockton, Lodi and Amador County. There is no cost for the transportation services.

Blue Mountain Transit

Blue Mountain Transit is a private van service that provides transportation in Amador and Calaveras Counties for disabled clients through its contract with Valley Mountain Regional Center. Discussions are underway as of June, 2008, for the company to operate the Reserve-a-Ride taxi voucher program under contract to Amador County Transportation Commission (ACTC) through the CTSA. Blue Mountain also provides charter van services to private individuals and groups on weekends.

Community Compass

Community Compass is a privately owned behavioral management program serving developmentally disabled residents in Amador County. The organization provides transportation at no charge to its clients during program hours (8:00 AM – 3:00 PM). Staff drivers are available to take program participants to work, activities or to/from the client's home. Services and programs include personal management, social skills training, and vocational assessment and training.

Jackson Rancheria Casino and Hotel

The Jackson Rancheria has its own fleet of 16 buses. Vehicles are used for the "Youth Bus" program, which transports the children of casino employees from school to on-site after school day care. The Rancheria is the largest employer in the County.

Family Learning Center

The Family Learning Center is a non-profit agency that provides ESL and family literacy program to residents in and around Ione, Plymouth, River Pines and Fiddletown. The agency relies on ARTS to meet its transportation needs.

American Legion

American Legion Post 108 provides ambulance services for a fee to residents of Amador and Calaveras Counties. Trips must originate or terminate in Amador or Calaveras and ambulance transports are limited to 60 miles, which includes Sacramento, Stockton and Modesto.

Common Ground Senior Services, Inc.

Common Ground received a grant of approximately $15,000 to provide transportation to medical appointments for adults 60 years and older, persons with disabilities and persons with low income. Common Ground purchases fuel from the County at a discounted rate. In 2007, Area 12 Agency on Aging provided Title IIIB funds for the purchase of a wheelchair accessible Dodge Caravan.

Private Taxi Service

There are two private taxi providers serving Amador County: Sierra Delta and Pioneer, both located in Jackson. Service is available 24 hours per day. Pioneer operates two vehicles and Delta Sierra operates three.

Foothill Rideshare

The Foothill Rideshare program is a collaborative effort between Amador, Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties. In 2006-07, there were approximately 250 participants and goal is to see that number double in 2007-08.

Greyhound, Amtrak and Airline Service

Neither Greyhound nor Amtrak is available in Amador County. Service can be obtained in Sacramento. The Amador County Airport, Westover Field, is a general aviation airport. There is no commercial service at this time. Sacramento International Airport is the closest major airport serving Amador County.

Barriers

Major Barriers to Coordination

Transportation providers in rural counties find themselves stretched thin trying to adequately address the growing demand for services. Recognizing the need for agencies to work together is a vital step towards achieving more efficient, cost effective transportation services. However, coordination efforts can be impeded by a wide range of obstacles, including:

- Lack of resources: staff, funding, equipment
- Different client eligibility requirements
- Service area boundaries that limit connectivity
- Inter-county and intra-county jurisdictional issues
- Different agencies with different requirements for driver screening, training and licensing and vehicle safety
- Lack of software/technology or incompatibilities with software/technology prevent sharing of scheduling and dispatching, client eligibility data, and reports
- Liability/insurance issues
- Privacy requirements, such as HIPPA, prevent sharing client information
- Reporting requirements that vary for federal, state and local funding source
- Rural counties often do not have the large number of public and private agencies that can share resources; coordination opportunities can be limited simply by the number of organizations operating within the region.
- Social service agencies typically provide programs and services to a very discretely defined client population. Agencies may serve frail elderly or severely physically disabled or mentally disabled clients. Often the unique needs of the client population are such that they cannot be co-mingled with other passengers. Social or behavioral problems may result from co-mingling passengers. This is a natural barrier to coordination. However, the resources used to serve one client group may also be used to serve a very different client group at another time of day when co-mingling of passengers is not necessary.

In discussions with stakeholders in Amador County as well as other rural counties in central and eastern California, the single most significant barrier to increased coordination was identified as the lack of resources to pursue such activities.

Stakeholders agreed that staffing levels within the transit agency, which has the responsibility of spearheading coordination activities, do not allow for dedicated focus on coordination. ARTS has entered into agreements with various agencies to provide transportation services, which demonstrates a certain degree of coordination. However, a larger mobility management role, such as arranging agreements between human service agencies has not transpired. During consultations with stakeholders the need for an enthusiastic champion committed to developing new coordination activities was identified repeatedly. New energy and dedication will be required if efforts by ARTS, in its role as CTSA, are to succeed.

Priorities

High Priority Strategies

Coordination Opportunity:

Overcoming barriers to coordination, including:

- Lack of staff resources to manage coordination activities
- Insufficient funds to achieve useful levels to support coordination activities

Strategy:

Provide sufficient resources to allow the CTSA to negotiate interagency agreements, providing for coordinated use of assets and operating funds.

The importance of the CTSA became very clear during discussions with local stakeholders. In Amador County, Amador Regional Transit System (ARTS) is the CTSA. While not necessarily responsible for all coordination activities, the CTSA is an appropriate focal point for achieving results. Research revealed that while most rural counties have a designated CTSA, many CTSAs are not very active in pursuing coordination opportunities. This situation often is the result of two local conditions:

1. Lack of Staff Resources to Pursue Coordination - Small transit agencies, such as ARTS, are frequently the designated CTSA for its county. While such designation is intended to carry with it the responsibility to work actively to coordinate the services of local organizations including the transit operator, small agencies often do not have the staff to carry out this task. The existing staff is focused on day-to-day operations management, service planning, and overall compliance with regulations. While supporting the concept of coordination and the key role of the CTSA in the coordination process, small agencies do not have sufficient personnel to dedicate to outreach, planning and organizing that is required for effective coordination. Completing grant applications can be confusing and overwhelming. While larger agencies often have staff dedicated to the preparation of grant applications, smaller agencies usually assign this responsibility to the transit manager or other administrative personnel. These individuals may not have the time or the expertise to seek out grant opportunities and submit applications.

2. Lack of Sufficient Funds to Accomplish Meaningful Results - Grant amounts available to rural counties are usually significantly less than those awarded to larger urban counties. The small size of the award can make it difficult to achieve “critical mass” or sufficient funds to realize meaningful outcomes. Agencies in rural counties weigh the value of the grant amount against

the staff time required to prepare the grant application and manage the grant once an award is made. Often, agencies find the reward is not worth the effort.

The realization that ARTS, in its role as the CTSA, does not have sufficient staff resources to create coordination results led to the recommendation that the CTSA function of the agency be enhanced through dedicated funding for that purpose. Stakeholders also indicated that the leadership within CTSA should be strengthened to achieve coordination goals and objectives. Workshop participants rated as the highest priority the ability to:

- Add staff devoted to CTSA activities; or
- Contract for CTSA management services from an outside expert source

The dedication of resources to achieving coordination results was universally recognized by stakeholders as the starting point action. In Amador County, TDA funds are fully dedicated to transit purposes Thus there are not additional funds that might be allocated to Article 4.5 purposes. Given this situation, funds to support coordination must come either from new sources or from reallocating current transit resources to CTSA purposes.

Coordination Opportunity:

Establishment of centralized maintenance and repair services to include social service agencies, non-profit organizations, and local government entities

<u>Strategy:</u>

Provision of contract maintenance through the CTSA

Amador Regional Transit System could expand its maintenance capability to include sufficient hours to service outside agency vehicles on a fee paying basis.

Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of sufficient transportation for medical trips from Amador County to Sacramento, Lodi and Stockton

<u>Strategy:</u>

Increase days of service provided by ARTS to Sacramento and Lodi/Stockton for medical and social service appointments. Establish a formalized volunteer driver program/rideshare capable of meeting the most critical non-emergency medical transportation needs out of the area.

Currently there are no Medicaid transportation providers in Amador County and stakeholders repeatedly listed non-emergency medical transportation as a high priority. Some rural counties supplement public transportation by implementing a volunteer driver program and developing rideshare resources.

Coordination Opportunity:

More fully utilize volunteer drivers in social service transportation programs

Strategy:

Identify agencies or community leaders to coordinate volunteer programs, including the recruitment, screening, training and managing of volunteers. Identify or create new insurance programs to eliminate exposure of volunteers and agencies to inappropriate levels of liability

Some agencies in rural counties make effective use of volunteer drivers to expand mobility options. Stakeholders in Amador County expressed a high degree of interest in expanding volunteer programs.

Coordination Opportunity:

Connections for employment, including reverse commute from Sacramento to Ione

Strategy:

Expand traditional transit service through reverse commute service. This could be done by adjusting trip times for returning buses from Sacramento to better serve county destinations such as Ione. Employment opportunities exist in Lone, where three of Amador County's largest employers are located. However transit service from Sacramento County, where many employees live, arrives after the start of the workday. By coordinating service from Sacramento, reverse commute service could be implemented.

Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of public transportation on weekends for seniors, disabled and youth

Strategy:

Expand public transit service and social service agency transportation to cover more weekend hours

The need for increased public transportation on weekends was discussed in every public forum held in Amador County for both seniors and the general public. Social service agencies could provide service utilizing vehicles normally used only during the week.

Coordination Opportunity:

Need for acquisition and replacement of capital equipment, including:

- Replacement vehicles for CCTA and human service agencies
- Computer hardware/software
- Maintenance equipment
- Communications equipment
- Cameras, GIS equipment
- Other equipment eligible under federal guidelines

Strategy:

Coordinate arrangements for purchase of capital equipment, including vehicles, to help tap available funding, e.g. FTA 5310

Use older (retired) vehicles for less intense social service agency needs

The purchase of new or replacement capital equipment, including vehicles, should be coordinated among agencies. ARTS is the primary vehicle operating agency in the County. It is also the CTSA.

Medium Priority Strategies Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of service to outlying areas of Amador County such as Upcountry

Strategy:

Expand public transit service to Upcountry and to other outlying areas of the County.

Develop social service agency transportation including volunteer drivers and rideshare programs. Public transportation options to very rural areas in Amador County are limited.

Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of public transportation outside the 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM weekday window.

Strategy:

Expansion of evening service in the existing transit service area

The need for transportation services outside the weekday window was identified as important for individuals participating in social service programs or school events and for employment opportunities, especially for youth. Evening and weekend service could be expanded using both traditional public transit and social service options.

Coordination Opportunity:

Coordination of support services

- Driver training
- Drug and alcohol testing
- Grant application preparation

Strategy:

Through the CTSA, expand coordination of driver training, alcohol/drug testing and other support services for non-profit organizations.

An agency devoted to coordination, typically the CTSA, often can provide a variety of support services to community organizations that lack the resources or the expertise to provide them internally.

In Amador County, ARTS as the CTSA may be in a position to provide centralized services to a variety of agencies in the county. Services could include:

- Consolidated driver training programs for staff or volunteers of social service agencies
- Staff support for technical functions such as drug and alcohol testing
- Assistance in grant preparation

Coordination Opportunity:

Implement a mobility training program to expand transit use

Strategy:

Focus a professional mobility training program on regional center clients, other potential ADA clients and commuters to foster regular transit use.

Mobility training has been proven to be a cost effective method of enhancing mobility options for a wide range of transit consumers. Coordination efforts could provide this service to ARTS passengers as well as clients of social service agencies.

Coordination Opportunity:

Improve transit system marketing, including route designations, signage, and promotional materials

Strategy:

Prepare a regular transit and CTSA services marketing plan and implement new customer service information strategies that include social service transportation options.

Stakeholders in Amador County expressed a need for increased communication with consumers regarding transportation services. Many participants involved in the planning process felt that the community at large was not aware of the variety of options available.

Coordination Opportunity:

Coordinate services between ARTS and the Jackson Rancheria

Strategy:

Work with tribal management to develop transportation options to serve community members, Jackson Rancheria employees, and guests of the Rancheria.

The Jackson Rancheria is the largest employer in Amador County and operates a fleet of 16 buses. Stakeholders expressed interest in a more effective relationship with the Casino to allow for coordination of services to the Rancheria and nearby childcare and medical facilities. Collaborative arrangements between ARTS and the Rancheria to share bus resources should be explored.

Low Priority Strategies Coordination Opportunity:

Taxi service in Amador County is not widely available. Standards for overall service as well as driver screening and training could be improved to provide higher quality service.

Strategy:

Expand taxi service through the introduction of a voucher program. Raise standards for driver screening and training as well as overall service

Currently, there are two taxi companies operating in western Amador County. Such a program has the benefit of offering another source of service to an eligible user group at lower cost while also helping to stabilize taxi operators that in rural areas that have difficulty staying in business.

Recommendations

Recommended Strategies

Several interrelated activities and decisions need to be addressed to begin implementing the strategies. They are discussed in the following sections.

Program Administration

In Amador County, an effective program administration structure is in place. The Amador County Transportation Commission has designated ARTS as the CTSA. The transit agency has in turn accomplished several coordination activities in this role. The Commission does provide oversight and hopefully will increase its monitoring role as a result of this Plan. ARTS has participated extensively in this planning process and was among the supporters of the highest ranked priority for increased resources to pursue coordination. This process has served to refocus attention on opportunities for efficient provision of services that in many cases serve to compliment the traditional transit operation.

Decision-Making Process

The local decision-making process in Amador County is functioning reasonably well. The Transportation Commission has designated ARTS as the CTSA. The Commission oversees its performance through a high level of ongoing staff interaction and collaboration on grants and projects. Further, the SSTAC is active and participates in the coordination decision process as mandated by state statute. The process could be enhanced through more formal assignment of clearinghouse functions to the CTSA for grant coordination and strategy implementation. This step typically introduces a strong incentive for local agencies to work together.

Access to Jobs and Employment

In Amador County, as in many rural counties, most residents live and work within the county. Census 2000 statistics report that nearly 80% of the workforce lives in the county. The relatively short distances to work centers and lack of congestion found in more urban areas combine to make it difficult to entice commuters out of their cars and onto public transit. Approximately 12% of Amador residents work in Sacramento. On weekdays, ARTS provides commuter service three times per day on the X route, from 6:00 AM until 6:46 PM. Foothill Rideshare, a cooperative agreement between Amador, Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties assists

commuters in the three county area by providing online assistance for carpools, vanpools and one-time trips. In FY 2006-07, 250 individuals participated in the rideshare program. The goal for FY 2007-08 is 500. During the planning process, stakeholders identified various employment transportation needs including:

- Service to Lone for job access. Lone is home to three of the county's largest employers and many workers commute from the Sacramento area. Reverse commute service that ensures on-time arrival at the worksite was listed as a high priority by stakeholders.

- Service to the Jackson Rancheria Casino for employees, with additional coordination activities to serve community members and guests

Volunteer Transportation

While there are agencies in Amador County that rely on volunteer drivers (i.e., Amador STARS, Common Ground), there is no coordinated effort to recruit, train and retain volunteers. Many rural counties have developed high functioning volunteer driver programs to supplement public transit, especially to support residents who live in outlying areas or who need nonemergency medical transportation. Amador stakeholders recognized the benefits of a countywide program and rated as "high" a strategy to build a volunteer driver pool. Program administration is the key to the successful implementation and ongoing viability of volunteer programs. Thus the need for an individual or community agency to be the champion is critical. The issue of agency liability frequently is raised as an obstacle to the implementation of volunteer driver programs. Efforts are underway through agencies such as Nonprofits United to create special insurance packages for individuals or agencies that offer an initial layer of coverage when a volunteer is operating a vehicle. This would supersede the coverage provided by the individual or agency when not in volunteer service. Early indications from Nonprofits United are that such coverage may be on the horizon.

The Beverly Foundation offers online resources for volunteer driver programs at www.beverlyfoundation.org. Additional information is available from the Washington State Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation, which has a manual for starting and maintaining volunteer transportation programs. It addresses the liability issues and provides forms and templates for agencies. The manual is available at: www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/training/vdg/default.htm

Coordinating/Integrating School Bus and Public Transportation Services

The coordination/integration of student transportation and public transportation services is fraught with obstacles. These include legislative and institutional barriers; restricted funding requirements and reporting requirements; turfism; attitudes and perceptions about student safety; vehicle design, and operational issues.

While school district transportation resources were identified in the inventory of transportation service providers (Figure 4-3), stakeholders representing the Amador Unified School District did not participate in any stakeholder meetings associated with the study. The District operates 31 vehicles, seven of which are handicap accessible. The District's focus is on student transportation and there has been little interest shown in coordination efforts with other agencies.

Vehicle Maintenance and Operations

Some degree of interest in consolidated maintenance was expressed by stakeholder agencies during public workshops. Smaller organizations such as ARC with six vans and Common Ground with one van could benefit from the expertise provided by the ARTS maintenance department. Coordinating with these service providers would allow ARTS gradually to expand its maintenance service to a broader client base and would require little initial investment in additional staffing.

CALAVERAS COUNTY

Transportation Needs and Gaps (Combined)

Unmet Needs

Availability of Information and Training

- Stakeholders commented that availability of accurate information regarding transportation services is a barrier to effective use of services. While Calaveras Transit publishes and distributes a schedule and makes up-to-date transit information available on its website, the need for wider dissemination of current transit information throughout the county was a recurring theme. Stakeholders felt that the availability of schedule information and route maps at key bus stops, and additional advertising of service changes and expansions (potentially on transit vehicles) would be helpful improvements. Also noted as a needed improvement was additional multi-agency transit information, particularly for those seeking to make connections in Lodi and Stockton. (Foothill Commuter Services is currently pursuing a project that would coordinate transit information for transfers and connections between providers in its service area, using the web-based application Google Transit.)

- Beyond the need for additional or improved information, there is a related need for trip planning assistance and training for those who do not understand how to effectively use existing transit information to plan successful trips. This is particularly important when trips involve transfers between Calaveras Transit routes or between Calaveras Transit and another system.

- On a broader level, it was noted that there is no 211 telephone service in the county. In many communities, 211 provides free information and referral services for a range of health, human services, and housing needs, and could help to fill the information gap in Calaveras County.

- Finally, stakeholders noted the importance of regular coordination meetings among transit providers and agencies serving older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals to ensure that all parties have accurate and up-to-date information about services and needs.

Limited Services for Out-of-County Medical Trips

While Calaveras County residents need to make out-of-county trips for a variety of trip purposes, the need for additional, wheelchair-accessible service for out-of-county medical trips

was identified throughout the stakeholder process. Overall, out-of-county medical transportation is limited and fragmented in nature.

Pedestrian Environment and Accessibility for People with Disabilities

As discussed above, difficultly accessing transit services is an important transportation gap for many in the county. While continuous pedestrian infrastructure is not expected given the rural nature of the county, several stakeholders noted that it can be difficult or unsafe to get around as a pedestrian even in the larger towns within the county. This can also inhibit transit access, particularly for people using mobility devices such as wheelchairs.

Service Connectivity and Coordination of Schedules

Stakeholders identified several issues related to connectivity between Calaveras County and communities in neighboring counties, as well as gaps related to the need to better coordinate the schedules of transportation providers. Similarly, many stakeholders noted that it can be inconvenient to transfer to the ARTS shuttle at the Raley's in Jackson, rather than traveling directly to the ARTS Terminal in Martell on Calaveras Transit. This was raised as a particular concern for those seeking to travel to Sacramento on the Amador-Sacramento Express.

For transportation providers that are already attempting to coordinate schedules, barriers related to competing needs may be an issue. For example, Calaveras Transit staff note that they attempt to be responsive to the range of travel needs in the community, but in some cases a schedule change benefiting one group can cause a missed connection for another group.

Availability of Shelters and Benches at Bus Stops

The need for shelters and benches at bus stops to support use of transit was identified throughout the stakeholder process, as discussed above. The need for shelters and benches is compounded by long waits for transfers due to limited transit frequencies.

Concerns about Public Transit Reliability

Some stakeholders expressed concern about transit reliability. Problems identified include buses not arriving at established stops, reserved deviations not being served, and inconsistencies related to locations where drivers will discharge passengers (e.g., some drivers will drop off passengers at the ARC, but others will not). The use of smaller vehicles on runs when demand is typically high was also identified as an issue.

Difficult Childcare and School Trips

For parents using public transit, completing child care or school drop-off trips can be very difficult. Buses are not able to wait for parents to escort children into childcare centers or schools, particularly if additional time is needed because the parent or child (or both) has a disability. Parents' trips to work or school are then delayed by the need to wait for the next bus.

Other Gaps and Needs

A range of more discrete needs and gaps were additionally identified by stakeholders. These needs include the following:

- Availability of smaller, accessible, four-wheel drive vehicles (operated by Calaveras Transit or other transportation providers) to serve hard-to-reach areas.
- More services tailored to youth transportation needs, particularly for trips to recreational opportunities and during school breaks (such as trips to movies and school break service to Bear Valley). Such service should address, if possible, the very long walks many youth have to access transit.
- Improvements to reduce pass-ups at flag-stops, such as provision of a visual aid that passengers can use to draw drivers' attention.
- Establishment of a bus stop that more directly serves WATCH and ARC locations.
- Attention to driver courtesy and training. While Calaveras Transit drivers were highly praised by many, some stakeholders noted problems concerning driver courtesy towards people with disabilities and a few drivers' apparent lack of interest in interacting with passengers. Problems with uncomfortable rides on rough mountain roads were also raised as a driver training issue.
- More opportunities for communication among transit planners, drivers, and riders regarding needs and issues.
- More efficient routing on contracted human services transportation, with the goal of reducing the long periods of time passengers spend traveling to programs.
- A toll-free number for Calaveras Transit.
- A vehicle serving the nutrition program at the Calaveras Senior Center.

Transportation Resources

Public Transit Operators Calaveras Transit

Calaveras Transit is the public transit operator for Calaveras County. Calaveras Transit is operated under contract to MV Transportation, with oversight provided by the Calaveras County Department of Public Works. Service is provided on six fixed-routes, with deviated service available within ¾-mile of any route. Each run can accommodate up to two deviations. In FY 2006/07, Calaveras Transit carried nearly 58,800 riders—a 2% increase over the previous year. Calaveras Transit operates Monday through Friday, from approximately 6:00 AM to between 6:00 PM and 10:30 PM, depending on the route. Seasonal weekend service (one round trip daily) is also provided to the Bear Valley ski resort in Alpine County. The Bear Valley service only operates when six or more riders have registered for a trip.

As part of the November 5, 2007 service changes, Calaveras Transit was able to respond to two needs identified through the local Unmet Needs process by implementing an early morning run to Lodi, and new service to Copperopolis. Calaveras Transit provides key regional links through connections to transit services in Amador County (at the Raley's supermarket in Jackson), Tuolumne County (at Columbia College), and San Joaquin County (at the Lodi Station). These services are discussed later in this chapter.

The Calaveras Transit fleet consists of two 30-passenger vehicles, six 20-passenger vehicles, and two 16-passenger vehicles. Five 20-passenger, 24-foot buses are currently on order, having been funded through the 5310 program and a 5309 pass-through agreement with the San Joaquin RTD. Fleet replacement remains a high priority for the system, as several vehicles have exceeded their useful life and maintenance costs are high. (Although vehicles are owned by Calaveras County, maintenance is performed by MV Transportation.) Improvement of bus stops, including installation of shelters and benches, remains a priority for the system. A Bus

Shelter Improvement Program has been adopted by the Calaveras County Public Works Department, with implementation proceeding as funds are available.

Social Service Transportation Providers

Transportation is additionally provided by a range of social service agencies serving clients or consumers in Calaveras County. While some agencies provide transportation directly, others arrange for it on behalf of their clients or consumers by contracting with other agencies or providers, or subsidizing transit fares. Most of the agencies listed below have a particular focus on the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, or low-income individuals; however, some agencies may serve a broader group.

American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society supports transportation for Calaveras County cancer patients through a small volunteer driver program and mileage reimbursement for cancer patients driving to medical appointments.

Area 12 Agency on Aging

The Area 12 Agency on Aging is a Joint Powers Agreement between Amador, Alpine, Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties that provides funding to community senior services providers and administers several direct service programs. Area 12 subsidizes transportation for older adults through the provision of gas vouchers funded through the Older Americans Act (OAA) and the Multi-purpose Senior Services Program (for medical transportation).

The ARC of Amador and Calaveras Counties

Transportation is provided to individuals with developmental disabilities participating in ARC programs both through contracted service with Blue Mountain Transit (a private transportation company) and service provided by ARC staff. The contract with Blue Mountain Transit is held by the Valley Mountain Regional Center, for which the ARC is a vendor. Blue Mountain provides transportation between consumers' homes and the ARC program. Transportation to program activities during the day is provided by ARC staff using four minivans and a wheelchair accessible van.

Calaveras County Behavioral Health Services/Mental Health Services and Substance Abuse Program

Behavioral Health Services owns 13 vehicles that are used to provide transportation to clients of the Mental Health facility and, more recently, to participants in the Substance Abuse Program. The fleet is varied and includes four vans and a variety of cars. Approximately 9,500 miles are operated monthly by the fleet, and typically one or two vehicles must be replaced annually. The agency has four drivers on staff, and is currently recruiting one additional driver. Transportation is provided Monday through Friday to medical appointments, counseling, and groups sponsored by Mental Health. Behavioral Health does not currently provide out-of-county transportation, aside from limited transportation for institutionalized clients residing in out-of-county facilities such as those in Redding, Sacramento, Yuba City, and the Bay Area. However, staff will work with out-of-county clinicians to coordinate transportation services whenever possible. Behavioral Health also provides bus passes as needed for program participants who are able to access Calaveras Transit. The annual budget for transportation assistance is approximately $81,000.

Calaveras County Probation Department

The Calaveras County Probation Department regularly purchases Calaveras Transit bus tickets for distribution to both juvenile and adult offenders in the probation system. Bus tickets are distributed on an as-needed basis to reduce transportation barriers to probation-related appointments and work program participation (weekend and after-school community service placements for juveniles), but may also be provided for other needs, such as transportation to medical appointments. Probation Department staff work to coordinate appointments with transit service schedules. The Probation Department estimates that $500 to $600 worth of bus tickets are purchased annually.

CalWORKS

CalWORKS purchases bus passes on an as-needed basis for Welfare-to-Work program clients who are able to use Calaveras Transit. Approximately $2,100 in bus passes are purchased annually. Client transportation is also supported through assistance with automobile-related expenses, such as mileage, car repairs, and insurance and licensing costs. Approximately $12,800 is spent annually on auto-related assistance. CalWORKS provides direct transportation using a County vehicle only under special circumstances (and usually for a “one-time” need).

Human Resources Council (HRC) - Head Start

Head Start provides bus passes and tickets on an as-needed basis for clients who can use Calaveras Transit. Direct transportation, for example to dental and medical appointments, may also be provided using a seven-vehicle fleet (one 9-passenger van and six cars and jeeps) and staff drivers. These vehicles are also used by home visitors. In the past HRC provided transportation for field trips, but is no longer able to provide this service as its fleet does not meet requirements set forth under new transportation rulings related to Head Start programs.

HRC Community Services/Salvation Army

HRC Community Services (a service unit of the Salvation Army) provides Calaveras Transit bus passes to low-income clients visiting HRC offices or traveling to medical appointments, as needed. Passes are funded both by federal grants and private donations. Bus passes or tickets may also be purchased by the HRC’s Food Bank and Crisis Center.

Mark Twain St. Joseph’s Hospital

Mark Twain St. Joseph’s Hospital provides free transportation for cancer patients traveling to radiation therapy at Ben Schaffer Cancer Institute in Lodi and St. Joseph’s Medical Center in Stockton using one 16-passenger, wheelchair-accessible van. Transportation is provided from either the patient’s home or fixed pick-up locations in Calaveras County. One trip is provided each day, leaving Calaveras County at approximately 9:00 AM and returning at around 1:00 PM. The van was provided by a sister hospital, and funding for vehicle maintenance and gas is provided by the Mark Twain Healthcare District.

Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC)

Valley Mountain Regional Center provides transportation for individuals with developmental disabilities through purchase of bus passes or ticket books and through transportation services provided for consumers participating in programs operated by VMRC vendors, including the

ARC and WATCH in Calaveras County. VMRC holds a contract with Blue Mountain Transit that funds service between consumers' homes, ARC and WATCH programs in Calaveras County. However, transportation to program activities is provided directly by the vendors. The VMRC does not purchase transit tickets or passes for use during programs operated by vendors, as consumer transportation is the responsibility of vendors.

Volunteer Center of Calaveras - Volunteer Driver Program

The Volunteer Center of Calaveras sponsors a volunteer-based transportation program for those in need of transportation assistance throughout the county. Transportation is provided by volunteers using private vehicles. The Volunteer Center offers mileage reimbursement to drivers, though many drivers do not seek reimbursement. Reimbursement is funded through private donations and Volunteer Center general funds. Currently about 150 individuals are registered to receive transportation through the volunteer driver program.

Carpool to Dialysis

The Carpool to Dialysis program was initiated in 2007 with the intent of reducing the burden of arranging for transportation to dialysis clinics by identifying opportunities for patients to carpool. The Volunteer Center has conducted outreach to the dialysis clinics serving Calaveras County residents and works to match patients expressing interest in the program with others from their area who use the same clinic. The clinics participate by arranging joint appointments for those participating in the carpool. Volunteer Center staff also network with community organizations to identify potential program participants.

WATCH

WATCH Resources, a VMRC vendor based in Sonora, serves individuals with developmental disabilities through the Outlook program at its Angel's Camp location. Transportation for program participants between their homes and WATCH is provided through a contract with Blue Mountain Transit. Currently there are 13 program participants traveling to the program from the San Andreas, Valley Springs, and Mokelumne Hill areas. During the day, WATCH staff provide transportation directly using one 15-passenger van and one smaller, five-passenger vehicle. In the past, WATCH and ARC staff coordinated transportation services on occasion. WATCH's hours of operation are Monday through Friday, from approximately 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

MV Transportation

MV Transportation is the contractor for Calaveras Transit, providing administrative staff, drivers and vehicle maintenance (vehicles are owned by Calaveras County). MV does not hold any other contracts to provide transportation services in Calaveras County.

Blue Mountain Transit

Blue Mountain Transit has served as a transportation vendor for the Valley Mountain Regional Center since 1975. The VMRC contract occupies Blue Mountain's full capacity during the day Monday through Friday. Blue Mountain is available to provide private charters or other services during weekday evenings and on weekends. Given this capacity outside of the business day, Blue Mountain is working with the Amador County Transportation Council to implement a limited evening and weekend service supplementing public transit in Amador County (currently scheduled to be initiated in March of 2008). Blue Mountain Transit's fleet includes 11 vehicles,

ranging from 12-passenger vans to a seven-passenger SUV. Blue Mountain operates one wheelchair-accessible van.

Other Transportation Services

While the following providers do not provide social services transportation per se, they also offer important options within the spectrum of transportation services available in the county.

Foothill Commuter Services

Foothill Commuter Services provides ridematching services for Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and San Joaquin Counties, and serves as a clearinghouse for information and resources related to alternative commute modes, such as public transit. The program is funded by a Federal Transit Administration 5313(b) grant through Caltrans, with support from a range of local sponsors, including the Calaveras Council of Governments, Amador County Transportation Commission, Tuolumne County Transportation Council and San Joaquin Council of Governments.

Murphy's Cab Company

Murphy's Cab Company operates one six-passenger Dodge Grand Caravan, with the possibility of adding an additional vehicle in March 2008. Demand varies widely between winter and summer months, and in the past demand has not been sufficient to support operation of two vehicles. Fares are $3 for the initial mile, followed by $2 for each additional mile. Charter service is also provided at a rate of $60 per hour, or $50 per hour for seniors. Service is provided in Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties.

Stagecoach Limousine

Stagecoach Limousine operates two 10-passenger limousines serving both residents and visitors. Stagecoach Limousine serves Calaveras, Amador, and Tuolumne Counties with market-rate services.

Gaps

The transportation gaps most commonly identified during stakeholder outreach related to

1. The limited coverage of transit services relative to the county's dispersed populations of older adults, people with disabilities and low-income residents;

2. The hours of transit operation (i.e., limited evening service and lack of weekend service); and
3. Limited frequencies that can make transit trips prohibitively lengthy for some riders.

Overall, stakeholders were consistently concerned with increasing the level of reliable transit services capable of improving individuals' mobility within their own communities and ability to travel between communities.

Several representatives of human services agencies were also interested in improved access to transit as a way of enabling clients to use a general public service that is more integrated into the community. Stakeholders also identified a range of related needs, from improved availability

of information and training for transit users, to installation of bus shelters and benches at bus stops.

The major themes emerging from stakeholder interviews are summarized below.

Insufficient Public Transit Coverage

While Calaveras Transit serves many origins and destinations within Calaveras County and makes several key connections with neighboring transit services, many stakeholders identified increased transit service coverage as one of the greatest needs for their clients or constituents. Several respondents noted that many individuals without reliable transportation live in areas that are outside of the ¾-mile deviation zone for Calaveras Transit. As a result, they have prohibitively long walks to transit, particularly if they have mobility limitations and/or must negotiate hilly terrain. In areas adjacent to the larger towns that have more frequent transit connections, residents may not be able to travel to the center of town to reach transit.

Most stakeholders felt that given the dispersed nature of the county's population, more coverage is needed throughout the transit system. It was also noted that transportation service options in the county are extremely fragmented for those who cannot use fixed-route transit. Increased availability of door-to-door services is needed.

Limited Frequency of Public Transit Service

Limited frequency of transit services was also commonly identified as a key service gap. Stakeholders noted that gaps in service schedules of two or three hours make it necessary for some individuals to arrive at appointments very early or wait for long periods of time before making a transfer. These issues contribute to a very high time cost for transit trips, particularly for more frail individuals who have difficulty with stamina during long transit trips. In addition, limited frequencies also reduce some agencies' use of the transit system for staff or client transportation for trips around town (such as trips within San Andreas) or between communities because they are unable to complete a round trip in a reasonable period of time.

Transportation Service Hours

In past CCOG-led Unmet Needs processes, the need for evening and weekend transit service was a common theme during stakeholder outreach. Several stakeholders mentioned the isolating impact of the lack of evening and weekend service for their constituents (particularly for those requiring accessible transportation), while others noted that limited service hours constitute a key employment barrier. For minimum wage workers and Welfare-to-Work program participants, night or weekend shifts are often necessary to get a start in the labor market. Stakeholders specifically called out the need for transportation serving the "24-7" shifts of casinos, hospitals, and janitorial positions, as well as weekend and evening shifts at fast food restaurants, drugstores and other retail establishments.

In addition, CalWORKS recipients often must attend classes on Saturdays that are difficult to access without transit. Stakeholders felt that a more flexible transportation option serving off-hours employment and providing an accessible transportation option is an important need. In the absence of regular transportation services during evening and weekend hours, stakeholders suggested special event transportation (limited trips to community events or for shopping/recreational purposes) would help reduce isolation and enable those without transportation access to participate in the community.

Barriers

Barriers to Coordination

A number of barriers to coordination exist. These are either existing or perceived challenges that have resulted in the various agencies in Calaveras County not coordinating as extensively as they otherwise could. One of these barriers is the lack of a sufficient number of vehicles, with some agencies reporting they do not have the resources they need for their own clients. As a result, they do not have the capacity to coordinate with other agencies.

Another barrier that was identified in Calaveras County is the lack of funding for transportation programs. With insufficient funding, there is competition for the limited funds that are available, and agencies do not perceive that they will necessarily benefit by sharing their knowledge of different funding sources with the other agencies that are also seeking funds. Many agencies talked about funding limitations and their impact on the services they can provide.

A lack of centralized information was also noted as a barrier. There are no central resources listing available transportation services.

Several stakeholders talked about spatial limitations and temporal limitations in Calaveras County, which can also be identified as barriers to coordination. Specific service boundaries, along with long distances between communities, makes it difficult to work with other agencies that operate in more limited areas. Limited transit service hours that do not effectively support employment make it difficult to coordinate with major employers or seek private funding for services.

Program eligibility and trip purpose restrictions also inhibit coordination. Many of the existing services are available only to subsets of the three target populations. As a result, some populations, especially individuals with low incomes, have limited access to the transportation resources. Other transportation programs are limited to taking people to/from medical appointments, or only to specific programs.

Priorities

High Priority Strategies

- Lead Agency or Champion: As appropriate, an agency is listed to take the lead in implementing the strategy. Agencies were identified based on skills shown in Figure 7-1, interest among agency leaders, or a role that agencies are already playing that is related to the strategy. For example, for a volunteer driver program, the Volunteer Center expressed interest in continuing its role in this capacity if additional funding were available to provide additional trips.
- Implementation Timeframe: Some ongoing projects already have a defined implementation timeframe. For example, 211 in Calaveras County is already planned for implementation over an 18-month period. For some strategies, timeframes are estimated based on experience with similar efforts in other counties.
- Order of Magnitude Costs: Where specific cost information is available, costs have been included based on already-budgeted amounts. When unavailable, costs are estimated based on the assumed scope of the strategy.

- Cost-Effectiveness of Strategy: When strategies were prioritized in Chapter 6 based on the evaluation criteria, cost-effectiveness was one of the considerations in ranking a priority as "high" with regard to ease of implementation. Although some strategies may be more costly than others, certain no-cost and low-cost strategies may be easiest to implement in the short-term. More costly strategies are ranked as high when they positively impact the mobility needs of large numbers of seniors, people with disabilities, or low-income residents.
- Potential Funding Sources: Refer to Chapter 1 for a basic list of funding sources that might be available to fully or partially implement each strategy. In some cases, other funding sources are listed based on existing contributions for similar programs in Calaveras County.

Comprehensive Public Information Program

Calaveras COG and Calaveras County are best equipped to take the lead on the developing a comprehensive public information program. The County already prepares excellent transit information and provides a transit website. Integrating Spanish language tools, accessible formats and consolidated public information into the current information program should not be a significant challenge. This strategy is highly cost-effective and can be completed is less than six months, but should be updated annually or whenever there are significant service changes.

211 with Transit and Service Information

Implementation of the 211 program is already underway for Calaveras County, with Behavioral Health staff taking the lead for this forthcoming information and referral service that will offer everything from suicide prevention counseling to transit information at a cost of about $50,000 per year. Full implementation is anticipated in 18 months.

Transportation Summit for Transportation Providers and Agencies.

It is recommended that Calaveras COG take the lead on this strategy, a low-cost effort designed to improve the dissemination of information in the county, bring together agencies with similar concerns, dispel myths and rumors and build partnerships around the topic of transportation.

Expansion of Existing Volunteer Driver Program

To expand the existing volunteer driver program, a plan should be developed that details staffing needs, capacity, reimbursement, insurance requirements, and volunteer recruitment. It is uncertain what the latent demand for such a program may be given the modest levels of use of the existing program.

Specialized Shopper Shuttle Transportation Service

Calaveras Transit would need to take the lead in the implementation of this strategy. Specific route schedules would need to be developed and funds would need to be programmed to cover the operation of additional services.

Pedestrian Paths, Sidewalk Improvements, and Bus Shelter and Bench Program

The total bus shelter and bench program is estimated to cost $424,000, and the improvements by location are shown in Figure 7-5. Funding has been programmed using FTA 5311(f),

Proposition 1B, and LTF. In addition, Calaveras County plans to apply for New Freedom (FTA 5317) funds because the bus stop improvement program significantly enhances transit access for people with disabilities while improving pedestrian safety for seniors, youth, and all other ridership groups. The program is scheduled for completion in FY 2010.

Replacement and Expansion of Vehicle Fleet and Capital Equipment for Transportation Programs and Transit Agencies

Vehicle and equipment replacement is a necessity for ongoing safe and reliable transportation operations. Fleet replacement, new dispatch equipment, and other capital needs may be necessary for Calaveras Transit, WATCH, ARC, HRC, Mark Twain St. Joseph's Hospital, Valley Mountain Regional Center, and any number of other transportation providers in Calaveras County.

Program Monitoring and Driver Training

Implementation of this recommended strategy can be accomplished through development of consistent training programs, in consultation with other transportation providers in Calaveras County, and monitoring of service quality through data collection, surveys, and consistent reporting. The transit operators (MV for Calaveras Transit and Blue Mountain Transit) would take the lead in ensuring their driver training programs are in compliance with state standards. They could also offer training for other agencies and organizations if they have capacity.

Medium Priority Strategies

Medium priority strategies include a number of recommended programs that may be more costly to implement or were evaluated to have less of an impact on mobility for seniors, people with disabilities and low-income individuals than high priority strategies. As medium priority strategies, these are assumed to require more time to implement, and it may be more challenging to find funding for implementation of these coordination strategies.

- Childcare ambassadors at school bus stops can be arranged with individual schools to make it more convenient for parents to drop off students without having to go inside the school. Both existing and potential new operators would likely be interested in contracting to provide service as part of a subsidized taxi program. Incentives to help them purchase accessible vehicles could also be used to encourage their participation in a subsidized program.

- Evening and weekend public transit service and the various transit service enhancements discussed in Chapter 6 will require additional analysis, and operating plans will need to be developed. There is no doubt that these expanded services would improve mobility options in Calaveras County, but analysis is needed to determine how cost-effective they can be.

- Having an ambassador or assistant on the bus may be easy to implement, but requires up to six months of lead time to develop the program parameters and train staff or volunteers Calaveras Transit could develop the program in cooperation with the Volunteer Center or the transit agency could recruit high school students as part of a community service effort.

- Finally, the formal rideshare program is included among medium priority strategies because, although implementation is the easiest of all of these (because Foothill Rideshare provides ongoing programming support), stakeholders felt that such a program has less of an impact on the mobility of the targeted population groups than any of the other strategies. Although the program is ongoing, it can certainly enjoy further support of Calaveras County agencies and businesses.

Low Priority Strategies

These were identified in as being lower priority either due to complexity of implementation or effectiveness of the strategy in addressing the needs of the target populations. For example, making retired vehicles available to human service agencies in the county would be relatively easy to do, but maintenance costs could be high and agencies may not have the capacity to pay for required maintenance. An alternative arrangement might be to provide such a vehicle for back-up purposes only. If the arrangement proves successful, the program could be expanded to offer vehicles to other agencies.

Promoting existing transit services through good marketing and sharing of information is the best strategy to build ridership. Nevertheless, special initiatives can be undertaken, such as a "try transit free" promotion.

Recommendations

Recommended Strategies

Program Administration

Implementation of the recommended program strategies is a responsibility of the various agencies in Calaveras County, as well as CCOG. As the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for the County of Calaveras and the City of Angels, CCOG is the designated planning and administrative agency for transportation projects and programs in the county.

Transportation Plan

Effective program administration is a crucial factor in ensuring the ongoing success of each new program implemented based on the strategies defined in this plan. As a first step, a sponsor or lead agency needs to be designated to manage each project.

Decision-Making Process

In addition to the staff administering the service or program (derived from the strategies) policy oversight is essential for formal decision-making. This function could rest with the CCOG Board and/or the boards of any of the agencies taking a leadership role in the implementation of strategies.

There is no permanent coordination body to carry forward some of the coordination activities that are encouraged in the various strategies. A new group could be established for the continuation and enhancement of coordination activities, or these responsibilities could be assigned to the SSTAC.

Service Standards

To ensure that programs developed from this Coordinated Plan are effective, it is recommended that agencies coordinating services or receiving any of the funding sources identified in this plan develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating services.

COLUSA COUNTY

Transportation Needs and Gaps (Combined)

Projected Transportation Needs

In Colusa County, the projected senior population (age 60 and older) is expected to grow from 3,694 to 5,453 individuals between 2010 and 2020, based on California Department of Finance projections. This represents a 48% increase. Therefore, it is assumed that demand for transportation services will increase approximately 48% in the next ten years.

Unmet Needs

Through a process that involved significant stakeholder participation and detailed analysis of existing documentation, the transportation needs and service gaps in Colusa County were identified. These generally fell into the following four categories: coordination, connections, service availability and capital equipment.

The unmet needs and service gaps as articulated by stakeholders are listed by category in this chapter. For strategies recommended in response to these needs, see Chapter 6 Identification of Strategies/Public Outreach. There are four categories as described below:

- Coordination – challenges that impede coordination efforts
- Connections – challenges providing transportation links inside and outside Colusa County
- Service Availability – challenges providing service beyond existing service
- Capital Equipment – challenges maintaining or expanding the available fleet, both public and private; challenges purchasing and maintaining other capital equipment

Coordination Stakeholders identified several needs that affect general coordination efforts such as:

1. Overcome barriers to coordination, including lack of staff resources to manage coordination activities and insufficient funds to achieve useful levels to support coordination activities. Combine CTSA and mobility management functions in a more unified way.
2. Develop a vehicle maintenance program to support human service agencies within the county
3. Expand the system of support services such as grant application assistance, driver training and alcohol/drug testing for human service agencies within the county
4. Develop a coordinated volunteer driver program
5. Lack of information about transit options in Colusa County

Connections

The need for connectivity to out of county services or systems was identified, especially for medical services and social service programs. In addition, gaps within the county were outlined.

Specific service gaps include:

1. Insufficient service to Sacramento, Yuba City and Chico for non-emergency medical trips
2. Insufficient connections with other agencies such as Yuba-Sutter Transit
3. Insufficient connections to Yuba City and Sacramento for employment

Service Availability

Stakeholders indicated a need for expanded services during evening and weekend hours. Transit users and human service agencies both expressed concerns over limited or nonexistent transportation outside the typical weekday work schedule. Specific issues include:

1. Lack of public transportation outside the 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM weekday window is seen as a significant factor limiting employment opportunities, especially for students or people in entry level jobs who often work non-traditional hours.

2. Reevaluate future service to Williams to serve medical facilities, Office of Education, and Yuba College

Acquisition and Replacement of Capital Equipment

Stakeholders acknowledged the need for replacement vehicles to maintain the operational status and service quality of the public transit fleet. There is a need to replace vehicles on a regular basis for Colusa Transit. There may also be a need to replace vehicles belonging to other agencies in the future. This is a critical need as the operating cost of aging vehicles can become prohibitive.

1. New and replacement vehicles, computer hardware/software, maintenance equipment, communication base station/mobile radios cameras, GIS equipment, and other equipment eligible under 5310 guidelines

2. Develop a Retired Vehicle Program so that vehicles retired by one agency may be used for service by another agency in a less demanding environment).

Transportation Resources

Existing Coordination of Services

Colusa County Transit Agency (CCTA), in its dual capacity as sole public transit provider and CTSA, is the lynchpin of coordination activities in Colusa County. Stakeholders praise CCTA for its coordination efforts that “make things work.” Colusa County has a reputation for self sufficiency among its social service partners. Currently, CCTA, under contract to the Alta California Regional Center, transports developmentally disabled clients within the county. Colusa Transit receives funding from the Area Agency on Aging to provide non-emergency and out-of-county medical transportation.

CCTA works closely with Colusa County social service departments to provide service for clients. Departments purchase tickets, which are distributed to clients on an as-needed basis. The CCTA maintenance department currently provides services for vehicles of various county agencies and has provided maintenance services to the Cities of Williams and Colusa. This expands use of the Colusa Transit shop. This is done on a fee basis for the departments/agencies involved.

Colusa County Transit Agency (CCTA)

Colusa County Transit Agency (CCTA) is the only public transit provider in Colusa County. The agency began service in 1979, with two vehicles and two drivers. Today it operates general public demand-response service Monday through Friday from its operating base in the City of Colusa, utilizing a fleet of 11 buses and a staff of ten. CTAA also provides package delivery service within its service area, which is defined roughly by the communities of:

- Arbuckle/College City (south)
- Grimes/Meridian/Colusa (east)
- Maxwell/Princeton (north)
- Williams (west)

All CCTA vehicles are wheelchair accessible with lifts and tie-downs. The Agency received two new buses in 2005 and has received three new buses in 2008. On an as requested basis, service is provided to Stonyford (1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays of the month) and Princeton/Maxwell (Tuesday/Thursday). Colusa Transit operates service to outlying areas on a daily basis. Service is provided to these areas on a general schedule wherein the bus departs Colusa at a set time and travels throughout the destination service area such as Williams. Thus pickup and drop off times in these areas are approximate. These services are operated on a “flex route” basis where the bus will deviate throughout a corridor surrounding the basic route alignment.

With funding provided by the Area 3 Agency on Aging, CCTA provides weekday transportation for a small number of riders to and from the Senior Lunch Program in Colusa. In addition, CCTA is the non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) service for the County. Utilizing several funding sources, the Agency provides out-of-county medical trips for:

- Children under the age of six and pregnant women
- Veterans
- Individuals with low income
- Seniors 60 and older (funding source: AAA).

NEMT service is provided during the fiscal year until funding is exhausted. Under contract to the Alta California Regional Center, CCTA transports clients to and from despite care provided by Colusa Support Services. CCTA provides curb-to-curb service for the general public and door-to-door service for ADA eligible passengers. CCTA vehicles go anywhere within the Agency’s defined service area.

Actions that CCTA has taken consistent with the CTSA designation are the following:

- Area 3 Agency on Aging contract: AAA contracts with CCTA to provide non-emergency out-of-county medical transportation for seniors. CCTA

also provides transportation to the Senior Lunch Program. The annual funding level is approximately $9,300.

- CCTA maintains a variety of Colusa County vehicles on a fee basis as the central maintenance provider in the County.
- Alta California Regional Center contract: The Regional Center contracts with CCTA to provide service to its clients at Colusa Support Services. In addition to providing passenger transportation, CCTA serves as a package delivery service within the County. Businesses and individuals may request delivery service by calling the Dispatch Center.

Other Transportation Service Providers

Area 3 Agency on Aging

The Agency on Aging (AAA) for Colusa County utilizes Title IIIB funds to provide transportation services for adults 60 years of age and older. AAA, through its contracted service providers, is responsible for transportation to and from medical appointments outside the County on an as needed and as available basis. AAA provides $9,300 to CCTA for non-emergency medical transportation and for service to congregate meals at the Colusa Senior Center.

Colusa County Unified School District

Colusa County Unified School District provides transportation for special needs students to and from school and general needs students (up through grade 5) to school. After school transportation is not provided for general needs students.

Colusa County Department of Health and Human Services

Colusa County DHHS provides vouchers/tickets that can be used on CCTA and/or gas money to its clients for transportation to agency sponsored programs, and therapy, medical, dental or court appointments. Clients include persons with disabilities, individuals with low income, older adults, and children/youth.

Private Taxi Service

During the course of this planning process Colusa County's sole taxi provider ceased operation, leaving the county without private cab service.

Colusa Casino Resort

The Colusa Casino Resort has one cutaway bus, which is used to transport casino guests to and from the parking lot.

Colusa Indian Community

The Hand-in-Hand Learning Center is open to families living and/or working in the Colusa area. Programs are available for toddlers, pre-schoolers, and school age children up to age 13. The center utilizes a 16 passenger school bus for transporting program participants. The Colusa Indian Community Health Center offers a range of medical and dental services, including primary care and dialysis, to tribal and non-tribal members of the Colusa community. The Health Center uses a van to transport tribal members to the facility for medical appointments.

Greyhound and Amtrak

Greyhound service in Colusa County was discontinued in April, 2005. The closest Greyhound station is in Marysville (Yuba County). Amtrak service can be obtained in Sacramento and Marysville.

Airline Service

The Colusa County Airport is a general aviation airport. There is no commercial service at this time. Sacramento International Airport is the closest major airport serving Colusa County.

Barriers

Major Barriers to Coordination

Recognizing the need for agencies to work together is a vital step towards achieving more efficient, cost effective transportation services. However, coordination efforts can be impeded by a wide range of obstacles, including:

- Lack of resources: staff, funding, equipment
- Different client eligibility requirements
- Service area boundaries that limit connectivity
- Inter-county and intra-county jurisdictional issues
- Different agencies with different requirements for driver screening, training and licensing and vehicle safety
- Lack of software/technology or incompatibilities with software/technology prevent sharing of scheduling and dispatching, client eligibility data, and reports
- Liability/insurance issues
- Privacy requirements, such as HIPPA, prevent sharing client information
- Reporting requirements that vary for federal, state and local funding sources
- Rural counties often do not have the large number of public and private agencies that can share resources; coordination opportunities can be limited simply by the number of organizations operating within the region.

In discussions with stakeholders in Colusa County as well as other rural counties in central and eastern California, the single most significant barrier to increased coordination was identified as the lack of resources to pursue such activities.

CCTA, the CTSA in Colusa County, and stakeholders both agreed that staffing levels within the transit agency, which has the responsibility of spearheading coordination activities, do not allow for dedicated focus on coordination. Dedicated staffing at the CTSA level might be able to move forward with this type of coordination effort.

Priorities

High Priority Strategies

Coordination Opportunity:

Overcoming barriers to coordination, including:

- Lack of staff resources to manage coordination activities
- Insufficient funds to achieve useful levels to support coordination activities

Strategy:

Provide sufficient resources to allow the CTSA to negotiate interagency agreements, providing for coordinated use of assets and operating funds

The importance of the CTSA became very clear during discussions with local participants. In Colusa County, CCTA is the CTSA. While not necessarily responsible for all coordination activities, the CTSA is an appropriate focal point for achieving results. Research revealed that while most rural counties have a designated CTSA, many CTSAs are not very active in pursuing coordination opportunities. This situation often is the result of two local conditions:

- Lack of staff resources to pursue coordination

- Lack of sufficient funds to accomplish meaningful results

Workshop participants rated as the highest priority the ability to:

1. Add staff devoted to CTSA activities or
2. Contract for CTSA management services from an outside expert source

The dedication of resources to achieving coordination results was universally recognized by stakeholders as the starting point action.

Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of sufficient transportation for medical trips from Colusa County to Sacramento, Yuba City and Chico.

Strategy:

Increase medical transportation capacity through traditional transit service connecting Colusa County with medical services out of county and also establishing a formalized volunteer driver program/rideshare capable of meeting the most critical non-emergency needs out of the area. Currently there are no Medicaid transportation providers in Colusa County. Stakeholders repeatedly indicated the need for a coordinated approach to non emergency medical transportation.

Coordination Opportunity:

More fully utilize volunteer drivers in social service transportation programs

Strategy:

Identify agencies or community leaders to develop and coordinate volunteer programs, including the recruitment, screening, training and managing of volunteers.

Identify or create new insurance programs to eliminate exposure of volunteers and agencies to inappropriate levels of liability.

The need for additional options for non-emergency medical transportation has been well documented throughout the planning process in Colusa County. A volunteer driver program could help fill this service gap.

Coordination Opportunity:

Need for acquisition and replacement of capital equipment, including:

- Replacement vehicles for CCTA and human service agencies
- Computer hardware/software
- Maintenance equipment
- Communications equipment
- Cameras, GIS equipment
- Other equipment eligible under federal guidelines

Strategy:

Coordinate arrangements for purchase of capital equipment, including vehicles, to help tap available funding, e.g. FTA 5310.

Use older (retired) vehicles for less intense social service agency needs

The purchase of new or replacement capital equipment, including vehicles, should be coordinated among agencies.

Colusa County Transit should consider formalizing a vehicle distribution program for its retiring vehicles that might still have useful life for a second agency.

Coordination Opportunity:

There is no private taxi service in Colusa County

Strategy:

Establish taxi service

Expand taxi service through the introduction of a voucher program

There is a need for private taxi service to supplement service provided by the public transit agency. Taxi vouchers are a tool to expand transportation services to targeted population groups through relatively inexpensive means.

Coordination Opportunity:

Connections for employment

- Insufficient transportation to Yuba City and Sacramento for employment

Strategy:

Expand traditional transportation options for employment in Sacramento and Yuba City. Implement reverse commute transit routes to serve casino from Yuba City. Employment opportunities exist in Yuba City and Sacramento; however commuter service or connections to other transit systems outside Colusa County are not currently available. JARC funding could be used for this service.

Medium Priority Strategies

Coordination Opportunity:

Coordination of support services, such as technical assistance in the preparation of grant applications, driver training, and drug and alcohol testing

Strategy:

Through the CTSA, expand support services to non-profit agencies.

In Colusa County, CCTA as the CTSA may be in a position to provide centralized services to agencies in the county. Services could include:

- technical assistance in the preparation of grant applications
- consolidated driver training programs for staff or volunteers of social service agencies
- staff support for technical functions such as drug and alcohol testing

Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of information about transit options in Colusa County.

Strategy:

Develop and implement a 211 system in Colusa County

Staff from social service agencies expressed the feeling that CCTA is doing a good job of meeting the needs of their clients but felt there needed to be a better awareness of existing transit services as well as easier access to information for their clients and the general public.

Coordination Opportunity:

Insufficient connections with transit agencies and organizations outside Colusa County.

Strategy:

Establish connection arrangements/transfer agreements with other transit agencies, such as Yuba-Sutter Transit. Coordination arrangements with other agencies could greatly enhance transportation options for Colusa County residents.

Coordination Opportunity:

Re-evaluate service to Williams to serve medical facilities, Colusa County Office of Education, and Yuba College.

Strategy:

Station one bus in Williams. Transportation needs to Williams are increasing as the population and employment/educational opportunities grow. Service to Williams will need to be re-evaluated, including the need for a fulltime bus stationed in the town.

Low Priority Strategies Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of public transportation evenings and weekends for seniors, disabled and youth

Strategy:

Expand public transit service and social service agency transportation to cover evening and weekend hours.

The need for increased public transportation on weekends was expressed by stakeholders in Colusa County. Social service agencies could provide service utilizing vehicles normally used only during the week.

Coordination Opportunity:

Establishment of centralized maintenance and repair services to include social service agencies, non-profit organizations, and local government entities.

Strategy:

Provision of contract maintenance through the CTSA.

CCTA could expand its maintenance capability to include sufficient hours to service outside agency vehicles on a fee paying basis.

Recommendations

Program Administration

In Colusa County, an effective program administration structure is in place. The Colusa County Transportation Commission has designated the Colusa County Transit Agency as the CTSA. The transit agency has in turn accomplished several coordination activities in this role. This process has served to refocus attention on opportunities for efficient provision of services that in many cases serve to compliment the traditional transit operation.

Decision-Making Process

The local decision-making process in Colusa County is functioning reasonably well. The Transportation Commission has designated CCTA as the CTSA. The Commission oversees its performance through a high level of ongoing staff interaction and collaboration on grants and

projects. Further, the SSTAC is active and participates in the coordination decision process as mandated by state statute. The process could be enhanced through more formal assignment of clearinghouse functions to the CTSA for grant coordination and strategy implementation.

Guidelines for Transportation Provider Agreements and Service Standards

Coordinated transportation agreements can take many forms, depending on the types of services involved, the agencies that are party to the agreement, and the clients served. Thus each service agreement will have its own unique set of requirements. Agreements can be developed for client transportation, driver training, vehicle maintenance, volunteer coordination, or a myriad of other services. Each agreement should contain clear performance guidelines and standards specific to the service/services provided.

DEL NORTE COUNTY

Transportation Needs and Gaps (Combined)

Projected Transportation Needs

Existing service gaps and unmet transportation needs were identified through individual face-to face and telephone interviews and at a Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) meeting held on January 10, 2008.

A number of transportation needs and gaps were reported, as described below.

Access to Out-of-County Services

There are many services that community members need to access outside of the county, including shopping and recreation. The need for non-emergency medical transportation was specifically reported as a priority, since virtually all specialized medical, vision, and dental services are located outside Crescent City, often in Humboldt County or in Southern Oregon.

RCTA provides two daily roundtrips to the Arcata Intermodal terminal where there are direct timed transfers to the Humboldt Transit Authority routes serving Arcata, Eureka, McKinleyville, Fortuna, Rio Dell and more. There are also timed transfers to Greyhound and Amtrak services to the Bay Area. There still appears to be a need, however, to improve access to services in this area, particularly specialized medical care, by increasing the frequency of trips into Humboldt County. In addition, some community members stressed the need to reach the Grant's Pass area and beyond, where there is currently no connecting service.
Service Hours and Days

Several needs for expanded public transit service hours and days were reported:

- Public transit service hours and days was reported as an issue for people who work nontraditional hours and do not have access to their own transportation. For those people who need to travel to work or home after 7:30PM or on Sundays, taking the bus is not an option.
- Lower income and elderly people have reported difficulties accessing the Humboldt and Del Norte County campuses of College of the Redwoods and Humboldt State University in Arcata. Classes are scheduled throughout the day

- Residents who use the RCT to travel to Klamath for drug court have reported long waits before and after their appointments.
- Social Security Administration consultative exams, conducted by private doctors in Eureka, are scheduled on both Saturdays and Sundays. Despite requests, all exam times are not scheduled when transit services are available.

Access to Dial-A-Ride Services at Time Requested

A need was expressed for a shorter pickup window for Dial-a-Ride services for people with disabilities, beyond the current interpretation of the Americans with Disabilities Act regulations. Dial-A-Ride (DAR) transportation is available to the general public. Since the recent expansion of local fixed route services, RCTA is considering fare adjustments and other policy modifications to encourage migration of general public DAR users to the fixed route service. This may warrant travel training to help riders transition from a Dial-A-Ride to a fixed route service.

Service to Schools and Children's Programs

Several transportation gaps were reported for student access to education:

- Aside from transportation provided by tribal organizations to tribal Head Start programs, there is no Head Start/Healthy Start transportation available in Del Norte County.
- Students from the Klamath charter school and many parochial schools are without transportation to and from Crescent City.
- Yurok tribal representatives report that it is difficult for children in Klamath to reach the high school in Crescent City.
- In addition to the difficulties some people experience in accessing local college courses due to the RCT hours of operation, there is no public transportation available for students from Hiouchi and Gasquet.

Service to and from Unserved and Underserved Areas

Transportation providers and community members reported a need for public transportation in the towns of Hiouchi, Gasquet, and Smith River. At this time, there is no service to Hiouchi and Gasquet on Highway 199. The US Highway 199 route is being studied for a possible new transit route in the current transit development planning process. Especially for older adults and people with disabilities, it may be difficult or impossible to access public transit due to the distance to bus stops.

Transportation is also needed for members of the Yurok Tribe living in the Klamath area to take advantage of job opportunities in Crescent City and Eureka. There may be a need for more schedules for commuters, as there is no service arriving in Crescent City before 8:30AM or leaving Crescent City after 3:45PM. In addition, the Tribe identified a need for a multimodal facility in Klamath that would include a bus shelter, informational kiosk and a secure storage facility for cycling tourists as well as local residents who travel by bicycle.

Cost of Providing and Accessing Transportation Services

The cost of transportation services has been reported as a major concern for both transportation providers and users. For many people, public transit may be more cost effective than driving a personal vehicle with these bulk fare options, but it may still be cost-prohibitive for a low income individual or family, especially if they need to make frequent trips on the longer distance routes.

Information, Referral and Training

The current system of providing information and referrals through various providers has made it difficult for some community members to know where to go to access services and how to contact the appropriate providers. It has been demonstrated that some older adults, in particular, may not be aware of the services and resources available to them.

In addition, community members indicated a need for training about how to use public transit, both fixed route and DAR services. Shelter at bus stops

Bus shelters are reportedly needed, particularly near senior and low cost housing areas.

Transportation Resources

Public Transit Operators

The local public transit agency serving Del Norte County is Redwood Coast Transit Authority (RCT). Four fixed routes are operated by RCT within Crescent City, as well as the Klamath fixed route, the Smith River-Arcata Intercity Route, and Dial-A-Ride service. Transportation is provided Monday through Saturday. Fixed route service times vary but most are available from 6:30 a.m. until 7:27 p.m. All RCT buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts. The following four fixed transit routes operate within the core of Crescent City:

- Route 1, Parkway-El Dorado is a counterclockwise fixed route providing transit service in central Crescent City along portions of US Highway 101, Parkway Drive, Washington, Northcrest, Harding, El Dorado, and H Streets. Each loop requires 30 minutes to complete and departs once per hour, alternating with the Route 2 trip.
- Route 2, Inyo-Washington is a clockwise fixed route providing transit service in central Crescent City, including portions of U.S. 101, Washington, Inyo, and A Street. Departing once per hour, this 30-minute loop alternates with buses traveling on Route 1.
- Route 3 is a two-way route along US Highway 101 and Northcrest Drive. These 30-minute trips alternate with Route 4.
- Route 4 also provides service along US Highway 101 and portions of Elk Valley Road, Howland Hill Road, Humboldt Road and Sand Mine Road. Trips are offered once an hour, requiring 20 minutes to complete its loop and alternate with Route 3.

For those wishing to travel beyond Crescent City, the RCT Klamath bus makes two round trips along US Highway 101, Monday through Saturday. The Smith River/Arcata route provides five round trips daily between Crescent City and Smith River to the north and two round trips daily

between Crescent City and Arcata to the south (in Humboldt County). Connections to Curry Public Transit (Curry County, Oregon) are available three days per week at Smith River.

Connections to Greyhound, Amtrak, Humboldt Transit Authority, and Arcata & Mad River Transit System are available in Arcata. Within Crescent City, the Dial-A-Ride (DAR) curb-to-curb program picks up passengers from 6:45AM to 7:30PM., Monday through Saturday, and is available to the general public. Door-to-door is also offered, by request, to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Although individuals requesting DAR services are asked to call at least one day in advance to arrange transportation, same-day service is available for an additional $1.00 fee. Scheduling transportation as soon as an appointment is made will help to access a ride at the time it is needed.

For people with disabilities, special “Flex Stop” service is available within 0.75 miles of any Redwood Coast Transit bus route in Del Norte County. As with the Dial-A-Ride program, users are asked to request their Flex Stop service at least one day in advance. Requests made on the day of service are subject to space and schedule availability.

Transit fares vary based on the route and distance traveled, whether service was requested in advance or same day and passenger type.

Social Service Transportation Providers

The Del Norte Association for Developmental Services, also known as Coastline Enterprises, is the county’s Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA). This organization provides transportation services through four different programs, with an annual transportation budget of $103,500. They are:

Senior Program

- Individuals over age 65 in the greater Crescent City area are shuttled to and from the Del Norte Senior Center to participate in the noontime nutrition program every weekday. Transportation is provided free of charge. During the 2006-2007 fiscal year, a total of 6,528 miles were traveled and 3,381 rides given (with some riders using the service multiple times).

Non-Emergency Medical Trips

- Coastline Enterprises offers transportation to medical appointments in the Eureka/Arcata area. There is no fee for this service, which operates on Wednesdays for appointments scheduled between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM.
- Originally available on both Tuesdays and Wednesdays, this service was scaled down to accommodate a new dialysis program. There has been concern that doctors will find it difficult to schedule appointments for CTSA patients only on Wednesday; options are being considered for restoration of the two-day service. At this time, however, there are too few drivers and vans to provide transportation for both dialysis patients and people with other non-emergency medical appointments on Tuesdays.
- During the 2006-2007 fiscal year, 13,148 miles were traveled and 422 rides given (with some riders using the service more than once).

- County funding for the non-emergency medical trips as well as for the senior program trips was recently reduced from $35,000 per fiscal year to $25,000.

Kidney Dialysis Program

- In January of 2007, Coastline Enterprises began transporting dialysis patients for their treatments. This is a new service (previously provided by another organization that is now closed) offered three times per week. There are five regular riders in the Del Norte County kidney dialysis program. Coastline Enterprises is applying for Medi-Cal reimbursements for three of these passengers.

Redwood Coast Regional Center Trips

- The fourth service provided by Coastline Enterprises transports individuals with developmental disabilities to and from job sites. This program operates seven days per week. During the 2006-2007 fiscal year, a total of 42,925 miles were traveled to provide 5,971 rides (again, this figure includes riders using the service multiple times).
- In addition to Coastline Enterprise's programs, there are two private taxi service providers for the general public and a number of social service transportation resources for specific populations in Del Norte County. The social service providers are described below.

Older Adults

The Area 1 Agency on Aging (A1AA) refers people to a list of caregivers who will drive them where they need to go on a fee-for-service basis.

The Del Norte Senior Center offers mobility and transit training, assisting older adults to find and use the transportation resources most suitable to their needs. They also have an agreement with Coastline Enterprises to transport senior to the senior center's nutrition program, as described above.

People with Disabilities

Del Norte Mental Health Department specialists transport certain clients to mental services, medical appointments, and shopping areas in county vehicles, when time allows. Some clients are transported to Sacramento or the Bay Area for in-patient care.

The Community Assistance League (formerly the Easter Seals Society) provides gas vouchers for medical trips (as well as financial assistance for food and lodging when necessary) for people with disabilities and others who need but cannot afford to access medical care out of town. This organization, with a budget of $90,000 to $100,000 per year and 22 volunteers, serves about 197 people per year.

People with Low Incomes

Gas vouchers are provided by the Public Health program of the Department of Health and Human Services to assist low-income individuals – mostly single mothers and their children – with transportation to medical appointments.

The Community Assistance Network, in partnership with the Del Norte County Department of Health and Social Services, provides direct transportation assistance to participants in their Life Elevation Action Program, a program available to residents who are in the lowest income brackets. Two staff vehicles are available for the three case managers to transport people as needed for a variety of reasons.

Del Norte Community Health Center provides fixed route and Dial-A-Ride bus vouchers for anyone in need.
Gas and/or bus vouchers are also available from area churches for various transportation needs.

Native Americans

The federally recognized Tolowa Tribe of the Smith River Rancheria and the Yurok, Tolowa, Chetco, and Hupa Tribes of the Elk Valley Rancheria provide transportation to Head Start for children of tribal/Rancheria members. The Yurok Tribe was recently awarded a grant to implement a transit system within the Elk Valley Rancheria.

United Indian Health Services, an organization providing culturally sensitive and comprehensive health care services to the Native American communities in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties, assists with locating and accessing resources for the health and well-being of those served. When necessary, this may include arranging transportation for medical appointments.

Veterans

The Del Norte County Veteran Service Officers provides assistance and referrals for veterans of all ages. Services may include providing transportation for medical care.

Medi-Cal Transportation Providers

No Medi-Cal providers were identified in Del Norte County, though Coastline Enterprises has been attempting to become one for its kidney dialysis program, as mentioned above.

Connecting Transit Services Beyond the County

The Redwood Coast Transit Authority offers transportation to Arcata, where there are connections to Amtrak rail services, Greyhound buses, and Humboldt Transit Authority's Redwood Transit System. Also available are trips to Smith River, where travelers may connect to the Curry Public Transit Coastal Express for transportation to Brookings and the Oregon Coast. Emergency air and ground transportation to and from medical facilities are provided by, Del Norte Ambulance and Cal-Ore Life Flight.

Non-emergency air and ground transportation is also provided by Angel Flight, a free service provided by volunteer pilots on private aircraft. This service is offered to people whose medical problems make it necessary for them to travel for diagnosis or treatment, and who lack the

financial resources for transportation. In addition, Angel Flight provides non-emergency wheelchair-equipped van services for disabled and convalescent passengers.

Barriers

Barriers to coordination between public transit and social service transportation providers include:

- Some funders limit the type of passengers that service providers can transport, though this is not a major consideration for the two most prominent transportation providers, RCT and Coastline Enterprises.
- There is some concern that the organizational capacity of Coastline Enterprises is limited because they have one full-time staff person with part-time assistance. This limits the organization's ability to perform CTSA-related functions and could limit their ability to take on coordination efforts in conjunction with the transit agency.
- Funding, in general, is a potential barrier to coordination efforts between the two major transportation providers in Del Norte County. Funding to support key services need to be addressed.
- The Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC), which could assist in coordination efforts, is not as effective as it could be because it meets on a very limited basis and does not include key policy makers in its membership.
- Community members appear to demand highly personalized service that may limit coordination efforts that attempt to maximize the use of fixed public transit.

Priorities

High Priority Strategies:

- Create One-Stop Resource (Mobility Management Center)
- Transit Education/Training
- Expand In-County and Out-of-County Service
- Public transit marketing
- Transition general public to fixed route

Medium Priority Strategies:

- Bus Shelters
- Engage Employers
- Arrange Carpool/Rideshare
- Consolidate services
- Group trips
- Increase DAR rates

Low Priority Strategies:

- Efficient (smaller) buses

Recommendations

Decision-Making Process

The Del Norte Local Transportation Commission is currently the decision-making body for transportation related issues. The Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) has been essentially inactive since all the TDA funds have been all allocated to transit services. Transit and social service transportation policy decisions are addressed independently of each other.

Recommendation

Strengthen and expand the SSTAC by expanding its membership to include policy makers in city and county government as well as social service agencies. The committee should meet on a regular basis and provide recommendations to the Commission regarding transit and/or social service transportation policy changes that would improve the provision and coordination of services.

Program Administration

The two agencies that provide the most trips in the county and are most likely to play a leadership role in administering the coordinated transportation plan are the Redwood Coast Transit Authority and Coastline Enterprises (the CTSA). Currently, neither agency has the time or resources needed to coordinate services and pursue projects that support the strategic directives of this plan.

Recommendation

If coordination of transit and social service transportation is desired in Del Norte County, on-site, full time staff will need to support the work. With additional staff, a strengthened SSTAC, and the contracted services of Mark Wall & Associates during the transition, the Local Transportation Commission and the local transit authority could share the same staff. If this approach is taken, it would be critical for Coastline Enterprises to be part of these discussions to ensure their services are not disrupted or diminished.

Service Standards

Developing service agreements with transportation providers and following through with monitoring system performance are important tasks for transportation providers. Service agreements should basic monthly and year-to-date operating and performance data.

Next Steps for Implementation of Short-Term Strategies

Significant work needs to take place by the Local Transportation Commission, SSTAC, the transit agency, social service agencies, and community leaders to scope the details of implementing the strategic objectives of this plan. Specific projects need to be defined, timelines established, roles and responsibilities clarified, and budgets developed.

Create One-Stop Resource

Development of a mobility management center in Del Norte County would accomplish many of the strategic objectives in this plan, including administration of ride share programs, travel assistance, travel training, and information and referral for transportation resources. Coordinated scheduling of trips that are funded by separate sources (e.g. transit and CTSA trips) could also be a responsibility of the mobility management center in the future.

Recommendation

The SSTAC should meet as soon as possible after the final coordinated plan is released in order to review the recommendations and begin plans for implementation. As a result of their work, the SSTAC should recommend to the Local Transportation Commission a preferred location for the mobility management center, as well as potential management and staffing.

An essential project to be pursued immediately is the publication of a central directory of transportation options in the community. The transportation inventory provided in this plan, supplemented by the Google transit trip planner currently under development, could be useful tools to begin organizing the information. With appropriate funding, the CTSA and the transit agency could collaborate on developing this directory as a first step towards improved coordination.

Transition General Public Riders to Fixed Route Transit

Some stakeholders reported scheduling difficulties for people with disabilities, who were identified as being in particular need of this service. Since the recent expansion of local fixed route services, RCTA is considering fare adjustments and other policy modifications to encourage migration of general public DAR users to the fixed route service.

In addition, a bus buddy program could be established to increase fixed route transit services among more seniors and people with disabilities who could use a little extra assistance and guidance while on the bus. Like travel training programs, these efforts can be highly cost effective and result in more travel options for many people.

New Freedom Developmental Disabilities Projects of National Significance

Recommendation

To encourage ambulatory individuals to ride fixed route transit, the Del Norte Local Transportation Commission should consider the following:

- Adopt an eligibility certification process for Dial-A-Ride passengers that is consistent with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Develop a fare structure for Dial-A-Ride that provides a discounted rate for eligible riders and a high enough rate to serve as an incentive for general public riders to choose fixed route. The current fare structure is currently under review by the consulting team developing the 2009 Transit Development Plan.
- Establish a bus buddy and/or travel assistance program. Many times people want to take the bus but are intimidated by the schedule, need help with packages, or are just not sure if they will know when to get off

the bus. Volunteers who serve as a bus buddy or travel assistant can make this transition smooth. General considerations for using volunteers are included in the "Volunteer Transportation" section below.

- Establish travel training program, as described in the "Create One-Stop Resource" strategy above.

Expand Service In and Out of County

An Intercity Transit Study has just been completed in Del Norte County, recommending one to three days of service per week between Crescent City and the Hiouchi/Gasquet area. This will be a good first step toward meeting the identified needs for expanded service within the county. The upcoming Transit Development Plan will review the possibility of increased service in the Smith River area, potentially adding stops off the highway.

The Intercity Transit Study also recommends adding a mid-day stop in Arcata, which will provide options for shorter trips that may be more doable for seniors and people with disabilities who are trying to access medical appointments or other services in Humboldt County.

In order to enhance mobility while in Humboldt County, it is recommended that Redwood Coast Transit expand their coordination efforts with Humboldt County transportation providers to determine if it is possible to create inter-county paratransit partnerships for RCT riders when they arrive in Humboldt County. Also, other possible strategies, such as the ride share program addressed in the medium priority strategies could help to fill this gap in the future.

Coastline Enterprises is also looking for funding to add another day of service to provide non-emergency medical trips into Humboldt County.

Recommendation

Given the timing of new service reviews on the part of both the transit agency and the CTSA, it is recommended that the two agencies meet to review their planned service expansions and coordinate their schedules to maximize efficiencies and prevent and/or reduce service duplication. Any remaining gaps in service could be accommodated by a ride share program, which is recommended for future development.

Public Transit Advertising/Marketing

A marketing plan will be important in helping the community understand the services available to them and in creating confidence in the migration of general public riders and social service transportation users to the fixed route transit system, making the overall system more effective and efficient.

Recommendation

The Transit Development Plan, which is currently underway, should be expanded to include a marketing section, inclusive of key messages, target populations, marketing vehicles, and distribution methods. Ideally a joint marketing plan could be developed that markets the transportation services of transit and social service agencies.

EL DORADO COUNTY

Transportation Needs and Gaps (Combined)

Projected Transportation Needs

In El Dorado County, the senior population (age 60 and older) is expected to grow from 41,050 to 62,453 between 2010 and 2020, based on California Department of Finance projections. This represents a 52% increase. Therefore, it is assumed that demand for transportation services for older people will increase approximately 52% over the next ten years.

Coordination Stakeholders identified several needs that affect general coordination efforts such as:

- Overcome barriers to coordination, including lack of staff resources to manage coordination activities and insufficient funds to achieve useful levels to support coordination activities. Combine CTSA and mobility management functions in a more unified way
- Develop a vehicle maintenance program to support human service agencies within the county
- Develop a system of support services such as driver training and alcohol/drug testing for human service agencies within the county
- Develop a coordinated volunteer driver program

Connections:

The need for connectivity to out of county services or systems was identified, especially for medical services and social service programs. In addition, gaps within the county in growing communities such as Cameron Park and El Dorado Hills were outlined. Specific service gaps include:

1. Insufficient service to Sacramento for non-emergency medical trips
2. Insufficient service for employment opportunities. Specifically the need for reverse commute service from El Dorado Hills to Placerville and from Sacramento to El Dorado Hills. JARC funds could be utilized be for this service.
3. El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park both as population and employment centers highlights the need for transportation services in the area, specifically for seniors, disabled, and youth.

Service Availability:

Repeatedly, stakeholders indicated a need for expanded services Transit users and human service agencies both expressed concerns over limited or nonexistent transportation outside the typical weekday work schedule. Specific issues include:

1. Insufficient Dial-A-Ride service, especially on weekdays
2. Lack of public transportation outside the 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM weekday window is seen as a significant factor limiting employment opportunities, especially for students or people in entry level jobs who often work non-traditional hours.

3. Extended service on weekends is needed for seniors and disabled individuals for shopping and social activities.
4. Lack of service for outlying areas of El Dorado County

Acquisition and Replacement of Capital Equipment:

Stakeholders acknowledged the need for replacement vehicles to maintain the operational status and service quality of the public transit fleet. In addition, other capital equipment may be needed to enhance coordination activities within the county.

1. New and replacement vehicles, computer hardware/software, maintenance equipment, communication base station/mobile radios cameras, GIS equipment, and other equipment eligible under 5310 guidelines

2. Develop a Retired Vehicle Program to allow the use older (retired) vehicles for less intense social service agency needs

Transportation Resources

El Dorado County Transit Authority (El Dorado Transit)

Currently, El Dorado Transit operates a fleet of 60 vehicles, which are serviced by its own maintenance department. Maintenance is available Monday through Friday, 4:30 AM – 7:00 PM. El Dorado Transit is the only public transit service in the western county. In 1993, the City of Placerville and El Dorado County entered into a joint powers agreement that resulted in the creation of the El Dorado County Transit Authority, which oversees the operation of the transit system.

El Dorado Transit operates six local bus routes Monday through Saturday. Transfers in Placerville allow passengers to travel throughout the western county areas, including:

- Placerville
- Shingle Springs
- Diamond Springs
- Pollock Pines
- El Dorado
- Camino
- Cameron Park

El Dorado County Transit Dial-A-Ride

The Authority's curb-to-curb transportation service provides rides for individuals unable to use the regular bus routes. Dial-A-Ride service is available weekdays from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM and weekends between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00PM. DAR is available to all riders; however, seniors (60 and older) and persons with disabilities receive priority when booking rides.

El Dorado Transit also offers weekday commuter service to downtown Sacramento from park and ride lots throughout the county. In addition, El Dorado Transit operates the Iron Point Connector between Placerville and the Folsom Light Rail Station.

The service is available Monday through Friday. Tuesdays and Thursdays each week, El Dorado Transit provides Sac-Med service, nonemergency medical transportation to medical facilities in Sacramento County. All El Dorado County Transit Authority vehicles are wheelchair accessible and buses are equipped with bike racks.

Among the actions that El Dorado Transit has taken consistent with the CTSA designation is its role as transportation provider for the following human service agencies:

Mother Lode Rehabilitation Enterprises, Inc. (M.O.R.E.)
M.O.R.E. is a nonprofit agency located in Placerville, provides services to disabled individuals, including vocational and life skill training, job placement, and a creative arts program. El Dorado Transit transports M.O.R.E. clients to the program site through a contract with the Alta California Regional Center. Alta California Regional Center is responsible for supporting services to the developmentally disabled clients of M.O.R.E.

El Dorado County Senior Day Care Center

El Dorado County Transit Authority provides subscription Dial-A-Ride service to the clients of the Senior Day Care Center. The Center, operated by El Dorado County Community Services Department, serves homebound seniors with mental and physical disabilities.

Alta California Regional Center provides assistance to individuals with developmental disabilities, including at-risk infants and their families. Alta contracts with El Dorado Transit, Extreme Taxi and the El Dorado County Office of Education to offer transportation for clients to the Placerville area. Among the services funded by Alta is the transportation to M.O.R.E. that is provided by El Dorado Transit.

Other Transportation Service Providers

Snowline Hospice

Snowline Hospice is a nonprofit, community-based organization dedicated to meeting the unique physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those who are nearing the end of life's journey. Volunteers, at their discretion and using personal vehicles, may provide transportation on a client-by-client basis.

Choices Transitional Services – (CTS)

Transitional Services (CTS) operates four programs, offering training in areas of self help, advocacy, pre-employment and community integration for adults with developmental disabilities. Transportation for shopping, employment, medical appointments and community activities is provided by staff members using personal vehicles. Reimbursement for mileage is provided through funding from the Alta California Regional Center.

Mother Lode Rehabilitation Enterprises, Inc. (M.O.R.E.)

In addition to the services described above, M.O.R.E. operates a 15 passenger van that is used to transport clients who reside at Pathways, a group home in Placerville. The agency also utilizes a seven passenger minivan and a Ford Escort to provide transportation on community outings. Two Ford extended cab pickup trucks take program participants to job sites. All vehicles are driven by staff members.

Gold Country Retirement Center

Utilizing one 20 passenger bus equipped with a wheelchair lift, Gold Country Retirement Center provides transportation to its senior and disabled residents. Trips are provided for nonemergency medical appointments, shopping and social activities.

Eskaton

Eskaton has two vehicles used to provide transportation for its senior and disabled residents. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, a 20 passenger bus with a wheelchair lift takes individuals shopping and to medical appointments. This vehicle, along with the agency's seven passenger minivan, is also utilized for transportation to social events and activities.

50 Corridor Transportation Management Association

Corridor 50 TMA, a nonprofit agency, promotes commuting options by providing information about ridesharing. Placement assistance is available to employers, individuals and other interested organizations.

DST Output

One of the largest employers in El Dorado County, DST has seven vanpools travelling to El Dorado Hills from South Sacramento (five vanpools) and Elk Grove (two vanpools). The vans are leased by Enterprise exclusively for vanpools.

Area 29 Agency on Aging (AAA)

Area 29 Agency on Aging is responsible for the administration of senior programs in El Dorado County for residents 60 years and older. The AAA develops and implements the Area Plan for Senior Services. Funding for transportation is limited to the Senior Shuttle program, which provides service in Placerville and El Dorado Hills for weekly shopping.

Greyhound

Greyhound bus service is available in Sacramento.

Amtrak

Daily bus service is available in El Dorado County from Placerville to the Amtrak Station in Sacramento. This service is offered only to ticketed Amtrak passengers.

Airport

Sacramento International Airport is the closest major airport serving western El Dorado County.

Private Taxis Service

Western El Dorado County is served by two privately owned taxi companies. Both Lighting Taxi and Extreme Taxi provide 24 hour service and will take passengers as far as South Lake Tahoe

and the Sacramento Airport. The county is also served by the Folsom Airporter and Foothill Flyer, which provide airport shuttle service.

Medi-Cal Vendors

It is possible for local providers (including public agencies and non-profit organizations) to become providers of non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) under existing Medi-Cal arrangements. medical clients.

Barriers

Major Barriers to Coordination

Recognizing the need for agencies to work together is a vital step towards achieving more efficient, cost effective transportation services. However, coordination efforts can be impeded by a wide range of obstacles, including:

- Lack of resources: staff, funding, equipment
- Different client eligibility requirements
- Service area boundaries that limit connectivity
- Inter-county and intra-county jurisdictional issues
- Different agencies with different requirements for driver screening, training and licensing and vehicle safety
- Lack of software/technology or incompatibilities with software/technology prevent sharing of scheduling and dispatching, client eligibility data, and reports
- Liability/insurance issues
- Privacy requirements, such as HIPPA, prevent sharing client information
- Reporting requirements that vary for federal, state and local funding sources
- Rural counties often do not have the large number of public and private agencies that can share resources; coordination opportunities can be limited simply by the number of organizations operating within the region.
- Social service agencies typically provide programs and services to a very discretely defined client population. Agencies may serve frail elderly or severely physically disabled or mentally disabled clients.

El Dorado Transit and stakeholders both agreed that staffing levels within the transit agency, which has the responsibility of spearheading coordination activities, do not allow for dedicated focus on CTSA activities.

Interviews with stakeholders showed that there is interest in coordinated arrangements for vehicle maintenance provided by the El Dorado County Transit Authority maintenance department. However, concerns by El Dorado Transit over liability issues have forestalled this opportunity. Likewise, stakeholders reported that perceived liability issues with volunteer driver programs, staff drivers, and the sharing of vehicles are barriers to coordination efforts within El Dorado.

Priorities

High Priority Strategies

Coordination Opportunity:

Overcoming barriers to coordination, including

• Lack of staff resources to manage coordination activities
• Insufficient funds to achieve useful levels to support coordination activities

Strategy:

Provide sufficient resources to allow for negotiation of interagency agreements, providing for coordinated use of assets and operating funds.

The importance of the CTSA became very clear during discussions with local participants, many of whom were not aware of the role of the CTSA in the County. This situation often is the result of two local conditions:

1. Lack of staff resources to pursue coordination

2. Lack of sufficient funds to accomplish meaningful results

Stakeholders universally recognized the need to dedicate resources to the achievement of coordination results to be an immediate action priority.

Coordination Opportunity:

Establishment of centralized maintenance and repair services to include social service agencies, non-profit organizations, and local government entities;

Strategy:

Provision of contract maintenance through the CTSA.

El Dorado Transit could expand its maintenance capability to include sufficient hours to service outside agency vehicles on a fee paying basis.

Coordination Opportunity:

Need for increased Dial-A-Ride service.

Strategy:

Increase Dial-A-Ride service to meet existing and potential future demand.

As identified by stakeholders and the Short Range Transit Plan, there is a need for additional Dial-A-Ride service, especially during weekdays. DAR service should be enhanced to allow El Dorado Transit operations staff the ability to allocate service hours depending on anticipated needs and observed operating patterns.

Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of sufficient transportation for medical trips from El Dorado County to Sacramento.

Strategy:

Increase days of service to Sacramento for medical and social service appointments provides travel training for potential passengers to use existing commuter service with connecting transfers in Sacramento.

Currently, there are occasional capacity constraints, forcing clients to reschedule their appointments or find alternate transportation. Service could be expanded by either adding an additional day of service or a second bus on an existing service day.

Coordination Opportunity:

More fully utilize volunteer drivers in social service transportation programs.

Strategy:

Identify agencies or community leaders to coordinate volunteer programs, including the recruitment, screening, training and managing of volunteers.

Identify or create new insurance programs to eliminate exposure of volunteers and agencies to inappropriate levels of liability.

Coordination Opportunity:

Connections for employment:

- Reverse commute to Placerville
- Reverse commute from Sacramento to El Dorado Hills

Strategy:

Expand traditional transit service through reverse commute service. Could be done by adjusting trip times for returning buses from Sacramento to better serve county destinations (e.g. El Dorado Hills and Placerville). By coordinating service, using regular buses returning from Sacramento and operated by El Dorado County Transit Authority, reverse commute service could be implemented.

Coordination Opportunity:

Need for new and replacement capital equipment for El Dorado County Transit Authority and human service agencies

Strategy:

Coordinate arrangements for purchase of capital equipment, including vehicles, to help tap available funding, e.g. FTA Section 5310.

Use older (retired) vehicles for less intense social service agency needs.

The purchase of new or replacement capital equipment, including vehicles, should be coordinated among agencies. El Dorado Transit is the primary vehicle operating agency in the county.

Implementation of this strategy entails a collaborative approach among local human service transportation providers and public transit to develop a county-based or regional capital improvement program. Components of a capital improvement program would include:

El Dorado County Transit Authority should consider formalizing a vehicle distribution program for its retiring vehicles that might still have useful life for a second agency.

Medium Priority Strategies

Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of public transportation outside the 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM weekday window.

<u>Strategy:</u>

Expansion of service beyond the 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM window in the existing transit service area.

The need for transportation services outside the weekday window was identified as important for individuals participating in social service programs or school events and for employment opportunities, especially for youth. Evening service could be expanded using both traditional public transit and social service.

Coordination Opportunity:

Coordination of support services, such as driver training and drug and alcohol testing.

<u>Strategy:</u>

Expansion of driver training, alcohol/drug testing and other support services for non-profit organizations through the CTSA.

In El Dorado County, El Dorado Transit as the CTSA may be in a position to provide centralized services to a variety of agencies in the county. Services could include:

- Consolidated driver training programs for staff or volunteers of social service agencies
- Staff support for technical functions such as drug and alcohol testing.

Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of adequate transportation for seniors, youth and developmentally disabled populations in El Dorado Hills.

Strategy:

Expand joint use of vehicles and service in El Dorado Hills for seniors, developmentally disabled and youth (typical service hours do not overlap).

The El Dorado Hills area receives limited public transportation service. With a growing population and few local social services, there is an increasing need for travel to services out of the immediate area. The population groups that were identified as having very significant needs were seniors, youth and people with disabilities.

The same bus that provides service to seniors for meals could also be used to carry students to after school activities and developmentally disabled to training programs. Such a bus might also be used for other purposes for these groups evenings and weekends.

Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of adequate transportation for seniors and developmentally disabled populations in Cameron Park.

Strategy:

Expand joint use of vehicles and service in Cameron Park for seniors, developmentally disabled and youth (typical service hours do not overlap).

There is a significant need for transportation for the senior and developmentally disabled within Cameron Park. Developmentally disabled clients require service during early morning and mid-afternoon hours, while seniors most often use the bus for noontime service to meal sites. The same bus that provides service to disabled clients mornings and afternoons could be used to transport seniors to midday meal programs.

Coordination Opportunity:

Red Hawk Casino to open Fall-Winter 2008.

Strategy:

Work with tribal management to develop transportation options to serve employees and guests of the Red Hawk Casino.

The Red Hawk Casino as it develops may emerge as a major employment destination. The need for public transportation at the site may call for a variety of transit services.

Coordination Opportunity:

Taxi service in El Dorado County is not widely available

Standards for overall service as well as driver screening and training could be improved to provide higher quality service.

Strategy:

Implement taxi voucher program. Work with taxi companies to upgrade driver screening and training.

Currently, there are two taxi companies operating in western El Dorado County. Taxi vouchers are a tool to expand transportation services to targeted population groups through relatively inexpensive means.

Low Priority Strategies

Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of public transportation on weekends for seniors, disabled and youth.

Strategy:

Expand public transit service and social service agency transportation to provide service on weekends for seniors, youth and disabled individuals.

The need for increased public transportation on weekends was articulated in every public forum held in El Dorado County. Seniors want to shop, socialize and participate in recreational activities. Youth need transportation for employment. Social service agencies could provide service utilizing vehicles normally used only during the week.

Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of service to outlying areas of El Dorado County.

Strategy:

Expand public transit service and social service agency transportation to outlying areas of the county.

Public transportation options to rural areas of the western slope of El Dorado County are limited, with service to Grizzly Flat provided one day per week. Service could be expanded to the northwestern part of the county (Georgetown – Auburn) with a similar one day per week route. Coordination with service providers in the South Tahoe region of the county as well as neighboring counties could be explored.

Recommendations

Program Administration

In El Dorado County, an effective program administration structure is in place. The El Dorado County Transportation Commission has designated El Dorado Transit as the CTSA. The transit agency has in turn accomplished several coordination activities in this role. The Commission does provide oversight and hopefully will increase its monitoring role as a result of the recommendations in this Coordinated Plan. El Dorado Transit has participated extensively in this planning process, which appears to have re-ignited its pursuit of coordination opportunities.

Decision-Making Process

The local decision-making process in El Dorado County is functioning reasonably well. The Transportation Commission has designated El Dorado Transit as the CTSA. The Commission oversees its performance through a high level of ongoing staff interaction and collaboration on grants and projects. The roles and relationships are also addressed in the 2008 Short Range Transit Plan, which acknowledges the formal relationship of the agencies. Further, the SSTAC is active and participates in the coordination decision process as mandated by state statute. The process could be enhanced through more formal assignment of clearinghouse functions to the CTSA for grant coordination and strategy implementation.

Guidelines for Transportation Provider - Agreements and Service Standards

Coordinated transportation agreements can take many forms, depending on the types of services involved, the agencies that are party to the agreement, and the clients served. Thus each service agreement will have its own unique set of requirements. Agreements can be developed for client transportation, driver training, vehicle maintenance, volunteer coordination, or a myriad of other services. Each agreement should contain clear performance guidelines and standards specific to the service/services provided.

Access to Jobs and Employment

In El Dorado County, population and employment centers are focused around the communities of Placerville, El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park. While some level of reverse commute service from Sacramento is offered by El Dorado Transit beginning at 7:00 AM, stakeholders indicated this schedule did not allow employees in El Dorado Hills or Placerville to get to work on time. With a growing number of Sacramento area residents working in El Dorado County, reverse commute schedules could be adjusted to provide more viable options.

During the planning process, stakeholders identified the following transportation needs for job access in El Dorado County:

- Service from El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park to Placerville
- Service from Sacramento to El Dorado Hills
- Service outside the 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM window
- Evening and weekend service for youth/entry level job holders
- Service to the new Red Hawk Casino

Volunteer Transportation

El Dorado County stakeholders recognized the benefits of a county-wide volunteer program and rated as “high” a strategy to build a volunteer driver pool. The issue of agency liability frequently is raised as an obstacle to the implementation of volunteer driver programs.

Coordinating/Integrating School Bus and Public Transportation Services

The El Dorado County Office of Education (EDCOE) is a contract provider of transit services to clients of the Alta California Regional Center. This arrangement is viewed by the EDCOE as a

natural extension of services that were provided to developmentally disabled individuals while they were students in the public school system. It is common for regional centers to contract with multiple vendors within a county; in El Dorado County vendor relationships exist with EDCOE and El Dorado Transit.

While school district transportation resources were identified in the inventory of transportation service providers (Figure 4-4), stakeholders representing the EDCOE did not participate in any stakeholder meetings associated with the study. EDCOE's focus is on student transportation and there has been little interest shown in coordination efforts with other agencies.

Vehicle Maintenance and Operations

During meetings with stakeholders, interest was expressed by several agencies in a consolidated maintenance program, which would take advantage of the facilities and technical expertise of the El Dorado Transit maintenance department. El Dorado Transit, in its role as CTSA, could develop agreements that would allow for the implementation of this coordination activity. One option would be to make greater use of the existing facility evenings and weekends for transit and social service vehicles.

GLENN COUNTY

Transportation Needs and Gaps (Combined)

Projected Demand for Public Transportation

For purposes of this plan therefore, the projected growth of the total population in Glenn County is used as a low-end projection for transit demand, and the projected growth of the population over the age of 65 is used as a high-end projection for transit demand. Based on the California Department of Finance figures used in Figure 3-5, a low-end projection for transit demand is that it will grow by 23% between 2010 and 2020 and by 46% between 2010 and 2030. A high-end projection is that transit demand will grow by 38% between 2010 and 2020 and by 88% between 2010 and 2020.

The most recent resolution, adopted in August 2007, identified the following unmet transit needs:

- Adjustment of dial-a-ride program boundaries to more closely resemble city limits of Orland and Willows and thereby include additional populated areas
- Adjustment of Glenn Ride schedule to deliver patrons to work in the City of Orland by 8:00 AM from the City of Willows
- Adjustment of Glenn Ride schedule to deliver patrons to work at Enloe Hospital (in Chico) by 8:00 AM and leave at 4:45 PM
- Hiring of driver(s) to replace and/or fill-in for the Volunteer Driver Program Some of these needs were determined to be "reasonable to meet" (according to the Commission's adopted definition) and some were not. Regarding needs found "not reasonable to meet" the resolution states:
- The current bus schedule provides for a delivery time in Orland between 7:10 and 7:25 AM Though not ideal, the arrival time is within an

acceptable limit. The evening trip leaves Orland between 5:21 PM and 5:37 PM, which is also an acceptable limit.

- The request for Enloe Hospital is a specialized need and the requested change to the fixed route schedule is counter-productive to the need for delivering riders to Orland and coordination with other transit services in Butte County.
- Additional information is needed regarding the hiring of driver(s) for the Volunteer Medical Program.
- The Glenn County Transportation Commission will have a transit assessment study completed by the Fall of 2007 which will provide additional information regarding ridership for the fixed route system and recommendations for improvement of service. The transit assessment referred to just above is the study by Moore and Associates, described earlier.

The Commission determined that it would implement the following "reasonable to meet" needs:

- Continued support of the following transportation programs administered by the Glenn County Transportation Commission with 100% of the estimated LTF ($830,000, for Fiscal Year 2007/2008): Dial-a-ride, Volunteer Medical Transportation Program, HRA CalWORKs Van Program and Glenn Ride Bus Program.

- Continuation of $3,960 contribution to the Senior Center for the Senior Nutrition Program to offset transportation costs due to the increase in LTF for the fiscal year and the continuing need to outreach to senior citizens in Glenn County.

- Maintain the 1.5 mile radius of the Dial-a-ride program with an adjustment to include the Willow-Glenn Mobile Home Park, west of Willows at 6155 State Route 162, Leisure Mobile Home Park, east of Orland at 7043 State Route 32, and the Huggins and Cannell Drives area on the west side of County Road G and thereby expand the specialized transit program to transit dependent citizens of Glenn County.

Transportation Resources

Public Transit Operators Glenn Transit Service

Glenn Transit Service is the public transit operator for Glenn County. Through a contract with Paratransit Services, (a private company headquartered in Bremerton, Washington) it operates one fixed-route service in the county, plus several other special transit services. Glenn Transit Service is a joint powers agency with a governing body known as the Regional Transit Committee (RTC). The RTC is composed of two representatives from each of the following bodies: Glenn County, the City of Orland, and the City of Willows. Glenn Transit Service is administered by the Glenn County Department of Public Works.

Glenn Ride

Glenn Ride is a general public, fixed-route inter-city transit service connecting Willows, Artois, Orland and Hamilton City in Glenn County and Chico in neighboring Butte County. In Chico, Glenn Ride passengers can make connections with Butte Regional Transit. The route directly serves the Butte College Glenn County Center in Orland, with connections via Butte College Transit from Chico to the main campus in Oroville, approximately 10 miles southeast of Chico. The route also serves the California State University campus in Chico.

Seven trips are provided Monday through Friday and three trips are provided on Saturdays. There is no Sunday service, at least in part because Butte Regional Transit, to which Glenn Ride connects in Chico, does not run on Sundays. The one-way fare for trips within Glenn County is $1.00, and $1.50 each way for trips originating or ending outside Glenn County. Children under 6 ride free. Butte College provides students with monthly bus passes as part of their tuition, and then is billed by Glenn County Transit.

Glenn Transport (Dial-a-Ride)

Glenn Transport provides dial-a-ride service to eligible Glenn County residents who are unable to use the Glenn Ride bus system for local transportation needs within the Orland and Willows areas. Paratransit Services operates the service, under contract to Glenn Transit Service (GTS); GTS qualifies clients for the program. This program began in 1981 in response to Unmet Transit Needs testimony.

Services are restricted to within a 1.5 mile radius of the City Halls of Orland and Willows, the Leisure Mobile Home Park (east of Orland), the Willows-Glenn Mobile Home Park (west of Willows) and the Huggins/Cannell Drives area, west of Orland. The service operates Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM, with Saturday service from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The fare is $1.50 per one-way trip with a prior day reservation, or $2.00 per trip for same-day service. Use of this service requires a Transit Service Card.

Eligibility requirements for the card are that the rider is:

- 60 years of age or older
- Has a permanent disability
- Is on low-income agency assistance, or
- Is on low-income non-agency assistance

Volunteer Medical Transport Program

The Volunteer Medical Transport Program provides transportation service to medical appointments for Glenn County residents who are unable to provide their own transportation or to use Glenn Ride fixed-route transit. Volunteers provide the service using their own vehicles. They are reimbursed at the Federal mileage reimbursement rate ($0.485/mile in 2007) and also receive a stipend for incidental expenses. The clients pay a fee, based on the distance to their destination.

In order to participate in this program, the rider must have a valid Glenn Transit Service Card, and a confidential application on file. The program is contracted to Paratransit Services for operation and management; GTS qualifies clients and reimburses the drivers.

CalWORKs Ride to Work Program

The CalWORKs Ride to Work Program is a van transportation service sponsored through the Glenn County Human Resource Agency (HRA) and operated by Paratransit Services. This program began in January 2000 and provides transportation to and from work opportunities for CalWORKs clients who live in outlying areas within Glenn County. In order to use this service, the client must be referred from their Glenn County HRA CalWORKs Eligibility worker.

Inter-Agency Connections

Glenn Ride connects with several other transit services in Chico:

- Greyhound Bus Lines – Provides intercity bus service with routes throughout California and the United States. Connects with Glenn Ride in Chico. Greyhound Bus Lines is a private operator.
- Amtrak Bus – Connects with Glenn Ride in Chico and provides a bus connection to Amtrak's nationwide rail and bus network.
- Butte Regional Transit – Provides intercity, fixed-route service throughout Butte County from the Chico Transit Center. The Chico Area Transit System (CATS) and the Chico Clipper paratransit system are now part of this newly consolidated transit system, also called the "B-Line". The consolidated system is administered by the Butte County Association of Governments (BCAG).

Social Service Transportation Providers

In addition to services offered by Glenn Transit Service, there are a number of transportation services offered by social service providers. These services are generally limited to clients of the agencies' programs, which target older adults, people with disabilities, or low-income individuals.

Glenn County Office of Education – Senior Nutrition Centers

The Glenn County Office of Education maintains two senior nutrition centers: one in Orland and one in Willows. The centers are open Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM (Orland) or 10:00 AM (Willows), and provide nutritious noon meals for seniors 60 years of age and older. The center will pick seniors up and bring them to the center for the noontime meal, as well as classes and other activities at the center. For those seniors who are unable to make it to the Nutrition Site, such as seniors in remote areas of the county, the program delivers meals through the volunteer driver program. In addition, they will transport seniors to and from grocery shopping and medical appointments if they are on the route.

Glenn County Office of Education, Student Services

The Glenn County Office of Education provides direct services to disabled and at-risk students through its Student Services Department, supporting many of Glenn's smaller districts. Services include student transportation, which is provided according to each child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) using the least restrictive mode. When possible, students use Glenn Ride or regular district buses. This program provides curb-to-curb service for nine school districts within Glenn County, using four buses with wheelchair lifts, and serves young people with disabilities from pre-school up to age 22 for transition to the community.

Glenn County Office of Education – Head Start

Head Start is operated under the Glenn County Office of Education, with facilities in Orland and Willows. Head Start transports children with an accompanying parent to any appointments where transportation is required: medical, dental, court-related, for example. The parent is responsible for getting the child to the center, then Head Start will transport them to the appointment and back. They use two County cars, which are shared by five resource assistants (case workers) and four home visitors. Case workers also use their own cars. They do not transport children with disabilities.

Glenn County Human Resource Agency – Adult, Child, and In-Home Supportive Services (Willows)

Glenn County's Human Resource Agency (HRA) includes Adult Services and Child Welfare Services. Glenn County In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) falls within the Adult Services group, and provides transportation in the context of the client cases. The Child Welfare department also provides transportation for clients needing to get to supervised visits, court hearings, and the like. The transportation is arranged by the case worker, and is provided using a county vehicle or van.

North Valley Indian Health, Inc. (Willows)

The North Valley Indian Health Clinic is a non-profit tribal operation serving Native Americans of Grindstone Rancheria, Mechoopda (Chico Rancheria), and Paskenta Band of Nomlaki (Paskenta Rancheria). They have clinics in Willows, Red Bluff and Chico. They provide transportation exclusively for their registered patients, all Native Americans, using one van and two drivers to transport patients to and from their clinics. Trips are free to the patients. They are unable to provide transportation for trips to specialists outside the area; many of these specialists are at U.C. Davis or in Sacramento, and are determined by Medi-Cal coverage. Patients must arrange these trips for themselves.

Butte College (Oroville)

Butte College in Oroville assists students with transportation to the school through their own transportation service connecting to Chico, and also through a contract with Glenn Ride to bring students from Glenn County. Glenn County's public transportation system coordinates with the college bus system, transporting students to the Tri Counties Bank on Pillsbury Road where they can transfer to the Butte College bus. Butte College students can get bus passes for the semester at the Butte College Glenn County Center in Orland. Glenn Ride invoices Butte-Glenn Community College for reimbursement.

Peg Taylor Center for Adult Day Health Care (Chico)

The Peg Taylor Center is a private non-profit facility in Chico (Butte County) serving adults 18 years or older with significant health problems and disabilities in Butte and Glenn Counties. Patients served generally have multiple chronic health problems such as strokes, diabetes, respiratory or cardiac illness or Alzheimer's disease, with about 40% having some form of dementia. By providing medical day care, those attending the center can continue to live at home rather than moving into a nursing home. The center provides a wide variety of programs including meals, social services, therapeutic activities, and nursing care to approximately 50 people daily, with a capacity of 60 per day. Clients pay for care at the Center through Medi-Cal or through private insurance. This is the only adult day health care facility serving Glenn County.

The Peg Taylor Center provides transportation to clients living within approximately an hour's drive of the center, including in and around Orland and Hamilton City in Glenn County. The center contracts with Merit Medi-Trans for this daily service, and pays for it from the medical funds they get through Medi-Cal or through private insurance.

American Cancer Society – Volunteer Program (Chico)

The American Cancer Society in Chico provides transportation services for their clients – exclusively cancer patients - regardless of income. Clients can receive monetary reimbursement for travel by car to chemotherapy or radiation treatments or can get a volunteer driver to drive them to and from their treatments. The ACS provides an array of transportation-related services for cancer patients, including:

- Funding transportation to assist cancer patients to reach medical treatment. Priority is given to radiation and chemotherapy patients.
- Arranging or providing volunteer drivers to take clients to medical appointments.
- Reimbursing or subsidizing transit and taxi fares or personal car mileage. If they cannot provide a volunteer driver they will reimburse up to 14 cents per mile to the patient or family to drive the patient to cancer treatment. The cap is currently $400 per fiscal year (September 1st to August 31st).
- Providing information referral services to local resources for transportation. They do not duplicate local services, but seek to provide services if there is nothing locally available.

Private Transportation Services

In addition to Greyhound (see Inter-Agency Connections above), two private operators provide service in Glenn County.

Yellow Cab, Orland

The Yellow Cab service in Orland is a private for-profit company serving all of Glenn County. Currently based in Orland, they are anticipating re-locating to Willows because of higher demand for cabs there. Yellow Cab charges a flat fee of $5.00 per trip within the city limits of Orland and offers a $1 discount to seniors. Outside of Orland, the fare is $2.20 base and $2.20 per mile. While not a medical transport company, Yellow Cab drivers will assist riders in entering and exiting the vehicle, and will carry parcels to the door. They can also transport people with folding wheelchairs.

Merit Medi-Trans

Merit Medi-Trans provides private non-emergency medical transportation in Glenn and Butte counties through offices in Chico, Oroville, and Paradise. They are able to provide wheelchair transport, gurney transport and special need transport. Patients pay for transportation using Medi-Cal payments, Workmen's Compensation, or rarely, private insurance. Their service area includes Willows, Orland and Hamilton City, where they pick up patients for transfer to medical facilities in Chico (most often dialysis). They also work with the Peg Taylor Day Center to bring seniors from the outlying areas into the center for meals and programs.

Barriers

Major Barriers to Coordination of Services

Because of the low density and sparse population of Glenn County, transportation needs for individuals can be unique to their circumstances. Those interviewed did not see many opportunities for coordinating services. Some barriers include legal restrictions on the use of funds and vehicles, and agencies being concerned about the unique characteristics of their client populations. For example, on vehicles purchased with Section 5310 funds, persons who are not elderly and/or disabled can be transported only on an incidental basis. Other programs are also limited to a specific clientele (i.e. Veterans, seniors, developmentally disabled, etc.) and are not well coordinated with others.

One stakeholder pointed out that the nine school districts in Glenn County have different vacation schedules and minimum days, which makes provision of transportation services for special needs students more difficult.

Priorities

High Priority Strategies

Based on the evaluation, there are five high priority strategies:

- A medical van, using paid drivers, for trips to Chico, Sacramento, Redding, and UC Davis, including coordinated ADHC and medical transportation
- Local circulators in Willows and Orland, allowing streamlined inter-city service
- Revised or more frequent Glenn Ride schedules
- Help for seniors and people with disabilities in learning to use the service, including transfers to Butte Regional Transit
- Continuous phased replacement of vehicles for all services

The new medical van service would supplement the existing Volunteer Medical Transport Program which provides medical trips for people who cannot use public transit and do not use wheelchairs.

Local circulators, revised Glenn Ride schedules, and help for seniors learning to use Glenn Ride all work together as a coordinated set of strategies. All of these were included as recommendations in the Glenn County Transit Needs Assessment. Local circulators would permit Glenn Ride, the inter-city service, to be streamlined, which would allow schedules to be revised to make them more convenient.

All of the services will need to replace existing vehicles over time. A sustainable replacement strategy for Glenn Ride in particular was identified as a need in the Glenn County Transit Needs Assessment.

Other Strategies

Based on the evaluation, there are three other strategies:

- Connect to Tehama County transit in Corning.
- Extend Glenn Ride and Glenn Transport (dial-a-ride) after 6 PM.
- Help some Glenn Transport riders use circulator service and focus Glenn Transport on needs of disabled and frail riders.

Recommendations

Program Administration

All of the strategies would be administered by Glenn Transit Service. In consultation with stakeholders, the agency would be responsible for seeking and securing funds, administering grants, overseeing services, contracting, coordinating with other jurisdictions, and evaluating service effectiveness.

Decision-Making Process

Formal decision-making responsibility will rest with the governing body for Glenn Transit Service, which is the Regional Transit Committee, composed of two representatives from the County, two from Willows and two from Orland. The committee, which is the designated CTSA for Glenn County, obtains guidance and input from the SSTAC. Members of the committee participate in SSTAC meetings and in unmet needs hearings.

Service Agreements and Standards

Developing service agreements with transportation providers and monitoring system performance are important tasks for transportation providers. Agencies should develop and adopt a set of measures and standards that can be monitored to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating services. Categories of measures include those used to monitor efficiency and service quality, including reliability.

Access to Jobs and Employment

Many major employers can be reached using Glenn Ride and connecting providers, including Glenn County offices, Wal-Mart, Johns Manville Corporation, the Shasta Packing Company, and Enloe Medical Center in Chico, However, the recent Transit Needs Assessment, unmet needs hearings, and the public outreach process for this plan identified an issue with Glenn Ride schedules that do not always match start and end times of major employers, as well as schools. Connections to Tehama County were also identified as a concern with respect to accessing employment.

In addition to Glenn Ride, job access is currently addressed by the CalWORKs Ride to Work Program, a van transportation service sponsored through the Glenn County Human Resource Agency (HRA) and operated by Paratransit Services, the provider of Glenn Ride.

Volunteer Transportation

Volunteer Transportation already plays a major role in Glenn County in the form of the Volunteer Medical Transport Program managed by Glenn Transit Services. Issues related to recruiting and

retaining volunteers were a major theme of the outreach process for this plan. Availability of volunteers has been a constraint on the medical transport program, as well the heavy time demands involved in dialysis trips to Chico and the need for trips by wheelchair users that most volunteers cannot provide. The proposed medical van program is intended to relieve the current strain on volunteers and provide services that volunteers are not able to.

School Transportation

The outreach process and the review of recent plans and unmet needs hearings did not find significant issues with regard to school transportation in general. However, stakeholders did identify a concern regarding inconvenience of Glenn Ride schedules arriving in Orland at the Butte College/HRA complex and North Valley Christian Schools. This issue would be addressed by the proposal to revise Glenn Ride schedules in conjunction with streamlining of Glenn Ride routes made possible by local circulator routes.

Facility Needs

The principal service providers all have their vehicles located at the Glenn County Service Yard where they are maintained by the County Service Center. This includes Glenn Transit Service and the County Office of Education. These arrangements are currently adequate and will be enhanced if a grant application to the California Office of Homeland Security is successful.

HUMBOLDT COUNTY

Transportation Needs

Later evening fixed-route public transit services

Most existing fixed-route and dial-a-ride services in the county do not provide service late into the evening (past 10:00 PM), and others do not provide service beyond 8:00 PM (Eureka Transit Service). For those providers that do operate on Saturday, most service ends no later than 8:00 PM and some service ends as early as 5:00 PM. A number of stakeholders noted that the lack of service into the evening prevented some people from accessing goods and services, especially low-income workers who do not work traditional hours.

Sunday fixed-route transit services

None of the public transit providers or human service transportation providers offers service on Sunday, which was identified as a significant barrier for those that rely on transit service for their basic needs. Stakeholders noted that this applies to both the fixed-route services as well as the dial-a-ride providers in the county.

Improved Bus Stop Amenities and Access

The SSTAC provided specific feedback on the need to improve access to and from bus stops and to improve amenities (shelters, benches, information, etc.). It was noted that this is especially for those who are dependent on mobility devices. In addition to improved access and amenities at the bus stop itself, such as platforms and shelters, several members of the SSTAC said that improved access from the neighborhoods to the bus stops was also an issue. This includes infrastructure improvements such as extending sidewalks to bus stops and ensuring that there are curb cuts to reach the bus stop.

Additional Dial-a-Ride/Dial-a-Lift services

Many stakeholders noted the need for evening and weekend Dial-a-Ride/Lift services, as well as the addition of demand response service to some of the more remote areas of the county. The need for additional Dial-a-Ride/Lift services between Eureka and Arcata was also noted.

Improved Frequency on RTS and Schedule Coordination with Other Providers

Several stakeholders noted that RTS does not operate enough frequency in the outlying communities such as Fortuna and Rio Dell/Scotia, and that the schedules make it difficult to efficiently use the service. It was also noted that connections between RTS and the Eureka Transit System and Arcata & Mad River Transit System would make using the bus easier. It was suggested that schedules on RTS be more frequent and regular to improve ridership and give users more confidence in the service.

Shared Resources Between Human Service Transportation Providers

Several stakeholders noted that there is some duplication between human service transportation providers in Humboldt County, and that additional coordination among these providers would benefit everyone. It was also suggested that vehicles used for human service transportation be replaced regularly, but that there is a lack of funding to maintain and replace these vehicles. Additional coordination among providers could make more efficient use of these funds for replacement vehicles.

Additional Feeder Service to Redwood Transit System

Several stakeholders felt that the transportation needs in the outlying communities could be partially addressed by providing feeder services that connect with the RTS services – especially from southern Humboldt to Scotia or Fortuna. K/T Net is a good example of a service that currently connects the Hoopa Valley with the RTS route in Willow Creek. While several stakeholders noted that this service is very helpful, funding is not guaranteed and needs exist beyond what K/T Net can provide with existing funding. It was noted that this service would have to be coordinated with existing RTS schedules and operate at times when people need to travel. Some stakeholders stated that the previous pilot service to southern Humboldt operated by RTS did not attract enough ridership and was discontinued because service was not provided at convenient times.

Additional Senior-Specific Transportation

Additional transportation services to and from activities, lunch sites and medical appointments was identified as an unmet need specifically for seniors – especially in the more remote communities that do not have other transportation options. While numerous transportation programs specific to seniors exist in the county, this need relates more generally to the aging population and to the increasing demand for senior-specific transportation.

Enhanced Awareness of Existing Transportation Services

Simply knowing what transportation services are available was identified as a need for Humboldt County. While certain organizations, such as the Area 1 Agency on Aging, provide a

summary of transportation services and other offer mobility training programs, not everyone is aware of this resource or how to navigate the various transportation services that might be available to them. Several stakeholders suggested that a single information source regarding transportation options be established in Humboldt County.

Improved or New Transportation in Tribal Areas

Many Native Americans live in very isolated regions in the county, many of which have very limited access to basic services. This is especially true in the north and northeast part of the county where most of the Native American lands are located. While K/T Net provides service from the Hoopa Valley to Willow Creek, several stakeholders noted that expanded service would serve a significant need, even if that service was operated once or twice a week.

Community-Specific Transportation Needs

In addition to the general, countywide unmet needs identified above, the following section presents identified needs specific to geographic areas in the county that were identified through the TDA Unmet Needs Transit Process.

City of Arcata

- Continue extended hours of service to 10 PM during HSU school year
- Maintain HSU shuttle bus between HSU, Sunnybrae, Valleywest, and downtown
- More frequent commuter service between Eureka and Arcata
- Sunday service
- Late night transportation
- Bus service to Bayside area (Alder Grove Road)
- Fill gaps created by Greyhound cutbacks and add additional stops along the route
- Implement a universal bus pass countywide
- Improved amenities at bus stops, transfer centers

City of Eureka

- Enhance routes that link up downtown and with southern parts of Eureka
- Establish flex routes for seniors
- Weekend and evening service
- More affordable dial-a-ride

Fortuna, Ferndale and Rio Dell/Scotia

- Feeder transportation from Ferndale to RTS
- General public transit service within Fortuna with connections to RTS
- Additional frequency and/or regular headways on existing RTS service to Rio Dell/Scotia Southern Humboldt
- Extended RTS service to Redway/Garberville area
- Feeder service to RTS service in Scotia/Rio Dell (or extended RTS service)
- Medical-related transportation to Eureka/Arcata

East County/Hoopa Valley

- Secure source of operations funding for K/T Net
- Additional fixed-route service on SR 299 beyond Willow Creek
- Transit service to Weitchpec, Pecwan, Orleans and Somes Bar North County (Trinidad and Orick)
- More frequent stops in Trinidad
- Coordinate bus schedule from Trinidad to HSU
- RTS service extended to Orick

Transportation Resources

Public Transit Operators Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA)

The Humboldt Transit Authority was established in 1975 to provide transportation services in the Highway 101 corridor throughout the county. The HTA was formed through a joint powers agreement between the cities of Rio Dell, Fortuna, Eureka, Arcata and Trinidad and the County of Humboldt. Funding for HTA is available from Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds and passenger fares. Of the TDA funding, Humboldt County contributes 50% and the JPA cities contribute the other 50%. HTA operates and maintains the Redwood Transit System (RTS), Eureka Transit Service (ETS) and the Quail Senior & Disabled Bus for Southern Humboldt. In addition, HTA provides maintenance service to the Arcata & Mad River Transit System (A&MRTS) through a contract.

Redwood Transit System

Transit service provided by the Redwood Transit System (RTS) consists of “mainline” commuter service along the Highway 101 corridor from Scotia to Trinidad. Although some trips serve the entire corridor, most trips provide service only along shorter sections of the route. Service between Eureka and Arcata is the most frequent, while there are only a few trips daily between Scotia and Trinidad. There are a total of 23 round trips provided between various locations along the route on weekdays and 12 round trips on Saturday. No service is provided on Sunday.

In addition to the mainline route serving Highway 101, a separate route provides service between Willow Creek and various locations in Arcata and McKinleyville. Four round trips are provided to Willow Creek daily, with two trips in the morning and two trips in the afternoon/evening. RTS does not provide service to Willow Creek on the weekends.

Eureka Transit Service

The Eureka Transit Service (ETS) has four fixed-routes within the city of Eureka. The Purple, Gold, Red and Green routes operate hourly and serve most major destinations in the city. The Purple, Gold and Red routes all connect to each other in downtown (3rd Street and K Street), while all four routes connect at Harris and F Streets in the southern part of the city. All routes provide timed connections either in downtown or at Harris and F Streets.

The Red and Gold routes mostly serve the western part of the city, including Humboldt County Social Services along Koster Street, the Bayshore Mall along Broadway Street and the Eureka Mall along Harris Street. The Purple and Green routes serve the east part of the city. Major destinations along these routes include St. Joseph Hospital, the Humboldt Senior Resource Center, and the Silvercrest Senior Residences. The Green route also serves Cutten and

Redwood Acres in the south and southeastern extremes of the city. A map of current ETS routes is provided at the end of this chapter in Figure 4-3.

Arcata & Mad River Transit System (A&MRTS)

The Arcata & Mad River Transit System provides fixed-route service within the city of Arcata. While the service is operated by the City of Arcata Public Works Department, A&MRTS has a contract with HTA for maintenance and storage services. Fixed-route service is provided on three routes: Gold, Red and Express. The Gold route provides service between Valley West and downtown, with service to Mad River Community Hospital and HSU. The Red route provides service to Greenview, downtown, Sunnybrae and the HSU campus. The Express route provides more direct service between the Valley West area and HSU and the Sunnybrae neighborhood and HSU. A map of A&MRTS is included in Figure 4-3 at the end of this chapter.

When HSU is in session, both the Red and Gold Routes operate hourly from 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM on weekdays and every other hour on Saturdays from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. During HSU summer and winter breaks, the Red and Gold routes operate from 7:00 am to 7:00 PM and on Saturday from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The Express route operates from 7:45 AM to 5:00 PM only on weekdays when HSU is in session. No fixed-route service is provided on Sundays. Regular cash fares on A&MRTS are $1.00 for a one-way trip and $0.60 for seniors (over 62), children (ages 3-6) and persons with disabilities.

Blue Lake Rancheria Transit

The Blue Lake Rancheria Transit System provides hourly service between Blue Lake and Arcata via Highway 299. Service is provided from 7:00 AM until 8:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Stops on the route include several locations in Blue Lake, the Blue Lake Rancheria, the Arcata Transit Center, Mad River Community Hospital and the HSU campus. The Blue Lake Rancheria Transit System began operation in 2002 and is funded with TDA funds from the City of Blue Lake and passenger fares. In 2005, the service provided nearly 16,000 passengers trips.

Quail Senior & Disabled Bus Service for Southern Humboldt

The Quail Senior & Disabled Bus provides service to the communities of southern Humboldt County from Weott to the Mendocino County line. On Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, the Quail bus provides service to the senior lunch program in Redway. The Quail bus provides service to Eureka. On the 2nd and 4th Tuesday, the Quail bus provides service to Fortuna. The round trip fare to Eureka is $6.00 and to $5.00 to Fortuna. On Fridays, the Quail bus provides transportation for shopping within Redway and Garberville. The Quail bus fleet consists of one lift-equipped bus. Annual operating costs for the Quail service are approximately $68,000 and the service provides approximately 3,500 passenger trips per year.

Paratransit

Paratransit in Eureka, Arcata and McKinleyville is provided by the Dial-A-Ride/Dial-A-Lift service, which provides service for elderly and disabled individuals who are unable to use the

fixed-route system. The Dial-A-Ride/Dial-A-Lift service areas include the cities of Eureka, Arcata and McKinleyville and as far north as the Little River & Highway 101.

In addition to the Dial-A -Ride/Dial-A-Lift service, the Humboldt Community Access and Resource Center (HCAR) operates supplemental paratransit beyond the cities of Eureka and Arcata with the Advanced Transportation/Care-A-Van service. The Care-A-Van service area includes Fields Landing, King Salmon, Humboldt Hill, Elk River Rd, Ridgewood Heights, Samoa/Manila, Indianola and Old Arcata Road.

City Ambulance of Eureka (CAE) operates the Dial-A-Ride/Dial-A-Lift services in Eureka, Arcata and McKinleyville through contracts with the individual cities, the Humboldt Transit Authority and/or Humboldt County. HCAR operates the Care-A-Van service directly through a contract with HCAOG. The Blue Lake Rancheria also provides Dial-A-Ride service within the City of Blue Lake and provides connections to Arcata, McKinleyville and Eureka for qualified disabled and elderly individuals.

Private Transit Providers

Cher-Ae Heights Casino Shuttle

Operated directly by the Cher-Ae Heights Casino, two separate shuttle routes operate Wednesday through Sunday serving various locations in Eureka and Arcata to transport customers to the casino. The Eureka shuttle route provides five round trips Wednesday through Saturday and four round trips on Sunday. The Arcata shuttle route provides four round trips Wednesday through Saturday and three round trips on Sunday. Service to Fortuna and Loleta is available on request. All service is free and a wheelchair accessible vehicle is available if requested.

Blue Lake Casino Transportation

In addition to the Blue Lake Rancheria Transit System that is open to the general public, the Blue Lake Casino provides a free shuttle service to and from Eureka, Arcata and McKinleyville called the Lucky Bus. Service is provided daily with three to five round trips provided to Eureka (depending on the day), four round trips to Arcata and four round trips to McKinleyville. The Lucky Bus is also available for special events. Reservations are required for groups of 10 or more, and wheelchair accessible vehicles are available.
City Ambulance of Eureka (CAE)

City Ambulance of Eureka (CAE) provides various transportation services throughout Humboldt County, including ambulance, dial-a-ride, non-emergency medical transportation, shuttle and taxi services. The various contracted and general public services provided by CAE are discussed below.

Paratransit and Medical Transportation Services

As discussed above, the majority of paratransit services in Humboldt County are provided by CAE through various contracts with the City of Eureka, the City of Arcata, the Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) and Humboldt County. All passengers using the Dial-A-Ride service must be certified to use the service. CAE also operates CAE Med Trans, which offers non-emergency wheelchair and gurney transportation throughout the county. Medi-Cal billing is available for the Med Trans service. CAE also operates City Ambulance, which provides emergency medical

transportation services throughout most of Humboldt County. City Ambulance has stations in Eureka, Fortuna and Garberville and responds to all 911 medical emergencies in Humboldt County. It also provides hospital to hospital transports throughout the county.

Taxi and Shuttle Services

Taxi services in Humboldt County are operated under the banner of City Cab, even though service is provided using several different company names, including Yellow Cab, City Cab and Express Cab. Rates are based on distance and service is provided in most parts of the County with the exception of Fortuna. CAE also provides shuttle service for private events or long distance group transportation (i.e., to the San Francisco airport). Rates are based on the number of people and a three hour minimum is required.

Social Service Transportation Providers

Klamath-Trinity Non-Emergency Transportation (K/T Net)

K/T Net provides fixed and flex route service between Willow Creek and Hoopa, Monday through Friday. The service meets several runs of the RTS bus that provides service between Willow Creek and Arcata. K/T Net makes three to four round trips per day, from approximately 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. K/T Net owns two vehicles for their fixed route service - one for regular service and one as a back-up vehicle. Depending on funding availability, K/T Net would like to expand service to Weitchpec and Pecwan or to Somes Bar in Siskiyou County.

Redwood Coast Regional Center

The Redwood Coast Regional Center (RCRC) is one of twenty-one private, non-profit regional centers in California that serve people with developmental disabilities. The RCRC provides services in Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake and Mendocino Counties. The RCRC does not directly operate any transportation, but has a variety of contracts to provide transportation for its clients.

In Humboldt County, the RCRC has contracts related to transportation of approximately $1.3 million. A sample of the transportation services provided for RCRC clients includes:

- Private transportation. Twelve vehicles are dedicated to providing services directly to RCRC families. Service is provided in the morning (between 7:30 AM – 9:30 AM) and in the afternoon (2:00 PM – 4:30 PM). City Ambulance of Eureka currently has the contract to provide these services.
- Purchase of Dial-A-Ride and fixed-route bus tickets. RCRC provides bus and Dial-A-Ride tickets to its families who are able to use the various transit programs in the county.
- Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program. RCRC provides a reimbursement rate of $0.32 per mile to volunteer drivers who provide transportation services to RCRC families.
- Other Transportation Providers. RCRC also contracts with Supportive Living Agencies, Board and Care Homes and Adult Day Services to provide in-county and out-of- county transportation.
- Examples of such agencies include Reaching for Independence (serving Rio Dell and Fortuna), Community Cornerstone (serving southern Humboldt), and Humboldt Community Access and Resource Center (HCAR), which provide in-

program community access transportation and special charters for clinic/non emergency medical appointments when no other source is available.

- Rental Cars and Taxi Vouchers. When other services are not available, RCRC will sometimes provide rental cars and/or taxi vouchers for its families.

Humboldt Senior Resource Center Dial-A-Ride

The Humboldt Senior Resource Center is a multi-service center that provides services mainly in Eureka, but also has meal site programs elsewhere throughout the county. Services are primarily for seniors, but some services are provided for persons 18 and older who are disabled.

Transportation services are provided in a number of ways, as described below:

- HSRC has a contract with the City of Eureka to sell Dial A Ride Tickets to eligible riders. HSRC is a pass-through agency for tickets and does not provide any direct Dial-a-Ride transportation services.
- HSRC is a nonprofit providing two adult day health care programs; Eureka Adult Day Health Services and Fortuna Adult Day Health Services, which provide therapeutic, health, recreational, and social services to the elderly and persons over 18 who are dependent on others. The programs provide transportation services only to clients, and only to and from its facilities in Eureka and Fortuna.

  The two centers have a total of six vehicles that provide services throughout Eureka and the surrounding area, Fields Landing, Fortuna, Rio Dell and the Eel River Valley. The Eureka program also relies on the Care-A-Van non-emergency medical transportation service and Dial-A-Ride services to transport its clients. The Fortuna program is able to use the Fortuna Senior Bus service for clients on a very limited basis.

County of Humboldt Health and Human Services

The Social Services Branch of the Health and Human Services department provides services throughout Humboldt County including employment training, the CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work program, and adult protective services. Although the Social Services Branch does not directly provide transportation for its clients, it does contribute approximately $400,000 annually for various transportation services or contracts.

Humboldt Community Access and Resource Center Care-a-Van

The Humboldt Community Access and Resource Center (HCAR) provides transportation services for the elderly and persons with disabilities through the Care-A-Van dial-a-ride service. This service is described above under Public Transit Operators section. HCAR has a total of 15 vehicles dedicated to transportation services.

Fortuna Senior Bus

The Fortuna Senior Bus is available to people over 50 and persons with disabilities who are residents of Fortuna. Service is provided to all locations within the City of Fortuna. Reservations for medical appointments can be made up to one month in advance, while non-medical related\ trips can be reserved up to one week in advance.

Humboldt Medi-Trans

Humboldt Medi-Trans is a 501(c)(3) non-profit agency that has been established to provide nonemergency medical transportation throughout Humboldt County and beyond. The service provides an interim means of transportation for people who cannot use the demand response services in the county, but also do not require more expensive ambulance services. The majority of trips made in Humboldt County are to and from kidney dialysis appointments. Humboldt Medi-Trans relies on funding from donations and grants, and charges little or no fare for the services it provides. Medi-Cal billing is also available. Humboldt Medi-Trans currently has five vehicles, but planned to reduce its service to just one on April 1st, 2008.

K'ima:w Transportation Department

The K'ima:w Transportation Department provides transportation service to people who use the K'ima:w Medical Center, which includes all medical, dental and outreach services. The service is intended for those individuals who do not have other means of transportation or family assistance and is not intended for personal trips (i.e., bank, grocery store, etc.). Service is provided within the Hoopa Valley, as well as to Eureka and other parts of the county with a two to four hour advanced notice. Transportation is also available outside of the county but requires at least three days advanced notice and a referral is required. The K'ima:w Transportation Department also provides medication deliveries for individuals with no transportation or family assistance. Service is available from 8:00 AM to 6:30 PM on weekdays only.

Adult Day Health Care of Mad River

The non-profit Adult Day Health Care of Mad River provides therapeutic, health, recreational, and social services to the elderly and persons over 18 who are dependent on others. The ADHC of Mad River provides transportation services only to its clients, and only to and from its facility in Arcata. The center has five vehicles that provide service throughout Arcata, McKinleyville and Eureka. The ADHC also relies on the Care-A-Van non-emergency medical transportation service and Dial-A-Ride services to transport its clients.

Ferndale Senior Resource Center "Bridging the Gap"

Ferndale's "Bridging the Gap" service provides demand response transportation services to seniors that reside in and around Ferndale. The Ferndale Senior Resource Center provides transportation throughout the community, home delivered meals and transportation to a bimonthly lunch for seniors at the community center. The community transportation service is generally available Monday through Saturday from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM. The Ferndale Senior Resource Center bus was purchased with a private donation, and operating costs are funded by private donations and fares.

Bridgeville Community Center Van

The Bridgeville Community Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that offers a senior lunch program on Tuesdays, rural health services on Thursdays and sponsors other community events throughout the year. The Community Center has one seven-passenger van that provides transportation from Bridgeville to Eureka and Fortuna on Fridays, as well as transportation for seniors in the area to attend the weekly lunch program. The service to Eureka/Fortuna is

available for medical and social service appointments and generally leaves in the morning and returns in the afternoon. Although the service is grant funded, the Community Center requests a $5.00 donation for the Eureka/Fortuna service. A one-day advanced reservation is required for the service. The van serves about 250 riders per year.

Southern Trinity Health Services

Southern Trinity Health Services, a medical facility in the southern Trinity County community of Mad River, administers a transportation service between Mad River and Fortuna/Eureka once a week (Wednesday). Anyone is eligible to take the bus for any type of trip, including shopping, medical appointments, and social outings. In addition, the facility provides rides for patients who have no other means of transportation to the clinic Monday through Friday. The service area is approximately 1,250 square miles.

These transportation services are operated by one employee, who, when not driving the van, performs administrative tasks at Southern Trinity Health Services. The clinic has one 8-person vehicle devoted to the regularly scheduled Mad River-Fortuna/Eureka service and the on-call patient shuttle. The facility has one additional van which is used for on-site dental care at the local public schools. The vans were acquired from the Southern Trinity Senior Center. The facility operates the program using money from its general budget. However, Trinity County contributes $5,000 to the van service each year.

Gaps

Based on input from stakeholders and review of previous planning documents, many of the primary transportation needs in Humboldt County are being addressed through the various transportation programs currently available in the county. This includes the public transportation providers, transportation provided by social service agencies and community organizations and private transportation providers. “Primary” transportation needs are defined as those that meet the threshold levels established by the Humboldt County Regional Transportation Plan, which includes weekday local bus service within Eureka and Arcata, service in the Highway 101 corridor between Trinidad and Scotia, ADA-compliant specialized transportation in the urbanized areas, and limited specialized transportation services in the rural areas as funds allow.

In general, the various transportation providers also appear to work well together to fill the gaps whenever possible (and when funding allows). Recent coordination efforts described above are a testament to the desire to make the most efficient use of existing services as possible. Still, transportation needs continue to exist in Humboldt County. Even in the urbanized communities in the Humboldt Bay area (Eureka and Arcata) where most of the transit service and human service transportation is concentrated, many stakeholders feel that new transportation services or more service by current providers is needed. Outside of the Humboldt Bay area, the more remote communities in southern Humboldt, east Humboldt (the Hoopa Valley and Willow Creek) and the Orick area were identified as having the most significant transportation needs.

These needs arise not only because of their geographic isolation, but also due to the higher concentration of low-income households that have limited access to goods and services. Also, several stakeholders noted that certain transportation disadvantaged groups in the county, such as the Latino and Native American communities, find it even more difficult to access transportation in the county due to their geographic isolation and the need for cultural awareness and sensitivity. While needs were identified in the rural areas, the population in

these areas is very dispersed and difficult to serve cost-effectively with traditional transit services. While a more comprehensive discussion of transportation needs is provided in the various planning documents that were reviewed for this plan, a summary of the most visible needs that were identified for Humboldt County are listed below.

Many of the smaller communities in the county are geographically isolated and lack critical social, health and employment opportunities – thus requiring residents of these areas to travel relatively long distances for most of their needs. The majority of the needs were identified for the more isolated communities of southern Humboldt (Garberville and Redway), Bridgeville, Willow Creek and the Hoopa Valley, and northern Humboldt (Orick). Several stakeholders noted that transportation related to medical appointments is the most critical need in these areas, but that their isolation necessitates transportation for the most basic goods and services. While some transportation services are available in these areas, such as the Quail bus in southern Humboldt and K/T Net in the Hoopa Valley, these services are unable to provide enough service to meet all of the needs that exist in these areas. Several stakeholders noted, however, that providing transportation to these areas is a challenge due to the dispersed population and distances between these areas and major activity centers.

Barriers

Major Barriers to Coordination

While numerous coordination efforts currently, or have recently, taken place in Humboldt County, some barriers to coordination persist. These are described below. As with many rural counties in California, barriers to coordination in Humboldt County are largely due to the size and geographic isolation of many communities in the county. While coordination of service is much easier in the more urban areas in the Humboldt Bay area, it is less efficient to coordinate service between communities outside of these areas, and many of the human service agencies or other organizations who are likely to provide transportation have limited staff time available to devote to coordination.

Specific client needs: By definition, customers of special needs transportation programs have difficulty or cannot independently make use of programs established for the general public. In many cases, these customers need a level of care that may not prove conducive to integration with other passengers. Some agencies have established service standards or guidelines for consideration in transporting their clients, such as maximum time on a vehicle, the need for a higher level of care, required use of seat belts, etc. that may preclude transporting them with other client groups.

Funding Restrictions

Social service agencies tend to fund or support transportation for their clients as an auxiliary service—as a means to support the end goal of providing a primary service such as training, medical assistance, etc. These agencies must ensure, often through cumbersome audit processes, that agency funds are being spent in support of eligible clients. While in theory some agencies have indicated support for mingling dollars and passengers through a single service delivery system, participants need to reach consensus on a methodology for equitably sharing the cost of service among various client groups.

Lack of Dedicated Staff

In rural communities, transportation program staff often "wear many hats," and may be required to administer programs, write grants or funding applications, prepare reports and invoices, supervise staff and, on occasion, even drive a vehicle. Staff resources may not be available to pursue coordination strategies, which need to be developed and nurtured over time. In Humboldt County, HCAR serves as the CTSA. The CTSA is well positioned, by virtue of its designation and authority established in state statute (AB 120), to assume a leadership role in overseeing coordination projects and activities.

Priorities

Highest Priority Strategies

Based on the prioritization process that took place in the two workshops, as well as a qualitative comparison of each strategy with the evaluation criteria, the following section provides a discussion about the highest priority strategies in Humboldt County as identified by workshop participants. The range of strategies presented and added to by workshop participants represents a diverse set of potential solutions. Out of a total of 35 strategies suggested by either the consultant team or a workshop participant, only three did not receive any votes. The votes were widely dispersed and indicate an interest in pursuing a wide range of solutions, ranging from fixed route service enhancements, to building new bicycle paths, to enhanced land-use and transportation planning. For this reason, it is important to consider each strategy in the mix of future service improvements.

The highest ranked strategies identified in Fortuna differed slightly from those identified in Eureka, in part because some strategies were considered only by one group and therefore were not fully vetted at both workshops. When considering the joint results of the prioritization exercise, several strategies emerged as those that ranked highest among workshop participants. These are:

- Provide transportation services from remote areas of Southern and Eastern Humboldt County to Eureka.
- Provide dial-a-ride services in rural areas of the county not presently served.
- Provide specialized medical trips (i.e. chemotherapy, dialysis) into Eureka.
- Establish and staff a mobility management program to advance coordination efforts within the county.

Recommendations

Program Administration and Oversight
Effective program administration is a crucial factor in ensuring the ongoing success of a new program or project. As a first step, a project sponsor or lead agency needs to be designated to manage the project.

For each of the highest ranked strategies, a lead agency is suggested; however, in some cases numerous entities could serve in this capacity. The lead agency should have the administrative, fiscal and staffing resources needed to carry out the program on an on-going basis; successfully applying for grant funds is just the first step. The Humboldt County Association of Governments will also play a role in program administration, in that it allocates TDA funds, and is responsible to adopt the Coordinated Plan. HCAR, as the designated CTSA, is well positioned to advance coordination efforts and take a lead role in pursuing the mobility management strategy.

Decision-Making Process

In addition to staff administering the program or service, a more formal decision-making process will need to be in place to ensure effective program oversight As mentioned, the HCAOC is responsible to allocate and disburse state transportation funds, and will require the adopted Coordinated Plan. The SSTAC advises the HCAOC on various transportation issues and concerns. By definition, the SSTAC is comprised of a wide variety of stakeholders, including users of transit, and those representing the elderly and persons with disabilities. The SSTAC is appropriately the entity, within Humboldt County, to provide ongoing program oversight as new services are considered and/or implemented. The SSTAC in Humboldt County is very active and meets on a monthly basis.

Guidelines for Transportation Provider Agreements and Service Standards

Developing service agreements and monitoring system performance criteria are important tasks for transportation providers.
Agencies are encouraged to develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating transit and paratransit services.

IMPERIAL COUNTY

Transportation Needs and Gaps (Combined)

Projected Demand for Public Transportation

For purposes of this plan, the projected growth of the total population in Imperial County is used as a low-end projection for transit demand, and the projected growth of the population over the age of 65 is used as a high-end projection for transit demand. Based on the California Department of Finance figures shown in Figure 3-3, a low-end projection for transit demand is that it will grow by 26% between 2010 and 2020 and by 50% between 2010 and 2030. A high end projection is that transit demand will grow by 50% between 2010 and 2020 and by 130% between 2010 and 2030.

The vast distances traveled between some of the origins and destinations, as described above, the lack of transportation options to connect origins and destinations, and limited resources are the factors that lead to most of the gaps or unmet needs in Imperial County. Prior to the implementation of IVT, many agencies provided their own transportation services. Although regular fixed-route and general public paratransit service coverage has expanded over the years, some areas of Imperial County are not accessible by transit and some have only lifeline services.

Limited Service Frequencies

Very limited scheduled transit service is available between El Centro and Winterhaven (one day per week), and service between Calipatria, Bombay Beach and other Salton Sea communities is only offered via one round-trip each day to Brawley. Imperial County is looking at reducing the service on the West Shores Dial-a-Ride. In large rural areas like Imperial County, it is rare to have high-frequency service, but it is worth noting that services with very limited frequencies present an obstacle for some residents.

Reliability Problems on Some Transit Operations

Unreliable transportation is a significant barrier for someone to hold a job or attend classes. Although stakeholders had positive things to say about existing transit services, some stakeholders talked about quality of service problems on AIM Transit and the Brawley Dial-a-Ride. Some stakeholders who work with disabled clients said they are unable to count on AIM Transit to get their clients to their scheduled appointments on time because vehicles are frequently late. These comments are anecdotal and could not be confirmed through documented records.

Stakeholders also commented about trip denials on AIM Transit, suggesting there may be some capacity problems or scheduling problems that AIM Transit may not be able to address with its current fleet. Peak demand for service occurs in the early morning when several social service agencies need their clients to arrive at a set time. This places significant demand on AIM Transit to both accommodate these subscription trips as well as serve passengers unaffiliated with a social service agency. While peak demand for service is difficult to accommodate, the consultant could not confirm or refute comments about scheduling problems because AIM Transit does not keep a log of service denials or have procedures for negotiating ride times.

One of the strategies identified includes the replacement and expansion of vehicle fleets so that AIM and other providers can maintain a high quality of service, even as demand for service increases.

Lack of Services or Connections to Services

With route deviation available, someone living in central Winterhaven could be picked up at their home and travel to El Centro Wednesday morning, boarding the IVT bus that departs Winterhaven at 6:08 AM. However, riders living outside of Winterhaven will need a ride to the bus stop. Connecting service to the intercity route from the small communities in eastern Imperial County is not available. To address the need to get its clients from Winterhaven to El Centro, CalWORKs picks up a group of Winterhaven residents each day and drives them to El Centro. No scheduled service exists between Winterhaven and nearby Yuma. The Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization (YMPO) is the region's MPO and includes the Winterhaven urbanized area as a non-voting participant.

The Quechan Tribe is working with YMPO to develop strategies to provide service between Winterhaven and Yuma, but currently this lack of service is identified as a barrier to regional mobility. Transit service does not exist in many very remote communities: places like Bard, Ripley and Palo Verde with very small populations. In Heber, residents without a car often travel on foot they wish to go to a location not served by the intercity route that runs between El Centro and Calexico. Outside of the irrigated area, the smallest communities in Imperial County do not have local medical and social services, so people must travel out of town to access these services. Many stakeholders noted that certain jobs and educational programs begin early, and

that people who must make a connection on transit were unable to reach their destination in time for work or a class. To address this challenge, IVT introduced new service effective July 1, 2008 that allows travel from northern communities to Brawley where passengers can transfer to an express route to El Centro.

Lack of Services/Concentration of Services

The concentration of services in El Centro means that residents of some of Imperial County's outlying cities must travel long distances to get basic services. Providing on-site services in outlying communities, like the Family Resource Centers are doing, is one way to reduce the need for people to travel out of town for services.

Imperial County's Boundaries and Borders

A significant proportion of Imperial County's residents cross the County line for goods or services. Many Imperial County employees live outside the county.

Examples are:

- Many people requiring certain types of medical care must travel to the San Diego area for treatments that are unavailable in Imperial County.
- People in eastern Imperial County go to Yuma for groceries and some services, but only limited Medi-Cal services are available in Arizona and some Winterhaven residents pay out-of pocket for medical services in Arizona rather than traveling to El Centro. To take a taxi between Winterhaven and Yuma costs about $15.00 each way.
- The International Border with Mexico means that a number of individuals travel back and forth between Calexico and Mexicali, typically on foot. The existence of inexpensive private transit operators like Calexico Transit and Numero Uno is in response to the high number of pedestrians crossing the border.

Availability/Quality of Information

IVAG invests heavily in the production of public informational tools about the transit programs its staff oversees. Some examples of promotional efforts include bilingual television commercials, radio advertisements and print ads in the Imperial Valley Press and Adelante. IVAG also has prepared public service announcements to get the word out about the services offered by AIM Transit, Imperial Valley Transit, the Blue Line, and the West Shores Dial-a-Ride.

Many Imperial County residents, particularly Spanish-speaking residents, do not have access to information about the services that are available: they are unable to go on-line or find a dial-a ride brochure available in their language. Distribution of up-to-date printed information has also been a challenge for transit operators in the county, with problems like vandalism at bus stops or information brochure supplies exhausted quickly at libraries and not replenished. Many Imperial County residents have a low level of computer literacy and some are unable to read printed materials.

Much of the available information on the internet and in printed dial-a-ride information needs to be updated. IVT's website is not up-to-date, and the information available in the brochure and on-line is confusing for many people to understand. Very little printed information is available

about many of the small dial-a-rides in Imperial County, and some of what is circulating is out of-date.

Many bus stops have little or no information. Some stakeholders noted that courtesy flag-down bus stops are good, but marked stops would be preferable so information can be included and people will know which bus serves the location. Nevertheless, keeping schedules posted at stops can require high maintenance costs.

Transit Service Hours

One of the most significant gaps is the lack of transit service in the evening, and on weekends in some areas. Although some of the core IVT services run as late as 11:00 PM, for people with job shifts that end very late (12:00 AM) or for people traveling locally in Imperial, Brawley, Calexico, or El Centro during evening hours, no late service is available.

Many low-income employees work nontraditional hours, and many job training programs schedule classes in the evening. Public transit service is not always available to serve a portion of their transportation needs. The lack of weekend service is also a challenge in many portions of Imperial County. CalWORKs has been able to help people find a new job, and will often drive them to their job for a short while, assuming they will make other transportation plans for the long-term. Ultimately, due to a lack of transit service, many people are unable to hold certain types of jobs. For those who are employed, the morning trip to work can also be a problem (e.g., the early shift at Brawley Beef), as well as the need for service to accommodate a 24-hour operation at employers like Wal-Mart.

Travel Times

Long travel times not only make for uncomfortable travel on buses and vans, but also discourage people from making trips for medical care, educational or social/recreational purposes. For example, a trip to Imperial Valley College from Niland on IVT takes one-and-a half hours, and from Winterhaven to 14th and State Street in El Centro is one hour and 40 minutes. Same-day round-trip travel beyond Imperial County to San Diego can be done, but is challenging. IVT has developed a number of express routes to try to reduce some travel times, but limited funds make it impossible to provide quick, direct connections between all of Imperial County's key origins and destinations.

Infrastructure

Based on data reviewed and stakeholder input, Imperial County residents walk quite a bit to get where they need to go. In some areas, transit service does not permeate the residential communities, and it is common for people to walk several miles. Even with many pedestrians, some communities have minimal sidewalk networks, particularly in many of Imperial County's colonias, which have a high proportion of very low-income pedestrians.

For people with disabilities, especially those who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices, poor curb access in portions of Calexico and El Centro mean that it is not only difficult to get around town, but also difficult to access and board buses. In addition, not all bus stop locations have benches and shelters, meaning that a number of bus riders must stand outside, often in Imperial County's extreme weather, waiting for the bus.

Transportation Resources

Imperial County Public Fixed-Route Transit

Imperial Valley Transit (IVT)

IVT operates local, express, direct and deviated fixed-route service as well as lifeline services throughout the service area. Service is operated from 6:00 AM until approximately 10:30 PM weekdays, and 6:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturdays. There is no Sunday service. Lifeline service in the outlying areas is operated on a once-a-week basis. The service is operated by First Transit and is administered by the County of Imperial. In July 2006, service frequency was improved in the primary corridors, reducing headways from two hours to 70 minutes. The Blue Line was also introduced at this time providing local circulation in El Centro.

IVT service began in 1989 and has significantly grown from a three-bus system carrying about 36,000 riders a year to an 18-bus system serving about 320,000 passengers per year. The system operates 12 peak vehicles at a cost per passenger of about $7.50. IVT has an annual operating cost of $2,383,000 (FY 2007) and operates about 25,000 annual revenue hours. The fare a passenger pays is based on two factors:

Private Fixed-Route Transit Services

Numero Uno Shuttle and Calexico Transit do not receive public funds. Therefore, vehicles are not necessarily ADA-compliant as is required for a publicly funded service, like IVT. Nevertheless, both services offer a transportation option for the region's residents.

Numero Uno Shuttle

Numero Uno is a privately owned bus service that operates between Calexico and El Centro, with plans to expand services. The service is funded exclusively by passenger fares, and Numero Uno receives no public funds. The shuttle operates Monday through Thursday between 6:00 AM and 11:00 PM every 30 minutes. Service operates Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays hourly from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM. The shuttle leaves on the hour or half hour from Calexico, making five stops along the way to El Centro.

Numero Uno operates four vehicles along the route, using two 55-passenger motor coaches, one 49-passenger motor coach and one 33-passenger minibus. According to staff, Numero Uno is planning to add a route from San Luis, Arizona (a border town to the east) via Yuma and Winterhaven to El Centro daily. In addition, in April 2008, Numero Uno is planning to add a route that continues north from El Centro, serving Brawley, Bombay Beach, Mecca and Indio, following Highway 111.

Calexico Transit System (CTS)

Calexico Transit System provides general public fixed-route transit service every day of the week, including all holidays except Christmas and New Years day. At least two of the routes operate from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. The system is unusual for a local transit system in the United States: it is a private operation, and 100 percent of its revenues are derived from passenger fares. The system receives no public funds. The for-profit service has four routes, operating at 30-minute headways throughout Calexico (See Figure 4-3 below).

The service operates seven buses, none of which are wheelchair accessible: five 28-passenger buses and two 38 passenger buses. People who are unable to ride the fixed-route system are served by Calexico Dial-a-Ride, the public paratransit service, the operation of which is contracted to CTS.

Dial-a-Ride/Paratransit Services

AIM Transit

AIM Transit is the countywide intercity curb to curb service for seniors and persons with disabilities. It serves as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary service to IVT. The coverage area is within a ¾-mile corridor of the fixed routes operated by IVT. The service operates from 6:00 AM to 10:30 PM on weekdays and from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Saturday. There is no Sunday service. AIM Transit is operated for Imperial County through a contract with Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC), a private nonprofit social service agency with a 501(c)(3) designation. ARC owns and operates the five vehicles used for this service. The service is funded with TDA Article 8C funds, fares and LTF. AIM Transit is available to ADA-eligible passengers. The County of Imperial oversees the certification process. Personal care attendants may accompany riders in need of extra assistance.

Brawley Dial-A-Ride

Brawley Dial-A-Ride provides demand responsive transit service within the City of Brawley. The coverage area is exclusively within the Brawley city limits. The service is available to the general public Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM and Saturday from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. There is no Sunday service. Brawley Dial-a-Ride is operated through a contract with Sunrise Transportation Services using two wheelchair-equipped vans.

West Shores Dial-a-Ride

The West Shores Dial-a-Ride provides demand-response paratransit services throughout the communities on the west side of the Salton Sea. The service is available to the general public and operates from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The West Shores Dial-a-Ride provides a special lifeline service to Westmorland on Wednesday only. Service is operated by ARC under contract to Imperial County, and is provided using two 2006 Ford E350 vans.

Calexico Dial-A-Ride

Calexico Dial-A-Ride provides paratransit service within Calexico. The service is available to seniors 60 years or older and persons with disabilities, and operates seven days a week from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Overseen by the City of Calexico Utility Services Department, Calexico Dial-a-Ride is provided under contract with CTS, the private operator of local fixed-route services in Calexico. Calexico Dial-A-Ride operates three Ford 350 vans and one Ford 450 van.

El Centro Dial-A-Ride

El Centro Dial-A-Ride provides demand-response service exclusively within the City of El Centro. Service is available to the general public and operates from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Saturday. No service is provided on Sunday. ARC operates the service under contract to the City of El Centro using three Ford E450 vans.

Imperial Dial-A-Ride

Imperial Dial-A-Ride provides demand-response service within the City of Imperial and between Imperial and the City of El Centro. The service is open to the general public and runs six days a week, from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM weekdays and 8:00 AM to 4:00 Saturdays. ARC operates the service under contract to the City of Imperial using two Ford E450 vans.

Public Transportation Service

Med Express Service

Med Express service offers non-emergency medical transportation from Imperial County to San Diego to access medical facilities, including hospitals, clinics and doctor appointments. The service is primarily designed for older adults and people with disabilities, but is also open to the general public on a space-available basis. Med Express service is available four days each week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, plus alternating Mondays and Fridays every other week), with a van departing Imperial County at 5:30 AM and returning from San Diego around 6:30 PM. ARC operates the service under contract to Imperial County. Service is provided in a wheelchair-accessible Ford E450 van.

Social Service Transportation Providers

ARC (Association for Retarded Citizens-Imperial Valley)

ARC is a not-for-profit social services agency that provides a variety of programs and services including vocational and residential services and paratransit programs. ARC is Imperial Valley's leading combined paratransit provider offering a wide array of paratransit services. It provides contracted service for the County of Imperial and the cities of El Centro and Imperial, as well as service for the San Diego Regional Center and ARC's own clients.

Alegria Adult Day Health Care Program

Alegria Adult Day Health Care Program (ADHC) is the largest adult day health care program in Imperial County, established for disabled seniors. Based in Calexico, and a service of Sun Valley Behavioral Medical Center, the program accommodates up to 100 adults per day. Alegria ADHC transports clients from home to the center weekday mornings and provides a return ride in the evening. One 15-passenger paratransit vehicle is dedicated to this service, which is contracted to ARC, which provides about 160 one-way rides each day. Alegria ADHC receives money from Medi-Cal to pay for the service.

Center for Employment Training

The Center for Employment Training (CET) is a nonprofit educational and employment training program. The El Centro CET office offers training programs for a variety of skills to help clients find employment. CET students train five days each week, attending skills and job training programs until they pass competency levels. CET provides transportation to low-income clients (farm workers, Pell grant beneficiaries, etc.), as well as some seniors and people with disabilities, to trainings, job interviews, testing, and other educational activities. CET clients are based in Imperial County and typically travel to San Diego County, within Imperial County, or to

Yuma. CET makes at least one trip to San Diego each day. CET uses two seven passenger vans that travel about 1,000 miles per month. CET employs one full-time driver and three part-time staff to drive the vehicles.

Disabled American Veterans Transportation

The Disabled American Veterans Transportation Network (DAV) provides a service for veterans to access Veterans Administration (VA) hospitals. DAV and Auxiliary volunteers drive Imperial County veterans to and from the VA hospitals in San Diego (La Jolla and Mission Valley). DAV Hospital Service Coordinators at both of the VA facilities oversee the program and schedule rides and volunteers. They operate one 10-passenger van for Imperial County veterans who must schedule a ride to San Diego.

Imperial County Department of Behavioral Health Services

The Imperial County Department of Behavioral Health Services oversees certain mental health services and addiction services in Imperial County. The primary function is crisis intervention and referral to hospitals when psychiatric hospitalization is required. The County provides some Outpatient Services (primarily medication support) and operates a Day Treatment Program and a Partial Hospitalization Program to serve the persistently and chronically mentally ill population.

Behavioral Health provides transportation to medical appointments and treatment, and other programs for individuals without transportation access. With 48 vehicles including sedans, minivans, and larger 15-passenger vans, Behavioral Health provides connections throughout the county with a series of internal routes. For example, they have one route that serves Brawley, Imperial and El Centro. Another route serves Calexico, Holtville, El Centro, Seeley and Ocotillo. They also have a bus that serves Winterhaven. All vehicles are owned by the county and operated by Behavior Health. All transportation services are funded with Behavioral Health funds.

Imperial County Work Training Center, Inc.

The Imperial County Work Training Center is a private nonprofit agency that focuses on assisting people with disabilities, and seniors, and individuals with low incomes to develop skills and capabilities so they can be employed. The agency assists people with disabilities in finding jobs or in conducting or establishing their own business.

The Imperial County Work Training Center also provides a Multipurpose Senior Services Program, working with Medi-Cal-eligible seniors who are at risk of being institutionalized to maintain their independence. The Work Training Center has two five-passenger sedans that are used to provide transportation for these senior clients, taking them from home to medical appointments.

IVROP/Project PROMOTE

The Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program (IVROP) owns four vans. Two vans are dedicated to Project PROMOTE and two are available for rental by various projects falling under the IVROP umbrella. All IVROP vehicles are used to transport program participants only. PROMOTE vans are used primarily to transport students to English Immersion and GED classes in Calexico, El Centro, Holtville, and Brawley. Classes run over a six-month period during which time routes are established with stops that are relatively central to participants' homes. If participants live too far out to be transported on PROMOTE vans, CalWORKs social

workers will often transport them to connect with PROMOTE transportation. For example, social workers may transport participants from Bombay Beach and Niland to Brawley to connect with the van to El Centro. Other areas where connections are lacking are Ocotillo and Winterhaven. IVROP coordinates extensively with CalWORKs. For participants who can use public transit, CalWORKs provides a transit subsidy.

Neighborhood House

Neighborhood House in Calexico is a community center and social services agency founded in the 1930s. The agency provides a diversity of services, from daycare for working parents, emergency shelter for women and children, emergency food assistance, literacy programs, adult employment training, business development, English classes, juvenile delinquency prevention and community advocacy.

The agency operates one van to pick up local children and take them to their on-site daycare program. They also transport children, as needed, who are enrolled in the Neighborhood House daycare program using one eight-passenger van.

Quechan Indian Tribe Transportation

A total of 31 vans are in use by tribal programs sponsored by the Quechan Indian Tribe. These vans are not shared among the various programs, but provide clients with transportation to and from specific programs, or to appointments in Winterhaven, El Centro and elsewhere in Southern California. The Quechan Parenting Program provides parenting skill classes to Tribal members and their families, counseling on family issues, household budgeting, etc. The three vans as part of that program are used to transport parents to various appointments.

Quechan CHR (Community Health Representatives) provides home-bound patient services and offers senior, disabled and home-bound patients transportation to local medical appointments or to coordinate for bus transfers to medical facilities in El Centro and San Diego. CHR has four vans. Several Quechan Social Services providers address transportation issues with their clients, working in coordination with agencies located in El Centro, San Diego, and other California locations. Many of these clients are dependent on transportation services to distant locations, including court-ordered appointments.

San Pascual Family Resource Center

The San Pascual Family Resource Center (FRC) provides assistance to the community members — families of students — in the areas of medical services, social services, mental health services, and nutrition. The FRC provides transportation to therapists in the community, collects food from the food bank, and delivers families to medical appointments as needed. The San Pascual FRC has one 7-passenger Toyota van that is driven by staff. Staff attends a weekly meeting in El Centro, and FRC will drive community members to a medical or dental appointment there to maximize the use of the vehicle. They also use the van to pick up food at the food bank and deliver it to the people in the community. The van is funded using Office of Education funds.

Other Transportation Services

The following providers offer other transportation options within Imperial County and beyond:

Golden Acorn Casino

Golden Acorn Casino in Campo spends $84,000 to operate transportation services to transport employees to the casino, using a subsidy from SANDAG. The vans are essentially used for the vanpool program, to pick up in both San Diego and Imperial Counties. The vans transport employees between their homes and the casino. According to casino staff, this includes a number of low-income and senior passengers. Golden Acorn Casino operates 11 vans, including eight seven-passenger vans, two 12-passenger vans and one 5-passenger van.

Taxi Services

A number of taxi services operate in Imperial County. The following figure provides a brief overview of the taxi services available in the Cities of Imperial, El Centro, Calexico and Brawley. All of the taxi services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The taxi services reported that they can transport people with disabilities by providing passenger assistance, placing wheelchairs in the trunk and offering other assistance as needed. Some of the services offer flat rates for travel within a single city and flat rates for travel outside of city boundaries. Holtville Cab charges different rates depending on the distance, even within El Centro.

Barriers

A number of barriers to coordination exist. These are either existing or perceived challenges that have resulted in the various agencies in Imperial County not coordinating as extensively as they otherwise could. Many of the individuals who provided input and shared their perceptions in the development of this plan said that transportation is one of the greatest challenges faced by people in Imperial County.

Most stakeholders said they would support some type of mechanism to pool vehicles and better share information about where vehicles are traveling. Only a few agency representatives said they were aware of specific restrictions that would limit their ability to carry non-agency clients on their vehicles. Nevertheless, some agencies also cautioned about poor experiences they had trying to comingle different populations.

For example, Mental Health and Behavioral Health clients with senior citizens on AIM Transit, or veterans and disabled children on Med Express may not necessarily travel well together on the same vehicle.

Some stakeholders said funding is confusing, and several talked about unsuccessful past attempts to secure JARC or 5310 funds. Clarifying funding requirements and providing clear information and instruction on how to apply for various funding sources for which agencies may be eligible would provide a useful benefit for many agencies.

With insufficient funding, there is competition for the limited funds that are available, and agencies do not perceive that they will necessarily benefit by sharing their knowledge of different funding sources with the other agencies that are also seeking funds. Several agencies talked about funding limitations and their impact on the services they can provide.

Another significant challenge is competing requirements from funding agencies for local agencies providing programs. For example, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program requirements recently changed. Individuals who are enrolled in CalWORKs

programs previously met most of TANF's requirements by participating in the CalWORKs programs. However, the implementation of stricter TANF requirements mean individuals may be required to travel longer distances for certain types of programs, even if transportation is not available. CalWORKs can use more flexible guidelines for non-TANF clients.

A lack of centralized information was also noted as a barrier. There are not central resources listing available transportation services. The lack of centralized information means there is no single source for individuals seeking to find transportation options, eligibility requirements, fares and service hours. As an initial task to fulfill some of its responsibilities, the CTSA would be an appropriate entity to assume a lead role in developing and implementing strategies to establish a centralized information resource.

Several stakeholders talked about spatial limitations and temporal limitations in Imperial County, which can also be identified as barriers to coordination. Long distances and limited services make it difficult to coordinate with major employers or seek private funding for services. Program eligibility and trip purpose restrictions also inhibit coordination. Many of the existing services are available to only subsets of the three target populations. As a result, some populations, especially individuals with low incomes, have limited access to the transportation resources. Other transportation programs are limited to taking people to/from medical appointments, or only to specific programs. Organizations have specific missions, vehicle requirements and insurance requirements, which makes it difficult to coordinate with other agencies.

Priorities

High Priority Strategies

There is neither service to other outlying communities such as Bard, Ripley and Palo Verde, nor is there Sunday service. Providing additional transit service would improve these residents' access to life-enhancing opportunities.

Many stakeholders indicated they thought there would be significant value to operating public transit service on Sunday. Although college classes are primarily weekdays and many people use IVT for social services that are provided on weekdays only, a key market for IVT is to address service sector commuters. The service sector (shopping, restaurants, etc.) runs seven days a week.

For the system to be useful for these workers, it must be useful on all of the days when they may need to work. Many low-income people, in particular, have mobility issues that are not being addressed. This strategy proposes expanding Imperial Valley Transit service. Route 500 could operate two days per week and a new lifeline route could be introduced to the communities of Bard, Ripley, and Palo Verde on a demonstration basis (or extensions of existing routes could be offered). Sunday service could be offered on a limited schedule. Later service could be operated as needed, based on determinations in the Unmet Transit Needs process. Increase Capacity on AIM Transit

Needs Addressed by Strategy:

Need for increased capacity to reduce or eliminate service

Denials

This strategy recommends that AIM Transit enhance its capacity by one vehicle to accommodate more passengers, especially during peak periods, between 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM when all vehicles are in demand. The service schedule would remain from 6:00 AM to 10:30 PM on weekdays and from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Saturday. If IVT introduces Sunday service, then AIM Transit would also need to offer Sunday service to complement the service hours. Introducing a new vehicle to increase capacity on weekdays would result in approximately 2,000 hours of additional service per year with another 250 annual hours for a limited Sunday service schedule. This strategy would require funds to purchase a new accessible vehicle and additional operating funds to support day-to-day operations.

A local circulator in Brawley could replace or scale back the existing general public dial-a-ride service. The dial-a-ride service could be scaled back to serve seniors and persons with disabilities or be made available only to ADA-eligible riders.

One option to eliminate the need for supplemental dial-a-ride service would be for the route to deviate to pick up ADA-eligible riders, as needed. The route configuration and schedule of a local circulator would need to be developed. The goal would be to link major activity centers in Brawley and provide convenient connections to IVT. It would be structured to serve the major destinations of transit users, including older adults and persons with disabilities. The proposed local circulator would improve convenience and spontaneity for residents wishing to travel within Brawley and make connections with IVT to travel to El Centro, IVC and other destinations beyond the city limits.

An extension of existing IVT service is also an option and is currently being explored. This strategy is to develop a dial-a-ride service that provides coverage throughout Imperial County. The individual city dial-a-ride services would be folded into a countywide service. This service should be limited to seniors and persons with disabilities.

Service could be available in Ripley and Bard on Tuesdays and in the communities surrounding Bombay Beach service could be offered on Thursdays. In these communities, there may be some local trip requests, however the vast majority of trips would be to El Centro for medical, shopping or social service purposes. A centralized dispatch and scheduling system would be needed to schedule all trip requests.

A consolidated countywide dial-a-ride system has several potential benefits, including improved mobility for residents not served by IVT and easier access to services beyond one's individual community. Elimination of the existing local dial-a-ride services, or consolidation of services, should be considered to allow a greater number of resources to be funneled into a more effective countywide dial-a-ride system. Information is important to support transit services. A thoughtful, coordinated, user-focused marketing and information program can help increase awareness of and access to the Imperial County Transit network. If the information is clearly and easily understood and is readily available, it could encourage greater transit usage.

To support a higher level of public information coordination, a comprehensive public information and marketing program should be considered. To understand whether the marketing and public information materials are reaching the target audiences, it is valuable to assess their effectiveness. An evaluation of existing marketing efforts could include informal feedback from riders and non riders alike, surveys and formal focus groups.

One key element in preparing transit information is to list all services in one source including text and accompanying maps. Bilingual printed information is essential and materials should also be in accessible formats to address the needs of some seniors and people with disabilities. Some stakeholders commented that word-of-mouth information is often how people learn about transit services; others noted that information needs to be more widely distributed to get the word out.

Updated information needs to be provided on the IVT website with links to other transportation options both within the county and to neighboring San Diego and Riverside Counties (and possibly services available in Mexicali). All written materials, including information on the website, should be in English and Spanish.

Even though 211 has not been implemented in Imperial County yet, there may be an opportunity, when it is introduced in the region, to develop a relationship between 211 and transportation providers so that high quality transportation service assistance can be available to 211 callers. This is one strategy in which the CTSA could play a key role, in facilitating the provision of transportation information for 211 operators and ensuring informational materials are updated and accurate.

Bringing together the array of transportation providers and agency staff at a transportation summit is a recommended strategy to provide information via word-of-mouth. The summit could include travel training information, materials from each of the transportation programs that serve the residents of Imperial County, a roundtable on transportation coordination issues (and opportunities to implement elements of this plan), and could even feature discussions on the development of a 211 program as well as development of a campaign to get the word about the transportation programs that exist

Some stakeholders noted that the Brawley Dial-a-Ride is not reliable and others have expressed a preference for a local circulator within Brawley (See above discussion). This proposed strategy is intended to develop a transfer center in downtown Brawley to facilitate transferring between local and intercity services. The intent is to provide a convenient, safe and attractive location for transferring passengers.

The main bus stop in Brawley is at “E” Street and Rio Vista. While this location is not a good location for a transit facility from an operational perspective, it may be necessary to identify and evaluate other locations to ensure adequate space is available for buses to wait for boarding passengers, a bus shelter with signage can be provided, and benches and other amenities are available. This strategy is closely tied to the strategy to develop a local circulator within Brawley with timed connections to IVT.

Vehicle replacement is critical for the continued operation of public and agency transportation service. As vehicles age, they become less reliable and have higher operating costs because they are less efficient and require more maintenance.

Only public and private nonprofit agencies are eligible for FTA 5310 funds. Implementation of this strategy entails a collaborative approach among local human service transportation providers and/or sponsors to develop a county-based or regional program to replace or expand capital equipment. Components of a capital improvement program would include the following:

- Identification and prioritization of transit facilities needing improvement

- Identification and prioritization of bus stops or transit centers needing improvement to enhance their usability, such as installation of shelters, benches, curb cuts, etc.
- Modification of bus stops to ensure their accessibility for wheelchair users
- Schedule for replacement of vehicles operated by local nonprofit agencies funded with FTA Section 5310 funds
- Development of an expansion plan to increase operators' fleets; identification of applicable fund sources
- Identification and prioritization of other capital equipment such as computerized scheduling and dispatching program, enhanced telephone or communication systems, or vehicle modifications needed to meet air quality standards

Medium Priority Strategies

Medium priority strategies are opportunities worthy of further evaluation. In some cases, they may be easy to implement, but have less of an impact in terms of meeting the needs of the plan's target populations. Some of the strategies require extensive planning, and funding of the strategy may be a challenge.

Develop a Countywide Vanpool Program

Needs Addressed By Strategy:

Limited service hours and frequency need for early morning service to employment and job training and employment

A vanpool program could be effective for sharing rides to improve access to employment or training sites. They offer flexible transportation service and can provide late night service when IVT and other options are not available.

Vanpools have also been adapted to offer farm worker transportation that may have applicability in Imperial County. Vanpool programs for agricultural workers have been operating in Fresno and Kings County and more recently a pilot project is underway in Santa Barbara County.

Develop a Medical Transportation Service within Imperial County

Needs Addressed by Strategy:

Limited service frequencies; Need for more medical transportation services; Problems with public transit reliability assistance to get to medical appointments.

Many stakeholders said that there is a need for more medical transportation service within Imperial County. To supplement this service, additional services for people to travel to medical appointments and facilities could be provided in a number of ways described below:

- AIM Transit, as the ADA provider can serve people who have a short-term medical condition such as a broken hip or knee injury, but many people may be unaware of this service. Individuals in this situation can apply for and receive temporary ADA eligibility and are eligible for service for a set time period. Granting temporary ADA eligibility is common among ADA transportation

providers and is for people with a health condition or disability that temporarily prevents them from using fixed route bus service.

- Volunteer transportation could provide a convenient and flexible option to existing services. A volunteer driver program could be established to provide non-emergency medical transportation on a limited basis. Volunteer transportation programs typically rely on volunteers to use their own vehicles to transport individuals to medical appointments and facilities. Volunteers are often reimbursed at the Federal mileage rate. Running a volunteer service using all volunteers is difficult. It is challenging to recruit and retain a large number of volunteers. However, this type of service is suggested as a small scale supplement to other medical transportation services and options.
- A subsidized taxi program could be a practical supplement for medical transportation services. A subsidized taxi program could be offered on a limited basis to targeted populations for travel to medical appointments.

There is no safe crossing at the intersection of Cole Boulevard and Highway 111 in Calexico, which is adjacent to a major transfer point for IVT service. Several stakeholders expressed concern that this intersection is unsafe and places many IVT passengers at risk.

The City of Calexico has recently adopted a resolution to utilize Proposition 1B funds and other grants and fees for a capital improvement project for the Cole Boulevard West development area. The capital improvement project consists of roadway widening from two lanes to four lanes, resurfacing, striping, median and traffic signals installation. While the exact elements of this improvement project are not clearly defined, this strategy would piggyback on this project to include safe street crossings at the intersection of Highway 111 and Cole Boulevard to include an overpass, sidewalks, crosswalks and other amenities to improve safety at this heavily utilized intersection.

This strategy proposes late night shuttle services for employees who work swing shifts at employers in Imperial County such as the meat packing plant in Brawley or the two state prisons. For the service to be useful to employers, it must be tailored to shift times to accommodate work schedules.

Another option for a late night employer sponsored service is to organize a subscription service, similar to a vanpool. A subscription service typically uses small- or mid-sized vans with one employee serving as the driver and other employees as passengers.

Low Priority Strategies

There are six taxi companies operating throughout Imperial County. A taxi subsidy program typically involves an arrangement between a sponsoring organization and a participating taxi company or companies. Under the arrangement, the taxi company accepts and accommodates trip requests from registered customers, clients, or residents, and accepts vouchers provided by the sponsoring organization to riders as partial payment for the trip.

Transportation Kiosk at the Mall or Plazas

Needs Addressed by Strategy:

Limited distribution of transit information and limited availability of maps and transit information at stops and transfer points

An ongoing challenge for transit agencies is to widely distribute and maintain updated transit information. Rural service areas are geographically large and spread out requiring significant labor resources. This proposed strategy is to install a transportation kiosk at key locations in the service area such as at Imperial Valley Mall, 14th and State Streets in El Centro, or 3rd and Paulin in Calexico. The advantage of a kiosk located at a central location is that it is highly visible to passengers and provides easy access to information without the transit agency staff having to continuously restock materials.

Recommendations

Program Administration

Effective program administration is a crucial factor in ensuring the ongoing success of each new program implemented based on the strategies defined in this plan. As a first step, a sponsor or lead agency needs to be designated to manage each project.

For each of the highest ranked strategies, a lead agency is suggested; however, in some cases numerous entities could serve in this capacity. The lead agency should have the administrative, fiscal and staffing resources needed to carry out the program on an ongoing basis. These agencies could be called upon to offer their skills or share resources with the appropriate lead agencies and organizations, facilitating the implementation the strategies defined in this plan.

Decision-Making Process

In addition to the staff administering the service or program (derived from the strategies) policy oversight is essential for formal decision-making. This function could rest with the IVAG Regional Council and/or the boards of any of the agencies taking a leadership role in the implementation of strategies. IVAG or the CTSA could assume some responsibility in carrying forward some of the coordination activities that are encouraged in the various strategies. However, the agency has limited staff resources and would be unable to assume many more tasks without additional staff.

The SSTAC focuses on an array of transportation issues that arise in Imperial County with coordination being one of their three primary areas of focus. The SSTAC provides a forum for sharing information and building consensus on strategies and tools.

Service Standards

To ensure that programs developed from this Coordinated Plan are effective, it is recommended that agencies coordinating services or receiving any of the funding sources identified in this plan develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating services. For any new program service performance should be monitored by the lead agency and data should be reported to participating agencies, such as the SSTAC and IVAG.

INYO & MONO COUNTIES

Transportation Needs and Gaps (Combined)

Projected Transportation Needs

Within the two county region, the projected senior population (age 60 and older) is expected to grow from 7,759 to 10,639 individuals between 2010 and 2020, based on California Department of Finance projections. This represents a 37% increase. Therefore, it is assumed that demand for transportation services in the region will increase approximately 37% in the next ten years. California Department of Finance estimates show that Mono County will experience a significantly larger increase in senior population (56%) compared to Inyo County (27%) during this period.

Unmet Needs

Through a process that involved significant stakeholder participation and detailed analysis of existing documentation, the transportation needs and service gaps in the two-county region were identified. These generally fell into the following four categories: coordination, connections, service availability and equipment.

- Coordination – challenges that impede coordination efforts
- Connections – challenges providing transportation links inside and outside the Inyo-Mono County area
- Service Availability – challenges providing service beyond existing service
- Acquisition and Replacement of Capital Equipment– challenges maintaining or expanding the available fleet, both public and private; maintaining or enhancing other capital equipment including computer hardware/software, maintenance and communications equipment.

Coordination:

Stakeholders identified several needs that affect general coordination efforts such as:

- Insufficient CTSA structure
- Overcome barriers to coordination, including lack of staff resources to manage coordination activities and insufficient funds to achieve useful levels to support coordination activities
- Develop a system of support services such as assistance with grant applications, driver training and alcohol/drug testing for human service agencies
- Develop Hispanic outreach mechanism
- Need for ESTA and Inyo Mono Association for the Handicapped to be vendorized by the Kern Regional Center
- Need to bring services such as driver licensing, Social Security services, to clients instead of transporting people long distances
- Lack of resource sharing. Need to coordinate use of vehicles and resources by multiple groups
- Enhance identity and connectivity of systems through improved bus stops, especially in Mono County.

Connections:

The need for connectivity to out of county services or systems was identified, especially for medical services and social service programs. In addition, gaps within the two county region were outlined. Specific service gaps include:

- Need for continued/enhanced commuter service to employment centers including
  - Lone Pine – Bishop
  - Bishop – Mammoth Lakes
  - Rural areas to employment centers (e.g. Mammoth Lakes, Bishop, Lone Pine)
- Connection in Lancaster to transit services such as Metrolink rail service into Los Angeles and other regional transit operators
- Insufficient service to Loma Linda, Reno, Los Angeles and Sacramento for nonemergency medical trips
- Lone Pine to Reno service requires overnight stay in Bishop
- Develop a coordinated volunteer driver program; resolve insurance issues to allow ridesharing for to Reno, Los Angeles, Loma Linda, Sacramento and other locations as needed
- Develop and enhance ridesharing opportunities, such as the Mono County Rideshare Program and van pool programs.

Service Availability:

Repeatedly, stakeholders indicated a need for expanded services during evening and weekend hours. Transit users and human service agencies both expressed concerns over limited or nonexistent transportation outside the typical weekday work schedule.

Specific issues include:

- A lack of service for outlying areas of the counties make it difficult for residents to access public transportation for employment or medical trips
- A lack of evening and weekend service to both campuses of Cerro Coso Community College
- A lack of public transportation outside the 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM weekday window to access non emergency medical transportation, especially for patients of the Toiyabe Indian Health dialysis facilities that operate three shifts per day
- A lack of service for veterans
- A lack of sufficient service in Bishop and Mammoth Lakes for workers, especially service industry workers, whose work schedules are outside the traditional weekday 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM timeframe

Acquisition and Replacement of Capital Equipment:

Stakeholders acknowledged the need for replacement vehicles to maintain the operational status and service quality of the public transit as well as the social services fleet. In addition, other capital equipment may be needed to enhance coordination activities within the county.

- New and replacement vehicles, computer hardware/software, maintenance equipment, communication base station/mobile radios cameras, GIS equipment, and other equipment eligible under 5310 guidelines

- Develop a program for retired vehicles.

Transportation Resources

Existing Service

Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA)

In 2006, the two counties together with the City of Bishop and the Town of Mammoth Lakes entered into a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) to administer and operate the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA). ESTA is a relatively new public transit agency that assumed operating responsibility for transit service in the two-county area on July 1, 2007. Built on the foundation of Inyo-Mono Transit (IMT), ESTA is involved in the process of re-making transportation service throughout Inyo and Mono Counties.

ESTA is the primary public transit service in the Inyo-Mono area and is the only year-round provider of interregional public transportation for the entire Eastern Sierra region. Yosemite Area Regional Transit System (YARTS) provides inter-regional services during the summer. ESTA operates local and interregional bus routes on schedules that are adjusted seasonally (see Figure 4-2). ESTA passengers are able to travel to:

- Bishop
- Mammoth Lakes
- Bridgeport (Mono County Seat)
- Independence (Inyo County Seat)
- Ridgecrest (connections to Kern County and Los Angeles)
- Reno, NV
- Carson City, NV
- Gardnerville, NV

ESTA operates an important interregional link, the CREST route, which provides northbound service between Bishop, Mammoth Lakes and Reno and southbound service between ammoth Lakes, Bishop, Lone Pine and Ridgecrest. CREST fills the service gap left by the departure of Greyhound from the region. The routes provide vital transit connections for medical, shopping, educational, and employment purposes. CREST plays an important role in recreation and tourism in the two county region.

Plans are underway to expand service on the southern portion of the route beyond Ridgecrest to Lancaster to allow for connections to the Metrolink train service into the LA area and to other transit operators serving the region. ESTA works closely with public and private agencies to advance human service coordination within the two county region. The majority of these agencies do not operate vehicles, but purchase ESTA passes, which are distributed to their clients. These agencies include:

- Kern Regional Center
- Great Steps Ahead
- Inyo County Courts
- Inyo and Mono Department of Health and Human Services
- Inyo-Mono Area Agency on Aging (IMAAA)
- Inyo County Office of Education

- Mono County Office of Education
- Inyo County Career Services
- Counties of Inyo-Mono Veterans Service Office

Other Transportation Service Providers

Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (MMSA)

During winter months, MMSA provides shuttle service in and around Mammoth Lakes to the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area utilizing its own fleet of buses. Service operates from 7:00 AM until midnight (1:30 AM Fridays, Saturdays and holidays). Bike shuttle service is provided during summer months. Inyo-Mono Area on Aging and Inyo-Mono Senior Program (IMAAA/IMSP)

The Inyo-Mono Area Agency on Aging is a joint powers agency created by the Inyo and Mono Boards of Supervisors. It has been designated by the California Department of Aging to plan, deliver and administer services for older persons and certain disabled adults in the two-county region. IMAAA contracts with the Inyo-Mono Senior Program (IMSP) to provide transportation for seniors who need transportation to essential services but cannot ride an ESTA bus. Rides are scheduled by appointment. IMSP also provides out-of-area medical transportation for individuals who have no public or private alternative. Rides require 7 - 10 days advance notice to schedule a trip.

Inyo-Mono Association for the Handicapped (IMAH)

The Inyo-Mono Association for the Handicapped operates two vans in the Bishop area to transport developmentally and mentally disabled adults to and from the day activity program in Bishop. Service is available Monday through Friday. Inyo and Mono Departments of Health and Human Services (DHHS) DHHS purchases ESTA bus passes for distribution to its clients.

Mono County Rideshare

Mono County offers residents of the two county area the opportunity to participate in the Mono County Rideshare program. A link from the Mono County website connects individuals to AlterNetRides, which is an online voluntary rideshare service. There is no charge to access this service that allows users to post their trip destinations and find potential drivers or passengers.

Toiyabe Indian Health Project

The Toiyabe Indian Health Project provides transportation to tribal members and their families in Inyo and Mono Counties. Service is available for medical appointments, shopping and other necessary purposes.

Big Pine Education Center

The Big Pine Education Center provides after school transportation to tribal and non-tribal children in the Big Pine area. The program operates two 14-passenger and one 7-passenger van.

Owens Valley Career Development Center

The Owens Valley Career Development Center offers emergency assistance to tribal members, including ESTA vouchers for transportation.

Bishop Paiute Tribe – Elders Program

The Bishop Paiute Elders Program serves tribal members and their families through the use of one 10-passenger van and one Jeep Cherokee. Neither vehicle is wheelchair accessible.

Yosemite Area Regional Transit System (YARTS)

YARTS provides an alternative mode of transportation for people visiting Yosemite National Park and who prefer not to drive. YARTS operates service from the West into the Park from Merced year round, with summer and winter schedules. It also operates service into the Park from the East with service available in Mono County from the communities of Mammoth Lakes, Lee Vining and June Lake. Service is seasonal from June through September.

Counties of Inyo-Mono Veteran Service Office

The Veteran Service Office for Inyo and Mono Counties provides gas reimbursement for veterans who require transportation to the Reno Veterans Medical Center.

Southern Inyo Hospital

The hospice program of Southern Inyo Hospital assists clients by providing or paying for transportation to medical appointments. The skilled nursing facility utilizes Medi-Cal funds to provide transportation for its patients to medical appointments.

Great Steps Ahead

Great Steps Ahead, a private non-profit organization serving disabled children ages birth – three years, purchases ESTA passes for use by its clients and their families.

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army purchases ESTA passes for its clients.

Kern Regional Center

The Kern Regional Center purchases ESTA passes for use by its clients in Inyo and Mono Counties. Funding is approximately $1,000 - $1,500 per month.

Greyhound and Amtrak

Greyhound and Amtrak service is available in Reno, NV.

Air Service

Reno/Tahoe, Las Vegas, Los Angeles (LAX) and Burbank are major airports serving Inyo and Mono Counties. Service to the Reno Airport is provided by ESTA on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Inyo County has seven general aviation and six private landing fields, which are located throughout the county. The Eastern Sierra Regional Airport in Bishop and the

Mammoth Yosemite Airport in Mono County offer charter services. Inyokern Airport offers flights to Los Angeles. Mono County operates Bryant Field in Bridgeport and Lee Vining Airport in Lee Vining, which are unattended fields.

Private Taxis and Limos

Taxi service is offered in the Mammoth Lakes area by two privately owned companies.

Medi-Cal Vendors

It is possible for local providers (including public agencies and non-profit organizations) to become providers of non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) under existing Medi-Cal arrangements. Medi-Cal is California's Medicaid health insurance program.

In Inyo County, Southern Inyo Hospital uses Medi-Cal funds to transport patients in skilled nursing facilities to medical appointments in the southern portion of the county. Inyo Mono Area Agency on Agency also receives Medi-Cal funding.

Barriers

Major Barriers to Coordination

Recognizing the need for agencies to work together is a vital step towards achieving more efficient, cost effective transportation services. However, coordination efforts can be impeded by a wide range of obstacles, including:

- Lack of resources: staff, funding, equipment
- Different client eligibility requirements
- Service area boundaries that limit connectivity
- Inter-county and intra-county jurisdictional issues
- Different agencies with different requirements for driver screening, training and licensing and vehicle safety
- Lack of software/technology or incompatibilities with software/technology prevent sharing of scheduling and dispatching, client eligibility data, and reports
- Liability/insurance issues
- Privacy requirements, such as HIPPA, prevent sharing client information
- Reporting requirements that vary for federal, state and local funding sources
- Rural counties often do not have the large number of public and private agencies that can share resources; coordination opportunities can be limited simply by the number of organizations operating within the region.

In discussions with stakeholders in Mono and Inyo Counties as well as other rural counties in central and eastern California, a significant barrier to increased coordination was identified as the lack of resources to pursue such activities. ESTA and stakeholders both agreed that staffing levels within the transit agency, which has the responsibility of spearheading coordination activities, do not allow for dedicated focus on coordination.

ESTA’s ability to fully embrace the leadership role required for effective coordination within the two counties is hampered by the fact that the agency is the designated CTSA for only one

county. Many human service agencies (e.g. Inyo Mono Area Agency on Aging, Inyo Mono Agency for Handicapped) operate in both counties in order to better serve their clients. Similarly, ESTA would be better able to direct coordinated transportation efforts if it were the designated CTSA for both Mono and Inyo Counties

Priorities

High Priority Strategies

Coordination Opportunity:

Insufficient CTSA structure

Strategy:

Designate ESTA as the CTSA for both Inyo and Mono Counties

Currently ESTA is the CTSA for Mono County while the Inyo County Board of Supervisors serves as CTSA for Inyo County. Coordination efforts would be more effective if CTSA responsibilities were combined under the direction and leadership of one agency. ESTA, with its existing connections to and agreements with local human service organizations in both counties is the natural choice for this role. Further, ESTA has experience serving as the CTSA for Mono County. This existing circumstance and the regional nature of the agency make it ideally sited to serve as the CTSA for the two county region.

Coordination Opportunity:

Overcoming barriers to coordination, including:

- A lack of staff resources to manage coordination activities
- Insufficient funds to achieve useful levels to support coordination activities.

Strategy:

Enhance CTSA management to allow for negotiation of interagency agreements, providing for coordinated use of assets and operating funds. As an agency specializing in transportation service delivery, ESTA has the technical skills and decision-making structure to be the most effective organization in the region to pursue coordination.

Research revealed that while most rural counties have a designated CTSA, many CTSAs are not very active in pursuing coordination opportunities. This situation often is the result of two local conditions:

- Lack of staff resources to pursue coordination; and

- Lack of sufficient funds to accomplish meaningful results

The realization that ESTA does not have sufficient staff resources to create coordination results led to the recommendation that the CTSA function of the agency be enhanced through dedicated funding for that purpose. Workshop participants rated as a high priority the ability to:

- Add staff devoted to CTSA activities; and/or
- Contract for CTSA management services from an outside expert source

The dedication of resources to achieving coordination results was universally recognized by stakeholders as the starting point action. In Inyo and Mono Counties.

Coordination Opportunity:

Enhance identity and connectivity of transit systems through improved bus stops, especially in Mono County.

Strategy:

Improve bus stops and shelters throughout Mono and Inyo Counties to enhance system identification, service connectivity, and passenger comfort.

The need for improvements to bus stops and shelters was identified during the planning process. In addition to improving existing bus stops, additional new stops are needed, especially in Mono County.

Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of public transportation outside the 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM weekday window to access nonemergency medical transportation (NEMT), especially for patients of the Toiyabe Indian Health dialysis facilities that operate three shifts per day.

Strategy:

Expand transit service for non-emergency medical transportation outside the 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM weekday window through specialized funding sources (e.g. FTA Section 5310). The need for transportation services outside the weekday window was identified as important for individuals needing hemo-dialysis and for non-emergency medical transport from the hospital to home.

Coordination Opportunity:

Develop a system of support services, such as assistance with grant applications, driver training and drug and alcohol testing for human service agencies.
Strategy:

Through the CTSA, expand support services such as grant application assistance, driver training, alcohol/drug testing and other support services for non-profit agencies. This sets the stage for the provision of support services by a centralized agency. In Inyo and Mono Counties, ESTA as the CTSA may be in a position to provide centralized services to a variety of agencies in the county.

Coordination Opportunity:

Develop Hispanic outreach programs.

Strategy:

Develop support services and materials to better serve the Hispanic population. Components could include bilingual drivers and dispatchers as well as marketing materials such as schedules, signs, brochures and web pages.

The Inyo-Mono region is home to a significant and growing Hispanic community. California Department of Finance projections estimate a population increase of 134% between 2000 and 2020. The need for outreach to this demographic group was identified by stakeholders during the planning process.

Coordination Opportunity:

Need for ESTA and IMAH to be vendorized by the Kern Regional Center.

Strategy:

Arrange for vendorization of IMAH and ESTA in order to provide an additional funding source. Both ESTA and IMAH are available to provide transportation to clients of the Kern Regional Center. It would be financially advantageous for ESTA to be paid an hourly rate as a vendor of the Regional Center and would provide an additional revenue source. IMAH will provide another transportation resource for developmentally disabled individuals in Inyo and Mono Counties, thus reallocating riders from public transit.

Coordination Opportunity:
Lack of resource sharing; need to coordinate use of vehicles, drivers and other resources by multiple groups.

Strategy:

Develop communication and coordination mechanism to facilitate shared use of resources among human service agencies.

Agencies within the two county region expressed interest in enhanced efforts to coordinate resource sharing. IMAH indicated its wheel chair accessible bus was available daily from 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM for use by another agency and tribal representatives stated, “This is a good time to talk about this.”

Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of sufficient transportation for non-emergency medical trips from Inyo and Mono Counties to Loma Linda, Reno, Los Angeles and Sacramento.

Strategy:

Coordinate services among agencies to make better use of vehicles. Develop and expand volunteer driver program.

Increased coordination between agencies providing NEMT service could expand options for residents of the region. Many rural counties rely on volunteer driver programs to support elderly and disabled individuals with transportation to medical appointments.

Coordination Opportunity:

More fully utilize volunteers to reduce need for more drivers for agency-owned vehicles and to increase options for non-emergency medical trips.

Strategy:

Identify agencies or community leaders to coordinate volunteer programs, including the recruitment, screening, training and managing of volunteers. Identify or create new insurance programs to eliminate exposure of volunteers to inappropriate levels of liability. There is a need for constant ongoing recruitment, as there is usually a high rate of turnover in volunteers. Leaders or agencies within the community who will undertake the administration of the volunteer driver program should be identified.

One significant obstacle to successful volunteer driver programs can be the insurance requirement placed on volunteers. By identifying or creating new insurance programs that eliminate the volunteer's personal insurance exposure, this obstacle can be reduced or removed.

Coordination Opportunity:

Need for acquisition and replacement of capital equipment, including:

- Vehicles for ESTA and human service agencies
- Computer hardware/software
- Maintenance equipment
- Communications equipment
- Cameras, GIS equipment
- Other equipment eligible under federal guidelines

Strategy:

Coordinate arrangements for purchase of capital equipment, including vehicles, to help tap available funding, e.g. FTA 5310. Use older (retired) vehicles for less intense social service agency needs

This may mean helping agencies prepare 5310 or other applications for funding. The transit agency's role in both types of vehicle acquisition would allow for the strategic assessment of vehicle needs for the region.

ESTA should consider formalizing a vehicle distribution program for its retired vehicles that might still have useful life with a second agency. Some agencies couple the contribution of a vehicle to another agency with some components of operating cost such as maintenance service or insurance.

Coordination Opportunity:

Connection to Lancaster for coordination with other transit systems such as Metrolink to provide transportation to the Los Angeles area.

Strategy:

Through specialized funding (e.g. JARC), expand CREST service to Lancaster.

Stakeholders in the two-county region specified a need for transportation services to Lancaster for connections to other transit agencies that provide service into the Los Angeles area.

Coordination Opportunity:

Need to provide commuter service to employment centers within the two county region

Strategy:

Through specialized funding (e.g. JARC), sustain and enhance commuter service between:

- Lone Pine – Bishop
- Bishop – Mammoth Lakes
- Rural outlying areas to employment centers (Bishop, Lone Pine, Mammoth Lakes).

Stakeholders identified the need for commuter transportation services to employment centers in Mammoth Lakes, Bishop and Lone Pine as a high priority.

Coordination Opportunity:

Need for transportation for employees who commute outside the 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM window.

Strategy:

Through specialized funding (e.g. JARC), sustain and enhance transportation outside the 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM window for workers in Bishop, Mammoth Lakes and other areas of the region Travel and tourism is a vital industry in the Inyo-Mono region. Many area employers, especially hotels, restaurants and casinos, have shifts outside the traditional weekday schedule. Stakeholders indicated a need for transportation outside the Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM timeframe for workers in service industry jobs.

Medium Priority Strategies Coordination Opportunity:

Lack of public transportation outside the 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM weekday window to both campuses of Cerro Coso Community College

Strategy:

Expand transit service through specialized funding sources (e.g. JARC)

The need for transportation services outside the weekday window was identified as important for individuals participating in social service programs or school events.

Coordination Opportunity:

Need for transportation services for veterans.

Strategy:

Quantify and design non emergency medical service for veterans.

Service for non-emergency medical transportation for veterans was mentioned repeatedly by stakeholders during the planning process. Trips to Reno can be difficult and time consuming. Coordination between agencies could be enhanced.

Coordination Opportunity:

Travel between Lone Pine and Reno requires overnight stay in Bishop.

Strategy:

Re-evaluate schedules through the Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) process to allow for through travel.

Travel between the Lone Pine area and Reno require passengers to transfer in Bishop. However, connections require an overnight stay in Bishop. Schedules should be reevaluated as part of the SRTP process.

Coordination Opportunity:

Work with other agencies to bring services to clients instead of transporting clients long distances to services.

Strategy:

Use CTSA as a mechanism to minimize transportation needs through provision of social services to remote locations

CTSA in its coordination role could work with agencies such as Social Security or Department of Motor Vehicles and local communities to establish on-site service in outlying areas.

Coordination Opportunity:

Increase opportunities for ridesharing for both inter-county and intra-county trips

Strategy:

Develop and enhance ridesharing opportunities, such as the Mono County Rideshare Program and van pool programs.

Promoting the use of services such as Mono County's Rideshare Program and developing van pool programs could achieve positive outcomes in the two county region.

Low Priority Strategies Coordination Opportunity:

Residents in very rural areas cannot access public transportation for employment or medical trips.

Strategy:

Establish lower cost human service transportation options to rural areas rather than expanding traditional service.

The need for increased transportation options for very rural area of the two county region was identified by stakeholders. Establishing volunteer driver or rideshare programs can expand choices for rural residents.

Recommendations

Program Administration

Many planning efforts and services in Inyo and Mono Counties are presently coordinated. The recent creation of ESTA is an example of the ability of the two counties to work together on critical issues. Various human service providers offer services to both counties under one organizational umbrella.

This Plan recommends that ESTA be designated the CTSA for Inyo County, which would mean that the CTSA for both counties would be ESTA. The transit agency would then have two-county responsibility for human service coordination just as it has responsibility for transit service delivery for the region. As with other counties throughout California, both Inyo and Mono Counties have Local Transportation Commissions that are responsible for designating the CTSA and for making funding decisions relative to the agency. This structure provides the necessary oversight role by the LTCs for performance of the CTSA and for funding associated with its responsibilities.

Decision-Making Process

The local decision-making process in Inyo and Mono Counties would benefit from the designation of one CTSA instead of two in the region. This structure would streamline human service transportation decisions. The roles and relationships between the LTCs and ESTA will also be addressed in the 2008 Short Range Transit Plan, which acknowledges the formal relationship of the agencies. Further, the SSTAC in each county is active and participates in the coordination decision process as mandated by state statute. The process could be enhanced through more formal assignment of clearinghouse functions to the CTSA for grant coordination and strategy implementation.

Guidelines for Transportation Provider Agreements and Service Standards

Provider agreements for human service transportation coordination are typically between agencies each with unique resources. The concept is for each participating agency in an agreement to share its resources with the other.

Each provider agreement should be crafted to fit the unique circumstances and resources of the participants.

There may be at least two levels of performance standards associated with human service coordination agreements. The first is contained the agreement between the actual agencies and is defined in the performance standards section mentioned above. The agencies that fund or provide the service must specify some measures by which they will determine whether the arrangement is meeting their intent. This broad area would also include the requirements imposed by any funding source that is contributing to the project. The second level of standards would come from the oversight agency responsible for coordination. This could typically be the CTSA.

Access to Jobs and Employment

Stakeholders indentified needs for regular transportation service in more rural outlying areas that would allow residents to commute to the employment centers in Bishop, Lone Pine or Mammoth Lakes. In addition, area residents stated a need for increased commuter service between Lone Pine and Bishop to accommodate workers. With Bishop and Mammoth Lakes both heavily dependent on tourism, employment in the service industry is high. Hotels, restaurants and casino employ people who work outside the traditional 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM window. Stakeholders indicated a need for public transportation in Bishop and Mammoth Lakes to support these workers.

JARC funds could be utilized to continue and enhance all these services. Mono County has developed a rideshare website to enable county residents to locate rides for jobs or other purposes.

Volunteer Transportation

Stakeholders recognized the benefits of a county-wide program and rated as “high” a strategy to build a volunteer driver pool. Program administration is the key to the successful implantation and on-going viability of volunteer programs, thus the need for an individual or community agency to be the champion is critical.

The issue of agency liability frequently is raised as an obstacle to the implementation of volunteer driver programs. Efforts are underway through agencies such as Nonprofits United to create special insurance packages for individuals or agencies that offer an initial layer of coverage when a volunteer is operating a vehicle. This would supersede the coverage provided by the individual or agency when not in volunteer service.

School Transportation

Ultimately, though, the responsibility for school bus operations and policies is delegated to the local districts, which traditionally have been uninterested in broadening their focus beyond student transportation.

Stakeholders representing the Offices of Education or school districts in the two county region did not participate in any stakeholder meetings associated with the study and there has been little interest shown in coordination efforts with other agencies.

Facility Needs

There is a lack of sufficient bus stops in Mono County. Plan have been developed to add twelve bus stops throughout the county, in Mammoth Lakes and along Highway 395.

LAKE COUNTY

Transportation Needs and Gaps (Combined)

Unmet Needs in Rural Areas

Given limited resources and the fundamental difficulty of providing public transit service to rural areas, stakeholders indicated the following unmet transportation needs in Lake County:

- The existing deviated fixed-route service does not meet the needs of all rural residents, especially those who live in the most remote locations. Residents living more than one mile from existing routes cannot take advantage of the deviated service.
- Service between the more rural communities tends to be less frequent than in Lakeport and Clearlake, resulting in longer wait times.
- Some communities are not served by Lake Transit, including Spring Valley, Hidden Valley Lake, and other communities.
- Paratransit service is needed in areas beyond what is required by ADA. Lake Transit operates deviated fixed-route service in lieu of providing complementary paratransit service in communities outside of Clearlake, Lower Lake and Lakeport. Despite the value this service provides, some older adults and disabled passengers require a higher level of door-to-door or door-through-door service and cannot travel via deviated fixed route service. For example, an older adult living in the North Shore who needs paratransit to travel to Lakeport has no services available to make this trip. For this reason, many stakeholders requested additional paratransit service countywide. Such service would exceed minimal ADA requirements, because ADA paratransit services are required to be provided within ¾ of a mile of existing fixed routes
- Casinos are some of the largest employers in the county, especially for those seeking or working in entry-level jobs. Lake Transit provides service to Robinson Rancheria on the North Shore, Twin Pines in Middletown, and to Konocti Vista Casino via Route 4A. However, these casinos operate – and have work-shifts – 24 hours a day, a schedule that Lake Transit is not able to support with current funding levels.

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Needs

Stakeholders indicated that Lake County's low-income, senior, and disabled populations need more comprehensive non-emergency medical transportation. Those living in the rural portions of the county often must travel considerable distances to reach medical appointments; for specialized appointments, it is common for residents to travel out of county to Santa Rosa, Napa, San Francisco, or Oakland. Lake County fire departments provide emergency and non-emergency medical transportation to and from county hospitals. T

here are three fire departments that provide medical transportation: Kelseyville Fire Department, Lakeport Fire Protection District, and Lake County Fire Protection District. The fire departments transport patients via ambulance since they have no other vehicles. Approximately half of these trips are non-emergency medical trips. According to the Kelseyville Fire Department Chief, the fire departments will likely be faced with an increased number of hospital-to-hospital transfers when Sutter Lakeside Hospital in Lakeport reduces the total number of hospital beds to 25 in early 2008.

Other Transportation Needs

Stakeholders described the following transportation needs:

- Senior centers: Senior centers do not provide direct transportation; therefore, improved transportation service is needed for people who travel to the centers for lunch and other activities.
- Travel and safety training: Older adults and disabled residents, just like many others, may need support, initially, to introduce them to available transportation services and help them understand how to make use of them safely.
- Accessibility: The lack of accessible bus stops creates a serious obstacle to using existing transportation services. Stakeholders noted the difficulty that passengers, especially older adults or people with disabilities, have when accessing transit. Key challenges often are missing sidewalks and accessible stops, which are an especially common issue at bus stops outside of more urban areas. In addition, some stakeholders indicated a need for upgraded wheelchair-accessible vehicles.
- Bus stops: In addition to improved accessibility, bus stops should include shelters to protect passengers from the elements – rain, wind, etc. Also, signs are needed to clearly identify the stop location.
- Youth needs: Not all of the youth-oriented transportation needs are met by the school districts. Students need after-school transportation and parents need to transport children to day care. In addition, teenagers need expanded transportation options throughout the county.
- College/GED Students: Lower-income GED students often rely on public transportation to for transportation to classes at Yuba College in Clearlake. Those traveling from the Upper Lake/Lucerne area cannot take Lake Transit for an 8:30 AM class because the earliest bus does not arrive until 9:45 AM. In addition, students traveling from Hidden Valley to Yuba College desire more direct and more frequent bus service. Bus service is also needed to accommodate later evening classes, which can go until 9:30 PM.
- Job access: The current level of service limits the ability to rely on public transit for access to job opportunities or training opportunities within the county and in neighboring counties.
- Sustainability: Some stakeholders expressed the need to address greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging more people to use public transit rather than personal automobiles for transportation.
- Technology: Some stakeholders want better technology in buses to assist drivers and to improve efficiencies. Such technology may include better radio equipment, or improved accessibility features.

Currently, Lake Transit does not operate Sunday or late-night service, and provides only limited evening service. Service is focused primarily in Lakeport and Clearlake, although a number of stakeholders identified a need for additional service in these areas as well. For example, in Lakeport, there is no connecting service for the bus arriving from Ukiah at 8:00 PM. This bus is used by those who work in Mendocino County or attend Mendocino College in Ukiah. In addition, some stakeholders indicated that there is demand for commuter bus service between Clearlake and Lakeport.

Some stakeholders expressed a need for a "shopper shuttle" or a "holiday shuttle" in Lakeport that would serve all of the town's major destinations. Establishing this shuttle may help to reduce dial-a-ride demand, freeing resources of this service for other transportation needs. Some stakeholders indicated that Lake Transit's vehicles are uncomfortable and that they jostle passengers. This is especially difficult for older adults and for those who, because they are in a wheelchair, must ride in the back of the bus. This situation is exacerbated by poor road conditions in some locations, which also limits the ability of a bus to deviate from its route.

Expanding service, however, would require an increase in funding for Lake Transit, and maintaining current levels of service is becoming an increasing challenge of its own, due to escalating fuel costs. Some stakeholders indicated a need for more door-to-door paratransit service. Lake Transit typically provides curb-to-curb service, which is consistent with ADA guidelines. Providing a higher level of service, either door-to-door or door-through-door, would exceed minimal ADA guidelines.

Transportation Resources

Public Transit Operators

Lake Transit

Lake Transit operates service within Lake County and offers connections to Mendocino and Napa counties. The majority of Lake Transit's routes operate Monday through Saturday. Lake Transit offers fixed-route service in Clearlake and on express routes and deviated fixed-route service on all other routes. Lake Transit operates the following routes:

- Route 1: North Shore Clearlake to Lakeport. This service operates between Clearlake and Lakeport via Clearlake Oaks, Glenhaven, Lucerne, Nice, and Upper Lake. There are seven round-trips made each day and two short-line routes between Clearlake and Glenhaven.
- Route 2: South County to Cobb. This route operates between Kit's Corner and Middletown and stops in Loch Lomond, Hobergs, Anderson Springs, a park-and-ride facility, Twin Pine Casino and Cobb. There are four runs in each direction. There is a timed transfer to the South Shore route at Kit's Corner that takes commuters to Lakeport or Clearlake before 8:00 AM. This route operates Monday through Friday only.
- Route 3: Highway 29 Clearlake to Deer Park/St. Helena. This route offers two roundtrips daily, Monday through Friday, between Clearlake and Deer Park/St. Helena in Napa County. The route stops in Lower Lake, Hidden Valley, Middletown, and Calistoga. At Calistoga, there are available connections to Napa VINE Routes 10 and 11. There are three additional short-line runs between Clearlake and Middletown. This route operates Monday through Friday only.

- Route 4: South Shore Clearlake to Lakeport. Route 4 operates along the south shore of Clear Lake between Lakeport and Clearlake via Lower Lake and Kelseyville. There are five express runs from Lakeport to Clearlake and one in the opposite direction. This route operates Monday through Friday only.
- Route 4A: South Shore Clearlake to Lakeport via Soda Bay. Route 4A operates between Kit's Corner and Lakeport via Rivieras, Soda Bay, Finley, and Big Valley Rancheria. There are three runs in each direction each day. There are timed transfers at Kit's Corner and Lakeport.
- Route 5: Clearlake City North Loop. This route is a loop route that begins and ends in Clearlake, making stops at Yuba College, Wal-Mart, Redbud Hospital, Austin Park, Clearlake Park, and Burns Valley Mall. There are 12 runs each day and the service operates hourly between 7:00 AM and 6:15 PM.
- Route 6: Clearlake City South Loop. Route 6 is a loop route that begins and ends in Clearlake, making stops at Yuba College, Burns Valley Mall, Redbud Hospital, Social Services, and Lower Lake High School. There is hourly service between 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM.
- Route 7: Lakeport to Ukiah. Route 7 operates between Lakeport and Ukiah with stops at Robinson Rancheria, Upper Lake, Blue Lakes, Calpella, and Mendocino College. Connections can be made to Amtrak, Greyhound, the Ukiah Regional Airport, and Mendocino Transit service in Ukiah. There are four runs in each direction. Lake Transit provided a total of 244,122 trips in FY 2006-2007.

Deviated Service

Lake Transit will deviate from the fixed-route service up to one mile from its regular route via its Flex Stop service. Route deviation is not offered on local services or in Napa or Mendocino counties. Passengers are asked to call a day in advance for a reservation. There are no special eligibility requirements for deviated service, but disabled passengers are given priority.

Paratransit

The transit agency also offers dial-a-ride service in Clearlake, Lower Lake and Lakeport to individuals whose disabilities prevent them from using fixed-route service. Paratransit passengers must first complete an application in order to be deemed eligible for the service. Passengers are asked to call one day in advance, although they can often be accommodated on the same day.

Social Service Providers

In addition to fixed route service offered by Lake Transit, there are a number of transportation services offered by social service providers. Most of the services have eligibility requirements stipulating that passengers must be older adults, disabled, or low-income.

People Services

People Services, Inc. is a private nonprofit agency located in Lakeport that serves adults with developmental disabilities in both Lake and Mendocino Counties. Currently, the agency

arranges transportation for 143 people. Of these, 41 persons are ambulatory and some of them can use public transit. The agency operates the services in house, and has a total of 44 vehicles in its fleet. Of these, 11 vehicles are cars. Transportation is primarily provided Monday through Friday, and also for some recreational trips on weekends.

On occasion, People Services Inc. will make its vehicles available for special events such as the Lake County Fair, Special Olympics, etc. People Services, Inc. also owns and operates an in-house maintenance facility which, over the years, has proven to be a cost effective way to maintain the fleet.

Lake Family Resources

Lake Family Resource Center provides a variety of programs to support families and communities. In particular, they administer programs that support children, parents, and victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse. The center provides in-house transportation services to support these programs using three vehicles owned by the center or volunteer drivers. In FY 2006-2007, the center provided 1,745 trips. Transportation is provided by advocate and outreach workers who are trained to drive clients. The center has 50 employees and 16 volunteers.

Lake County Department of Social Services

The Lake County Department of Social Services (LCDSS) offers financial support in the form of food stamps, cash aid, and medical assistance for eligible low-income persons in Lake County. Transportation is a needed support service for many clients, and the LCDSS purchases bus tickets and passes through Lake Transit for their clients, and provides transportation directly for youth who are receiving foster care services and/or employment services. Hourly fixed-route service offers customers the opportunity to make connections to other parts of the county.

Redwood Coast Regional Center

The Redwood Coast Regional Center (RCRC) is one of 21 private, nonprofit regional centers in California serving people with developmental disabilities. RCRC provides assistance to residents with developmental disabilities, and their families, to obtain community support and services in Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake and Mendocino counties. In Lake County, the Regional Center assists clients with transportation, but does not provide the service directly. It pays approximately $925,000 for the following transportation services:

- RCRC pays Hey Taxi, a private taxi service, to transport clients to medical appointments. Hey Taxi operates throughout the county and in Mendocino County.
- It sponsors services that support clients in their own home. The center contracts with a private provider to offer supportive services and provide transportation when necessary.
- The Regional Center provides funding to People Services (described above).
- When possible, the RCRC issues Lake Transit bus passes to clients who are able to use public transportation for their transportation needs.
- In addition to purchasing fares, RCRC contracts with Lake Transit for services.

Barriers

Barriers to Coordination

The following barriers or obstacles preventing or hindering coordination of public transit and human service agency transportation programs are not unique to Lake County; rather, they are universal in nature and are faced by local communities throughout the country.

Geography:

Opportunities to coordinate service among transportation services in Lake County are limited in part due to the limited number of service providers, and also by the size and geography of the county. Access to and from—and between-- these communities is restricted by the presence of Clear Lake, the largest natural lake in the State of California. Additionally, the geographic isolation is a barrier to providing service in the outlying valleys and rural communities such as Spring Valley, Lakeview Estates, Orchard Shores and Glen Haven.

Specific Client Needs:

By definition, customers of special needs transportation programs have difficulty or cannot independently make use of programs established for the general public. In many cases, these customers need a level of care that may not prove conducive to integration with other passengers. Some agencies have established service standards or guidelines for consideration in transporting their clients, such as maximum time on a vehicle, the need for a higher level of care, required use of seat belts, etc. that may preclude transporting them with other client groups.

Funding Restrictions:

Social service agencies operate on limited budgets for provision of direct services. This results in the tendency to fund (if at all possible) or provide transportation services for their clients as an auxiliary service—as a means to support the end goal of providing the primary service such as training, medical assistance, meals, case management, etc. They look to local transportation authorities to help fill this gap.

Limited Staff Resources:

In rural communities, transportation program staff often “wear many hats,” and may be required to administer programs, write grants or funding applications, prepare reports and invoices, supervise staff and, on occasion, even drive a vehicle. Staff resources may not be available to pursue coordination strategies, which need to be developed and nurtured over time. In Lake County, Lake Transit serves as the CTSA. The CTSA is well positioned, by virtue of its designation and authority established in state statute (AB 120), to assume a leadership role in overseeing coordination projects and activities. However, no staff members are dedicated to work exclusively on coordination tasks.

Priorities

Highest Priority Strategies

Based on the prioritization process that took place in the two workshops, as well as a qualitative comparison of each strategy with the evaluation criteria, the following section provides a discussion about the highest priority strategies in Lake County as identified by workshop participants.

No single strategy emerged among the range of those proposed as most viable or highly desired to pursue. Stakeholders did indicate their interest in pursuing expansions for Lake Transit by providing additional service hours and by providing more frequent services. Those that ranked as high priorities are indicated below:

- Increase frequency of Lake Transit This strategy was ranked highly in both workshops. This strategy directly addresses the need to provide service more frequently in order to avoid long waits between trips, or to better connect with other routes or services.
- Extend Service Hours for Lake Transit. This strategy complements that of increasing frequency—stakeholders would like to see additional service hours in the evenings and/or in the morning to meet the travel needs of students, workers, or others who need to use public transit past 7:00 pm, when most routes no longer operate.
- Develop Capital Replacement Program. This strategy recognizes the need for local programs to coordinate efforts to identify locations needing capital improvements, such as making access to transit more available for persons with disabilities, replacing and expanding fleets, etc. In addition, some recent air quality standards may impact existing non-profit providers who will need to take steps to ensure they are in compliance with these standards.
- Initiate Pilot Program with CTSA and local AAA to provide services to seniors. The local AAA is interested in collaborating with the local CTSA (currently Lake Transit) to test a new approach that would provide services to seniors in outlying communities not currently served by transit.

Recommendations

Program Administration and Oversight

Effective program administration is crucial to ensure the ongoing success of a new program or project. As a first step, a project sponsor or lead agency needs to be designated to manage the project.

For each of the highest ranked strategies, a lead agency is suggested; however, in some cases another agency or organization could serve in this capacity. The lead agency should have the administrative, fiscal and staffing resources necessary to both implement and sustain the program over time. In Lake County, the APC will play a fundamental role in program administration, through the allocation of TDA funds to various programs and services. The APC is also the agency responsible for adoption of the final Coordinated Plan, and as the local CTSA, Lake Transit may also appropriately assume a lead coordination role for some activities.

Decision- Making Process

In addition to staff administering the program or service, a more formal decision-making process will need to be in place to ensure effective program oversight As mentioned, the APC is

responsible to allocate and disburse state transportation funds, and will adopt this Coordinated Plan. The SSTAC advises the APC on various transportation issues and concerns. By definition, the SSTAC is comprised of a wide variety of stakeholders, including users of transit, and those representing the elderly and persons with disabilities. The SSTAC is appropriately the entity, within Lake County, to provide input as new services are considered and/or implemented.

Guidelines for Transportation Provider Agreements and Service Standards

Developing service agreements and monitoring system performance criteria are important task for transportation providers.

Agencies are encouraged to develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating transit and paratransit services.

Access to Jobs and Employment

Providing access to jobs and employment is a critical function of public transportation. For persons without access to an automobile, availability of transit can mean the difference in self sufficiency. There is a need for low-income persons to access employment or training activities. Within Lake County, strategies to provide additional service hours or to improve frequency of Lake Transit ranked highest by program stakeholders. A number of alternatives suggested in this plan and in the TDP would provide new or enhanced commuter service for persons traveling within Lake County, or into Napa or Mendocino Counties.

Volunteer Transportation Programs

There currently are no programs in Lake County utilizing volunteer drivers to provide transportation for clients. Program administration is the key to the successful implementation and ongoing viability of volunteer programs, thus the need for an individual or community agency to be the champion is critical.

Becoming a Medi-Cal NEMT Provider

It is possible for local providers (including public agencies and non-profit organizations) to become providers of non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) under existing Medi-Cal arrangements. Medi-Cal will pay for NEMT only when it is provided by a carrier licensed by Medi-Cal, and only when the individual's medical condition requires transport by a wheelchair van, litter van, or ambulance.

Coordinating/Integrating School Bus and Public Transportation Services Student Transportation in Lake County

In Lake County, there are six school districts. Home-to-school student transportation operations during the academic year is provided by both school-district operated bus fleets and fleets operated by private carriers under contract to some local school districts.

According to the California Department of Education (CDE), there have been sporadic uses of public school buses for transporting the general public, primarily in connection with moving people for special events, such as spectators at a professional golf tournament or marathon

participants. CDE staff is not aware of any instances in California where the general public is being transported along with students on home-to-school routes.

LASSEN COUNTY

Transportation Needs

Unmet Transit Needs

On April 9, 2008 the Lassen County Transportation Commission held a meeting of the Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee and unmet transit needs hearing.

- Participants noted a need for transportation to medical services outside the county for wheelchair users, service to the University of California at Davis, and to Redding and Red Bluff, especially for children.

- In a discussion of commute service to the federal prison, Lassen County Transit Agency staff pointed out that prison shift times are difficult to serve.

- Several participants commented on long wait times for subsidized taxi service.

- Other requests included extending Saturday bus service an additional hour until 4:00 PM, added handrails on the buses, and service to Eagle Lake, which has since been initiated.

The meeting included a review of the Existing Conditions report that was developed for this plan. In the review, the participants identified three priority projects and strategies:

- A mobility management center that would allow all transit service requests to be handled from a centralized location
- Non-emergency medical transportation
- After-hours service for patients needing a trip home following a medical appointment or hospital stay.

Transportation Resources

Lassen Transit Service Agency (LTSA)

Lassen Transit Service Agency (LTSA) provides public transportation services in Lassen County. The Lassen County Transportation Commission (LCTC) was the operator of the public transportation system known as the Lassen Rural Bus (LRB), governed by the LCTC Commissioners. On July 12, 2001, a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) was signed between the County of Lassen and the City of Susanville creating the Lassen Transit Service Agency.

The LTSA is charged with the administration and operation of LRB public transportation services within Lassen County under the jurisdiction of the Lassen County Transportation Commission (LCTC), the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for the County.
The LTSA is currently party to six agreements, as follows:

- The Lassen Rural Bus Operations Agreement

- Maintenance Agreement with the Lassen Senior Services and LRB Operator
- Subsidized Vehicle for Hire Program
- Lassen Senior Services for Senior Transportation Services
- Alturas to Susanville Service Agreement with Modoc County (Sage Stage)
- The Lassen College Agreement

The services provided under these agreements are detailed below.

Lassen Rural Bus (LRB)

The Lassen Rural Bus system began service in July of 1981 using two wheelchair-accessible vehicles to operate one fixed route and Dial-A-Ride service. The LRB system has since grown to a fleet of nine wheelchair-accessible vehicles, providing a fixed route, two commuter routes, a deviated fixed route, a demand-response route, and the Dial-A-Ride service for the elderly and disabled.

Lassen Rural Bus services operate Monday through Friday, with Saturday service limited to reduced hours for the City Route and Dial-A-Ride provided on Saturdays. LRB does not operate on Sundays or on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday, Presidents Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Day After, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Below are descriptions of each service provided by the LRB. Susanville City Fixed Route: Service is provided on the City Route on one-hour headways between 7:00 AM and 6:52 PM, Monday through Friday, and from 8:00 AM to 3:52 PM Saturday. The service area is entirely within the Susanville city limits.

The LRB City Route serves all the major activity centers in Susanville: Wal-Mart, the Sierra Shopping Center, the Lassen Shopping Center, the Susanville Shopping Center, Lassen Senior Services, the Banner Lassen Medical Center, City/County Administrative offices, Meadowview School, Lassen High School, Lassen Community College, and the Safeway Shopping Center.
The route also connects to the Modoc Sage Stage. Through an agreement with Lassen Community College, LRB provides free transportation to students showing a valid authorized student identification card issued by the college administration office..

West County Commuter:

Transit service between Susanville and Westwood is provided on the West County Commuter Route, which provides three runs per day, Monday through Friday. Points served on this route include Devil's Corral, Westwood, Clear Creek, and Hamilton Branch. Within Susanville, stops are scheduled at Main and Gay Street, Lassen College, and Wal-Mart. In addition, passengers may "flag" the bus anywhere along the route as long as it is a safe location.

Morning run departs the Susanville Wal-Mart store at 5:45 AM, arriving in Westwood at 6:26 AM, the Plumas/Lassen transfer point in Hamilton Branch at 6:39 AM, and returning to Westwood at 6:50 AM and Susanville at 7:45 AM. The Mid-Day run departs Susanville at 12:00 PM, arrives in Westwood at 12:50 PM, returning to Susanville at 1:35 PM. The evening run departs Susanville at 5:15 PM arriving in Westwood at 6:05 PM, the Plumas/Lassen transfer point at 6:15 PM, returning to Westwood at 6:30 PM and Susanville at 7:05 PM. This schedule not only allows Lassen College students to arrive on campus in time for the 8:00 AM classes, but also provides ample time for transfers onto the City Fixed Route.

This route provides for connections twice a day with the Plumas Transit "Quincy to Chester" route at the Plumas/Lassen transfer point at Hamilton Branch in Plumas County.

South County Commuter:

The South County Commuter provides direct Monday through Friday service to the Sierra Army Depot located in Herlong. With this bus service, two buses are deployed and depart from Susanville at the eastern portion of the Wal-Mart store parking lot at 5:13 AM arriving at the Sierra Army Depot (SIAD (sigh-ad)) Main Gate at 6:00 AM.

The buses make multiple stops on the base facility and end the AM service upon departure through the Main Gate. The afternoon service begins at the SIAD Main Gate at 5:00 PM reverses the morning run on the facility making multiple stops while on the facility departs the Main Gate making drop offs at Milford, Janesville, Junction US395 & SR 36 Park-N-Ride locations with the last stop at the Susanville Wal-Mart at 6:15 PM. The South County Commuter service does not provide for "flag stopping" anywhere along the route.

East County Route:

The East County route is considered a deviated fixed route where the bus is able to "deviate" off route up to ¾ of a mile off route in order to provide ADA pick-up service. This route begins Monday through Thursday at 6:40 AM in Herlong and serves the eastern portion of the County including the communities of Standish, Litchfield, Leavitt Lake, and Johnstonville. In addition, the East County route provides service to the California and High Desert Correctional Facilities returning to Susanville at Wal-Mart at 7:53 AM and ending at Lassen College at 8:00 AM.

In the afternoon, the East County route departs Lassen College at 3:10 reversing the AM run and completing the run at Herlong at 4:40 PM. On Fridays, the route is designed to start service at Wal-Mart at 8:20 AM to assist Lassen College in reaching swimming and bowling facilities located in Herlong at for classes for special needs students. The route provides service to Johnstonville, Leavitt Lake, Standish, Litchfield, Milford, and Herlong returning to Susanville at 10:50. The route departs Susanville again in the afternoon at Wal-Mart at 1:10 PM returning to Susanville at 3:31 PM. With this route, "Flag Stops" are provided at any safe location for the bus to pull over and stop.

South County to Susanville:

The South County to Susanville route begins in Herlong at the Fort Sage Family Resource Center at 6:30 AM. The route serves the communities of Herlong, and communities along the US 395 corridor such as Doyle, Milford, and Janesville ending at the Northeastern Rural Health Clinic in Susanville at 8:04 AM. Afternoon return service begins at the Northeastern Rural Health Clinic in Susanville at 3:00 PM and ends service in Herlong at 4:40 PM. This route provides for "Flag Stops" at any safe location for the bus to pull over and stop as well.

Eagle Lake Route:

The Eagle Lake Route is a newly established route (Summer 2008). This route is considered a "Demand Response" route due to the fact that the route is only provided upon demand and is available twice a month on the first and third Thursdays. In order to activate the route, a person would have to contact the LRB office 24 hours in advance of the scheduled service date and request service. If no one calls in, the route will not run. Lassen Dial-A-Ride: Dial-A-Ride offers

door-to-door individualized service throughout Susanville for the elderly and disabled for $1.75 per ride, or for LTSA taxi coupons. People 60 years of age or older or those qualifying as ADA eligible can use this service. They use one 30 foot bus seating 24 people. For doctor's appointments, they request a 24-hour notice due to the 30-minute wait for the bus.

Modoc Sage Stage

The Modoc Transportation Authority operates the "Sage Stage" transit program, which includes an intercity route between Alturas and Reno via Susanville, operated on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday each week. This route serves downtown Reno (providing connections to Greyhound and Amtrak), the Reno/Tahoe International Airport, as well as medical facilities, and is scheduled to allow passengers a few hours in Reno to accomplish their trip purposes in a single day.

The LTSA has a contract with Modoc Transportation Authority for the vehicle to stop in Susanville, providing Lassen County passengers intercity transit service to Reno and Alturas. The vehicle stops at Wal-Mart at 9:00 AM en route to Reno, and 3:30 PM on the return.

Subsidized Vehicle for Hire Program/Susanville Taxi Service Barely Enterprises, Inc., owners of Susanville Taxi Service, operate the Subsidized Vehicle for Hire Program through an agreement with the LTSA and Lassen Senior Services.

The program is designed to provide subsidized transportation to seniors and people with disabilities at a level above and beyond what can be provided by the Lassen Rural Bus Dial-A-Ride service. The service is available primarily within the city limits, as well as portions of the County. The service is available 18 hours per day, Monday through Sunday, to eligible patrons holding coupons. Eligibility requirements include a disability that renders a person unable to operate a vehicle or a being at least 60 years of age. Family members may accompany the eligible patron at no extra charge.

The contractor is responsible for maintaining a 20-minute response time during non-peak hours, and a 30-minute response time during peak hours (or risk a penalty).

Social Service Transportation Providers

In addition to the services offered by LTSA, there are a number of transportation services offered by social service providers. Most of the services have eligibility requirements stipulating that passengers must be older adults, disabled, or low-income.

Lassen Senior Services

Lassen Senior Services (LSS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping the senior citizens of Lassen County to live more productive and independent lives. To accomplish this goal, LSS operates many services for seniors, including transportation.

Transportation is provided for seniors from their homes to the nutrition site (senior center), as well as for medical appointments, shopping, and errands to the post office or bank. For those seniors whose specialized medical appointments are in Reno, LSS offers service twice weekly on Tuesday and Thursday.

Lassen County Health and Human Services

The Lassen County Health & Human Services Department coordinates transportation for multiple County departments, including mental health, alcohol and drug treatment. They provide any social-service-related transportation, arranged by the case worker. They use County-owned vehicles driven by four full-time and four part-time employees.

Lassen County Veteran's Services Office

The Lassen County Veteran's Services office provides a wide array of services for veterans and their dependents, including assisting with service-related claims for pensions, compensation and education, health benefits, and applications for VA funds in lieu of local welfare grants. The office uses a nine-passenger van to transport veterans once or twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) from Susanville to the Veteran's Medical Center in Reno, and also goes to Reno from Alturas on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Drivers are AMVETS volunteers with no special license. The vehicle is provided by AMVETS, and the Veteran's Administration pays for fuel and maintenance. Pickups are at various locations as needed.

Crossroads Ministries

Crossroads Ministries is a church-affiliated non-profit organization providing services to needy individuals who request it, including transportation. Crossroads operates two six-passenger vans and makes approximately 40 to 50 passenger trips each week, including approximately two to three per month to Reno for medical appointments. The clientele is primarily very low income and many are disabled as well. While the vans do not have wheelchair lifts, fold-up wheelchairs are regularly accommodated. Crossroads estimates that 90% of the trips are for medical appointments.

Crossroads purchases bus passes for clients on occasion, and may assist individuals who are trying to return home to another area (often inmate visitors). Crossroads provides vouchers for Greyhound services, and is subsequently charged by Greyhound when the vouchers are redeemed. Crossroads also arranges for individuals to use the "Mail Truck" (Mount Lassen Motor Transit) to travel to and from Red Bluff.

Far Northern Regional Center/North Valley Services/Lassen Life Skills

Far Northern Regional Center (FNRC) funds transportation for persons with developmental disabilities. Service is provided by LRB and on two vehicles owned by North Valley Services. Clients of North Valley Services and Lassen Life Skills receive unlimited trips on both the fixed route and Dial-A-Ride for a set fee of $60 per client per month, paid for by FNRC. The number of clients served by this program varies monthly, averaging approximately 35 clients, equating to an average of approximately $2,100 revenue income each month for LRB. Staff at North Valley Services and Lassen Life Skills report that they have no issues with the Lassen Rural Bus public transit system.

Susanville Indian Rancheria

The Susanville Indian Rancheria (SIR) is home to 519 members of the Paiute, Maidu, Pit River, and Washoe tribes, with 1,417 members in California. For FY 2006 they received $99,000 through the FTA Tribal Transit Program to use, in part, to purchase a medium-sized bus.

SIR provides medical trips to Red Bluff and Redding for tribal members only, on an as needed basis with an on-call driver. Operating costs of $30,000 a year are paid out of their own funds.

Privately Provided Services

Susanville Taxi

Susanville Taxi Service (previously operated as Sierra Express Taxi Service), operates both subsidized and non-subsidized service in Susanville; non-subsidized service includes operation of the "Susanville Express" which provides daily trips from Susanville to Sacramento. The van leaves Susanville between 8:00 and 9:00 AM from Hart's Café, arriving at the L Street bus depot in Sacramento at around 12:30 PM, and directly returning to Susanville to arrive between 4:30 and 5:00 PM. The round trip cost is $90 (the return ticket is good for up to 30 days). Susanville Taxi also provides a service that takes parolees from the California Correctional Center (CCC), the High Desert Prison, and the County Jail to the Sacramento airport and to the Greyhound station. They use 15 passenger vans, and sometimes take two. Around 25 non-parolees use the "back trip" to visit family or prisoners in Susanville.

Mt. Lassen Motor Transit – also known as "The Mail Truck"

Mt. Lassen Motor Transit, based in Red Bluff, offers one round trip (on the contracted U.S. Mail delivery truck) Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday between Red Bluff and Susanville. The mail truck leaves Red Bluff at 8:00 AM and arrives in Susanville at approximately 1:00 PM. The return trip leaves Susanville at 2:00 PM and arrives in Red Bluff at approximately 4:45 PM. The bus stop in Red Bluff is located at the Sunshine Food and Deli, (also the Greyhound bus stop) at 22700 Antelope Blvd. The designated stop in Susanville is at the Lassen Senior Services office, located at 1700 Sunkist Drive, with additional stops in Westwood and Chester.

Gaps

Gaps in Service Connections:

Several respondents talked about the difficult connections from Susanville to Redding. Currently riders take LRB and connect to Plumas Transit at Hamilton Branch. That route goes south to Quincy, where they transfer to a route going back north and west to Chico. In Chico, they are dropped at the Greyhound stop where they can get a bus to Redding. However, the route to Chico only runs on Wednesdays, and is not timed to meet the Greyhound to Redding.

The other alternative is to take the mail truck from Susanville to Red Bluff and transfer there, but once in Redding, there is no way to get back to Susanville that late in the day, so travelers must spend the night. The Susanville Indian Rancheria (SIR) has expressed interest in expanding their service to go to Redding through Red Bluff. This service may be eligible for funding through 5311(f), which will pay for both capital and operating expenses.

LTSA has received some comments about adding service to the federal prison in Herlong. While irregular end times for shifts can make bus service difficult, commuter service to the federal prison is included in the Transit Development Plan as a "potential future improvement."
Equipment.

Lassen Senior Services has trouble hiring drivers and finding the money to pay for vehicles. They try to keep their vehicles, which are maintained by LRB, for at least three years. They

need a wheelchair-accessible vehicle, and lost a van which was based in Doyle and provided service between Doyle and Susanville; there are several homebound people in Doyle who would benefit from being picked up.

In general, Lassen Senior Services' vehicles are old and need to be replaced.

Specific needs: These specific gaps in service were also noted:

- Special Olympics athletes depend on volunteers for transportation to practices. Sometimes this is difficult because of insurance issues. The athletes are non-driving adults. LRB takes them to the larger competitions, but not the smaller ones.
- The seniors have coupons for the Susanville taxi service, but riders sometimes wait up to two hours for the taxi to arrive. Because of wait times for the taxi service, the Senior Center staff sometimes gives people rides to their appointments.

Medical Transportation Services

Most specialized medical care is only available outside Lassen County; patients traveling to specialists outside of Susanville are most often referred to Reno, NV (48%) or Redding in Shasta County (14%), with some going to Chico (Butte County), Fall River Mills and Sacramento. Service to Redding is limited, and transportation to Reno is currently provided five days a week; three days are provided by the Modoc Sage Stage, and two days are provided by the Lassen Senior Services for seniors and, when space is available, the disabled.

While many travelers have the same destinations, the great distances between residents can prove a barrier to coordinating services.

Several social service agencies provide transportation to medical facilities within and outside of Lassen County. Respondents indicated a need to bring people from Family Resource Centers in rural communities into Susanville to shop and for medical appointments.

Barriers

Major Barriers to Coordination of Services

Challenges to coordinating services include the great distances between residents living in more rural areas, and difficulty transporting certain populations with other people, such as children in the Child Protective Services system, parolees, and seriously ill or disabled travelers who need more assistance.

Some agency transportation is not on a regular schedule, which also makes coordinating with others difficult. Other issues include limitations of facilities that would prevent adding services now operated by other agencies, limitations to agency missions that would conflict with service clients of other agencies, and limited institutional and managerial capacity.

Priorities

High Priority Strategies

Five high-priority strategies emerge from the discussion, the voting, and analysis:

- Coordination or consolidation of demand responsive services: The highest priority strategy is some form of coordination or consolidation of the multiple demand responsive services that operate in Susanville and the surrounding area. This may involve technology or, if administrative and institutional issues can be resolved, it could involve consolidation under Lassen Senior Services.
- Medical transportation: Medical transportation to Redding or Chico, and to some extent to Red Bluff and Sacramento also emerged as a high priority.
- Wheelchair accessible vehicles: Lassen Senior Services is operating vehicles that were not originally designed for passenger service and that are approaching the end of their useful life. Additional wheelchair accessible vehicles may be needed as well.
- Coordinated maintenance: This strategy did not receive a lot of votes, but it is a very low cost strategy with the opportunity to produce significant benefits if issues related to the capacity of the LRB maintenance facility can be resolved.
- Vehicle replacement for all services: This strategy was not specifically identified in the outreach process, except for the LSS vans, but a sustainable vehicle replacement plan is the most cost-effective general strategy for vehicle acquisition, and is necessary for continued operation of all needed services.

Other Strategies

Based on the evaluation, there are four other strategies:

- Added Lassen Rural Bus service for commute trips to the Federal Correctional Institution in Herlong: While this strategy was popular, practical issues make it difficult to implement. LTSA is currently working with the prison to modify shift times so workers could use existing LRB service.
- Mobility management, possibly including the various components of the Lassen County Department of Health and Human Services, is viewed as important by many stakeholders. To some extent this strategy overlaps with coordination of demand responsive services (and could be an outgrowth of such an effort). In addition identifying a lead agency may be a challenge.
- Volunteer coordination to help address insurance concerns for after-hours hospital releases and Special Olympics athletes.
- Service from Family Resource Centers into Susanville.

Recommendations

The first strategy would address overlaps among three demand responsive services in and around Susanville. Much discussion at the public workshop focused on technology solutions such as automatic vehicle location and other efforts that would help each system provide a back up to the other. Alternatively, it may be possible to consolidate operations by transferring the Dial-a-Ride now operated by LRB to Lassen Senior Services (LSS). This plan would bring two of the three services together and would help LRB implement plans to add a bus to its Susanville fixed-route service.

If efforts to address passenger concerns about the subsidized taxi program are not successful, funding used for that program might be used to expand the combined Dial-a-Ride/Senior program, thus bring all of the demand responsive services together.

A service that would provide medical trips to destinations other than Reno is considered a high priority. Two organizations are interested in operating such a service. The Susanville Indian Rancheria (SIR) currently provides medical trips to Red Bluff and Redding for tribal members only, on an as needed basis with an on-call driver.

Replacing the aging non-wheelchair accessible vehicles currently operated by LSS needs to be done in order to address liability issues and to ensure continued reliable service. In general, a sustainable vehicle replacement plan is the most cost cost-effective strategy for vehicle acquisition for all public transportation services, and is necessary for continued operation of needed services.

Coordinated maintenance is a continuation and expansion of existing arrangements that help organizations like Lassen Senior Services provide service. Expanding this arrangement to Susanville Indian Rancheria would be an important element of helping SIR expand its service and make it available to the general public.

Mobility Management

There is considerable interest in the concept of a mobility manager to increase efficiency in using the transportation resources, both public and private, in Lassen County, and to reduce duplication of services, such as trips to medical facilities. The County has expressed interest in participating in a coordinated service from which they could purchase service instead of providing it.

Potential Lead Agency

A key step in developing a mobility manager in Lassen County would be identifying a lead agency. Possibilities include existing organizations or a new entity formed specifically for this purpose. A lead agency should be one with the necessary organizational and administrative skills, with a broad mission to serve multiple populations and trip types. In Lassen County, the agency that currently best meets this description is the Lassen Transit Service Agency. Potentially a new entity could be formed, perhaps with County staffing, based on a multi-party agreement among all the organizations with an interest in coordinating.

Other Implementation Issues

Program Administration

Effective program administration is a crucial factor in ensuring the ongoing success of a new program or project. As a first step, a project sponsor or lead agency needs to be designated to manage the project.

For each of the highest ranked strategies, a lead agency is suggested; however, in some cases multiple entities could serve in this capacity. The lead agency should have the administrative,

fiscal and staffing resources needed to carry out the program on an on-going basis; successfully applying for grant funds is just the first step. Organizations that would have administrative responsibility, include the Lassen Transit Services Agency, Lassen Senior Services, and possibly Susanville Indian Rancheria. In the case of LSS and SIR, LTSA would provide assistance and support.

Service Agreements and Standards

Developing service agreements with transportation providers and monitoring system performance are important tasks for transportation providers. Agencies should develop and adopt a set of measures and standards that can be monitored to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating services. Service agreements should include basic monthly and year-to-date operating and performance data.

Access to Jobs and Employment

Many major employers in Susanville can be reached using Lassen Rural Bus, including Wal-Mart, County and City offices, medical centers, Lassen Community College, and the Diamond Mountain Casino. The South County Commuter route provides service to the Sierra Army Depot. LTSA has received comments requesting improved commute connections into Susanville using the South County Commuter, including added stops in Susanville and an added run in the evening that would enable south county residents to return home from a job in Susanville. Similar service was previously discontinued due to lack of ridership, but renewed interest due to rising gas prices could make this service viable again if funding can be found.

Volunteer Transportation

Several programs in Lassen County use volunteers including Lassen Senior Services, the AMVETS van service to Reno, and Crossroads Ministries. Recruiting and retaining volunteers were not specifically identified as issues in the outreach process for this plan, but these are concerns in all transportation programs that use volunteers. Availability of volunteers has been a constraint on the ability of Lassen Senior Services to provide back-up service when people have problems with the taxi service, and it has been a problem for the Special Olympics in arranging transportation for its athletes.

School Transportation

The Lassen High School district operates school bus service for its students and also for Susanville School District. Several smaller school districts are believed to operate their own service. These districts are not close enough to Susanville for joint operation to be feasible for them. The outreach process and the review of recent plans and unmet needs hearings did not find significant issues with regard to school transportation in general.

Facility Needs

The LRB Maintenance facility is considered inadequate for existing needs and not able to accommodate additional needs for proposed maintenance services for the Susanville Indian Rancheria and for North Valley Services.

The December 2006 Transit Development Plan calls for adding a second maintenance bay. However, subsequent discussions have identified an opportunity to improve facilities using

property adjacent to the existing property. This would permit construction of a drive-through maintenance facility in alignment with the existing bus washer, with the capacity to serve anticipated needs. Lassen Senior Services has adequate parking for its vehicles, although it is dependent on LRB for maintenance.

MARIPOSA COUNTY

Transportation Needs and Gaps (Combined)

Unmet Needs

Transit Accessibility

Difficulty accessing transit services is an important transportation gap for many in the county. Factors contributing to poor transit access include the distance of residents' homes from bus routes, hilly terrain and/or poor quality roads. One stakeholder noted that in some portions of the county, residents must ask a family member or a neighbor for a ride to a location where they can access a bus.

Discontinuous pedestrian facilities and a lack of accessible pedestrian infrastructure were identified as mobility barriers and potential safety issues. While continuous pedestrian infrastructure is not expected given the rural nature of the county, several stakeholders noted that it can be difficult or unsafe to get around as a pedestrian, even in the places like the county seat of Mariposa. Sidewalks are not contiguous, even in the central shopping district. This can inhibit transit access, particularly for people using mobility devices such as wheelchairs. Additionally, not all transit vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts or low floors.

Availability/Quality of Information

Much of the information about transit services in Mariposa County is provided by word-of-mouth. Mariposa County Transit does a good job of distributing transit information to seniors through the senior services center; less effort is made to market the service to the general population. Additional stakeholder feedback related to the availability and quality of transit information in Mariposa County included the following:

- One stakeholder commented that she was unaware bus service existed in Mariposa County until she saw a vehicle near her home.
- Mariposa County Transit information is not widely distributed, but the service is included on the 966-RIDE telephone line. Mariposa County Transit does not offer any information online.
- Although YARTS has fare and schedule information available online, not everyone in the county has access to the internet.
- Stakeholders suggested that the media (such as TV, radio and community newspapers) should be utilized to present information.
- Transit information in Spanish would be desirable.

Limited Capacity

With increasing gasoline prices and many people turning to transit services in rural areas, additional capacity for YARTS may be warranted in the future.

Medi-Trans sometimes becomes overbooked and must deny rides to callers. Reliability is reduced when customers cannot depend on transportation due to service capacity. Additional vehicles, improved scheduling efficiency or increased coordination with other services or organizations could help to alleviate this problem.

Aging Population

Funding for Operations and Capital Needs Funding is often available to purchase vehicles but not to operate them. For example, an agency must operate a vehicle purchased with 5310 funds for at least 20 hours per week.

An agency with a small staff is often unable to find individuals to operate their vehicles, or is unable to pay expenses for the day-to-day operation and maintenance of vehicles due to limited funding. Furthermore, with increased gasoline prices, several agencies indicated that controlling costs has become more challenging.

Transportation providers in Mariposa County emphasize that often transit programs are easy to start, but difficult to sustain.

The vast distances traveled between some of the origins and destinations, as described above, and the lack of transportation options to connect origins and destinations are the factors that lead to most of the gaps or unmet needs in Mariposa County.

Although regular fixed-route and dial-a-ride service coverage has expanded over the years, some areas of Mariposa County are not accessible by transit and most communities, especially those not served by YARTS, have only basic lifeline transit services

Lack of Service

Many areas of Mariposa County are only provided with lifeline services. Weekday service on Mariposa County Transit is limited and no service is provided on weekends. Dial-a-ride service from the communities of Bear Valley, Hornitos, and Bootjack to Mariposa is only available one day per week. Transportation between Mariposa and the northern part of the county is extremely limited, with service only available during select hours on Thursdays.

While both Mariposa County Transit and YARTS provide transit service between Mariposa and Merced, Mariposa County Transit provides only one round trip per week. YARTS provides only four daily trips from Merced to Mariposa and at most six daily trips from Mariposa to Merced. In addition, YARTS provides at most six daily roundtrips between Mariposa and Yosemite National Park. Since runs are typically only scheduled in the mornings and evenings, passengers often have long waits for return trips.

Mariposa County has one taxi provider at the present time, but also has a history of failed taxi services that were unable to operate profitably or with adequate insurance. Although Sierra Taxi provides service throughout the county, many stakeholders were not aware of the service and some said that more taxi services are needed, but they are difficult to provide given the rural geography and limited road network.

Lack of Vehicles

Many social services organizations have only one vehicle, limiting the transportation services that can be provided. For example, when Head Start's only vehicle is being used for field trips, staff report that they have nothing else to provide needed services. Other organizations have no vehicles, but have clients who require transportation. For example, John C Fremont Hospital has no vehicle to provide transportation to patients. However, hospital staff indicated they would like to purchase a wheelchair-accessible van to provide transportation between the hospital and a patient's home, particularly for people who used skilled nursing services and who are incapable of taking care of themselves. The main limitation to purchasing additional vehicles is limited funding. Better information about the availability of grants and how to apply for them could be very helpful for small agencies in Mariposa County. Coordination of existing vehicle resources may also be an option for reducing the need for additional vehicles.

Transportation Resources

Public Transit Operators Mariposa County Transit

Mariposa County Transit, also informally known as Mari-Go, provides general public dial-a-ride service for Mariposa County. It is a curb-to-curb service with designated routes and service areas on specific days. Riders must call ahead to arrange for a ride..Dial-a-ride service is provided within the town of Mariposa, within two miles of the Mariposa County Transit office, between 10:30 AM and 1:00 PM, four days a week (Tuesday, the bus is in Merced). Regular transit routes operate five days a week, and service options vary each day.

Mariposa County Transit operates two buses: a South County bus and a North County bus. The South County bus provides service to the communities between El Portal and the Mariposa/Merced County line, primarily along Highway 140 and Highway 49. The North County bus covers the communities in the northern part of the county, including Coulterville, Greeley Hill and Groveland. On Tuesdays the Northside bus provides service from Coulterville to Sonora, located in Tuolumne County. Transportation between Mariposa and the Coulterville/Greeley Hill area is provided if arrangements are made in advance.

Mariposa County Transit also travels to the Tuolumne Adult Day Heath Care (ADHC) Center in Sonora on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, however this service is only available for ADHC clients who live in Mariposa County. Mariposa County Transit is supported by funds from the FTA 5311 program, TDA (specifically, LTF), AAA, the Central Valley Regional Center, and farebox revenues. In particular, AAA provides funding for transportation service for seniors, including the service to the ADHC center in Sonora.

The Mariposa County Transit fleet consists of three buses, each equipped with wheelchair lifts, two vans with ramps providing wheelchair access, and two autos. Medi-Trans Mariposa County Transit also operates a medical dial-a-ride service, called Medi-Trans, for seniors (60 or over) and veterans. The service operates from locations in Mariposa County to medical offices in northern and central California. Although many of these trips are to appointments in the city of Merced, trips are occasionally made to Fresno, as well. In the past, trips were made as far as Modesto and San Francisco, but due to limited funding, Medi-Trans can no longer afford to make these longer trips. Medi-Trans will carry non-seniors, such as family members of riders, if space is available and passengers are picked up in the same vicinity as senior riders.

There are different fares for local trips and for trips to Merced and Fresno. Medi-Trans uses the two low-floor vans from the Mariposa County Transit fleet. The service is funded through the VA

Hospital, donations and TDA. Dispatch is managed out of the Senior Center as a joint operation with the general public dial-a-ride.

Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)

The Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) began running regional transit buses in May of 2000, serving communities in the counties of Mariposa, Merced and Mono. YARTS provides service to activity centers in Yosemite National Park and connects with Yosemite shuttles including the free Valley Shuttle.

Service levels vary to meet seasonal demand, as well as different scheduling needs required for different days of the week. YARTS has two core routes. The first runs along Highway 120 through Yosemite National Park and into Mammoth Lakes in Mono County. The second route is the one that serves Mariposa County's communities, running along Highway 140 from Yosemite National Park, through El Portal, Midpines, Mariposa and Catheys Valley to Merced. The two routes share a common stop at the Yosemite Visitor Center.

Yosemite National Park employees make up 35% to 40% of YARTS ridership. The park has Commuter Choice for employees, which allows employees to ride without paying a fare.

Social Service Transportation Providers

Transportation is additionally provided by a range of social service agencies serving clients or consumers in Mariposa County. While some agencies provide transportation directly, others arrange for it on behalf of their clients or consumers by contracting with other agencies or providers, or subsidizing transit fares. Most of the agencies listed below have a particular focus on the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, or low-income individuals; however, some agencies may serve a broader group.

Area 12 Agency on Aging

The Area 12 Agency on Aging is a Joint Powers Agreement between Mariposa, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne and Alpine counties that provides funding to community senior services providers and administers several direct service programs. Area 12 subsidizes transportation for older adults through the provision of gas vouchers funded through the Older Americans Act (OAA) and the Multi-purpose Senior Services Program (for medical transportation).

Mariposa County Department of Human Services

Human Services encompasses both Social Services and Behavioral Health. Within Social Services are Child Protective Services (CPS), Adult Services and Eligibility. Social Services vehicles are mostly automobiles for use by social workers and others on staff, but clients are occasionally transported using one of these vehicles. CPS has six vehicles to transport children in protective services, consisting of one Safari van, one Chevrolet Impala, one Chevy Blazer, two Jeep Liberty SUVs, and one Jeep Moreno.

Children in CPS include foster children and detained children, many of whom are low income. Any of the fourteen CPS staff members are qualified to drive the van. Children are transported as needed, but typically there is at least one trip per day.

Heartland Opportunity Center

Heartland Opportunity Center provides services to adults with developmental disabilities. Currently all members of the program qualify as low income, and none are over 60 years old. Heartland transports program members between their homes, the center, various recreational programs, etc. The center has a daily transportation schedule, with five morning routes in which patients are picked-up at their homes starting at 8:10 AM, in addition to five evening routes returning patients to their homes. The routes use five vehicles: two 8-passenger vans, one 10-passenger van, one 6-passenger pick-up truck, and one 6-passenger van. None of the vehicles are wheelchair accessible, but the center has access to a wheelchair-equipped van at the Madera center if needed. Passengers are typically transported within Mariposa County, but are occasionally taken to programs in Madera County. On average, the vehicles travel 4,000 miles per month and the center currently employs eleven drivers.

Mariposa County Unified School District

Mariposa County Unified School District provides bus service to K-12 students living within the district. As much as fifty percent of students in the district ride the bus to school, and very few walk. Typically the students are transported to schools within the district, but four students are transported to schools in Merced and Madera Counties.

The district has 37 standard yellow school buses, which transport students along 18 regular routes and six special needs routes. The buses typically operate weekdays between 6:00 and 8:00 AM for the trip to school and from 2:00 to 5:00 PM for the return trip. The buses travel approximately 33,000 miles per month or 400,000 miles per year. The Mariposa County Unified School District provides funding for the vehicles and employs four full-time drivers and eight part-time drivers.

Mariposa Head Start

Mariposa Head Start is a nonprofit organization that provides pre-school services to low-income children age five and younger to prepare them for kindergarten. Mariposa Head Start provides transportation to the school using a van (with car seats built in) that has room for fourteen children plus one parent. The van follows a route based on a subscription service and picks up students at established stops within Mariposa County. The transportation program is supported by federal funds through the Head Start program. The van transports students to the Head Start program from August through April. During the summer months the van is used for the migrant Head Start program in Madera County.

Mariposa Indian Health Clinic

The Mariposa Indian Health Clinic is a nonprofit organization with a goal of ensuring that Native American elders receive health care services. The clinic provides transportation services for Native American elders primarily for medical appointments, but occasionally for other purposes, on a demand-response basis. Most trips are within Mariposa County, but at times trips are provided to neighboring counties for specific types of medical appointments. Trips are provided using two vehicles: a wheelchair accessible Chevrolet van with room for ten passengers, and a Ford Bronco with room for five passengers. Transportation is funded through the Mariposa, Amador, Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties Health Board, Inc. The clinic employs two drivers.

Mercy Medical Transport

Mercy Medical Transport serves the emergency transportation needs of Mariposa County, using five ambulances that provide both basic life support and advanced life support functions. Everyone is eligible for the service including both Medi-Cal patients and people who pay out-of pocket or have private insurance. Patients are primarily picked up in Mariposa County, including Yosemite National Park, and are usually taken to John C. Fremont Hospital in Mariposa, although some patients are taken to hospitals in other areas including Fresno and Modesto, and sometimes as far as San Francisco. Mercy Medical Transport has a total of fifteen paramedics who take turns driving the ambulances.

Mountain Crisis Services

Mountain Crisis Services is a nonprofit organization that provides shelter and support services to domestic violence victims and their dependents. The center has a seven-passenger Chrysler Town and Country van that is used to satisfy the various transportation needs of the victims, such as transport to the shelter after an incident, to and from court, transfer to another county for safe housing, medical trips, or mediation services out of the county. Mountain Crisis Services has one main volunteer who typically drives, however all nine staff members at the center are qualified to drive the van.

Thumbs Up!

Thumbs Up! is a community integration program for individuals with developmental disabilities in Tuolumne and Mariposa Counties. The organization's goal is to help its clients live as independently as possible. The Central Valley Regional Center provides funding for Thumbs Up! to transport its clients (those who are unable to use public transportation on their own) between their homes and the Thumbs Up! program. Thumbs Up! also transports program participants to activities and outings in and outside of the county. The organization's vehicle fleet includes one 16-passenger van and two six-passenger vans. Two drivers are used to transport clients between their homes and the program in the morning and the evening, and program instructors drive the vehicles during the day.

Other Transportation Services

Juniper Crest Airport Shuttle

The Juniper Crest Airport Shuttle provides on-demand service to airports in Fresno, Sacramento, the San Francisco Bay Area, Modesto and Stockton, as well as small general aviation airports in the mountains and Central Valley. The shuttle is included on the County's 966-RIDE "one-stop" phone directory. Service is provided using one 6-passenger Ford van.

Taxi Services

Sierra Taxi and Limousine provides taxi service throughout Mariposa County and beyond the county line as needed. The small family-run business has limited capacity, but has expressed interest in providing additional service if taxi subsidies can be provided.

Barriers

Barriers to Coordination

A number of barriers to coordination exist. These are either existing or perceived challenges that have resulted in the various agencies in Mariposa County not coordinating as extensively as they otherwise could. One of these barriers is the lack of a sufficient number of vehicles, with some agencies reporting they do not have the resources they need for their own clients. As a result, they do not have the capacity to coordinate with other agencies.

Several stakeholders talked about spatial limitations and temporal limitations in Mariposa County, which can also be identified as barriers to coordination. A small population and low ridership on some existing services is a barrier because it provides little incentive to coordinate services with other agencies. Even some of Mariposa County Transit's services have barely enough ridership to support the service.

Another barrier that was identified in Mariposa County is the lack of funding for transportation programs. With insufficient funding, there is competition for the limited funds that are available, and agencies do not perceive that they will necessarily benefit by sharing their knowledge of different funding sources with the other agencies that are also seeking funds. There is a limited amount of funding available for rural transportation projects throughout the state, so not all projects may be approved. Clarifying funding requirements and providing clear information and instruction on how to apply for various funding sources for which agencies may be eligible would provide a useful benefit for many agencies.

A lack of centralized and comprehensive information was also noted as a barrier. Mariposa County Transit's information can be confusing to understand and YARTS service is revised regularly. The lack of centralized information means there is no single source for individuals seeking to find transportation options, eligibility requirements, fares and service hours, nor is there a regional directory providing information on transportation services available in the region beyond Mariposa County.

Program eligibility and trip purpose restrictions also inhibit coordination. Many of the existing services are available to only subsets of the three target populations. As a result, some populations, especially individuals with low incomes, have limited access to the transportation resources. Other transportation programs are limited to taking people to/from medical appointments, or only to specific programs. Organizations have specific missions, vehicle requirements and insurance requirements, which makes it difficult to coordinate with other agencies.

Priorities

High Priority Strategies

The recommended service is a result of a collaborative effort between Mariposa County Transit and John C. Fremont Clinic to offer service and two days each month and coordinate medical appointments. Currently, service is offered the first and second Thursday of each month, meaning individuals with medical appointments in Greeley Hill can use the service only for an occasional or monthly appointment. The bus operates back and forth between Greeley Hill and Coulterville, as needed, allowing riders to travel not only to medical appointments at the clinic, but also to limited shopping, laundry and recreational activities in either of the two communities. Rides must be requested at least one day in advance. The Clinic holds open appointment slots on days the service is operating to allow people to use the bus to access the appointments.

Although the recommended strategy is to offer the service one day per week, one-day service is currently operated only two weeks each month. This may limit the ability of individuals who would require weekly appointments to use transit. Nevertheless, as a pilot program, the very limited service two days per month should provide an indication of the service's likelihood for longer-term success.

Some stakeholders noted that such a service should be actively marketed. Distribution of flyers to households in Coulterville and Greeley Hill via utility bills, postings at key activity centers, and through advertising at the clinic are some of the opportunities Mariposa County Transit has to inform the community and build ridership on the service. Once riders begin to use the service, they should be surveyed about their preferences for the service, and whether additional service is warranted.

Workshop participants indicated that while seniors often receive information about transit by word of mouth through the senior services center, there is still a need to increase awareness about transit services among other populations, including individuals with disabilities and people with limited incomes. One cost-effective way to reach these people is by piggybacking onto an existing information and referral service such as Community Link, which is run by Mariposa County Safe Families.8 Since Community Link is already providing information to the public on a variety of county services, it could concurrently inform these people about complementary transit options.

This strategy proposes to expand Community Link's information and referral services in the area of transportation, and then to advertise and market Community Link as a source of transportation information.

Bringing together the array of transportation providers and agency staff at a transportation workshop is a recommended strategy to provide information via word-of-mouth. The workshop could include travel training information, materials from each of the transportation programs that serve the residents of Mariposa County, a roundtable on transportation coordination issues (and opportunities to implement elements of this plan), and could even feature discussions on grant applications for joint vehicle or software purchases.

The quarterly workshop would logically be held in conjunction with the quarterly SSTAC meeting. After the SSTAC meeting is adjourned, participants could be invited to share information about their transportation programs, identify opportunities to work together, and discuss how they can better service the residents of Mariposa County.
Vehicle replacement is critical for the continued operation of public and agency transportation service. As vehicles age, they become less reliable and have higher operating costs because they are less efficient and require more maintenance. All transportation providers must replace vehicles, and some must expand their fleets to address higher levels of demand.

Organizations and agencies for which this would be an appropriate strategy include Mariposa County Transit, YARTS, the Central Valley Regional Center (for its contract providers), and other human service transportation providers that address the needs of older adults, low-income residents and people with disabilities. Implementation of this strategy entails a collaborative approach among local human service transportation providers and/or sponsors to develop a county-based or regional program to replace or expand capital equipment.

Medium Priority Strategies

Many people, including individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with limited incomes, have mobility issues that are not being addressed with the limited amount of transit service currently available in the county. Providing additional transit service would improve these residents' access to life-enhancing opportunities, such as job training or other social services.

This strategy proposes expanding Mariposa County Transit service so that it operates one additional day per week in some communities. Service to and from YARTS stops should be timed with the YARTS schedule in order to minimize passengers' waiting time..

The County's only hospital, John C. Fremont Hospital in Mariposa, has no vehicle to provide transportation to patients. This strategy recommends that the Hospital apply for a grant (e.g., FTA Section 5310, FTA Section 5317) to purchase a vehicle, which would allow the hospital to transport patients between their homes and the hospital when necessary. Stakeholders suggested that this service be targeted at those patients who are unable to take care of themselves, use skilled nursing, and do not have any other means of transportation to the hospital.

Additional, affordable taxi service is needed throughout the county, according to stakeholders, but is difficult to provide given the rural geography and road network. Additional taxi service could be developed through a taxi subsidy program.

Many seniors and persons with disabilities are homebound and may be uncomfortable scheduling individual trips through Mariposa County Transit for special events such as the 4th of July festivities, Summer Music in the Arts Park, annual Flea Market, County Fair, or Coulterville Easter Egg Hunt. Group trips provide both a social outlet to spend some time with others via an uncomplicated prescheduled trip. This promotes independence and may encourage some hesitant Mariposa County Transit users to make greater use of the system. Riders would be able to call ahead to schedule a space on the bus(es), which would provide special public service to anyone seeking to attend a special event.

Private automobiles offer an extremely flexible and convenient means of transportation to those who can afford them. With access to a private vehicle, a person can travel at any time of day, including evening and weekend hours when transit service is typically unavailable or infrequent, and to any destination, even those that are remote and would not typically be served by transit.

This strategy proposes to subsidize car ownership for certain county residents, particularly those with low-incomes who participate in certain types of job training or educational programs, for whom an automobile is the only practical means of transportation to employment, training, or other critical services. Automobile subsidies proposed as part of this strategy include the provision of subsidized gas vouchers and a low-cost auto loan program.

Subsidized gas vouchers are commonly used to ease the costs of automobile travel and enhance transportation options for low-income residents. For instance, the Area 12 Agency on Aging already subsidizes transportation for older adults through the provision of gas vouchers funded through the Older Americans Act (OAA) and the Multi-purpose Senior Services Program (for medical transportation). The Salvation Army also provides gas vouchers for travel to medical appointments or in the case of family emergencies.

Low-cost auto loans provide a number of benefits far beyond transportation. In addition to receiving financial management training, recipients have the opportunity to build good credit for themselves so that they can become increasingly financially stable. Some auto loan programs even provide checking accounts for recipients so that they can avoid expensive check cashing services.

Low Priority Strategies

Stakeholders suggested there would be value in automated trip planning software, so agencies could review when and where the various transportation programs operating through Mariposa County would be available. This would allow for enhanced coordination of services, and allow agency staff to understand the various options available for scheduling their clients.

A lower cost alternative to linking scheduling software would be a web-based booking and scheduling program that could be developed for participating agencies in Mariposa County. This kind of software could allow agencies to enter information about their vehicles, trips they are making and excess capacity, allowing other agencies to schedule their consumers on these vehicles or make phone calls to coordinate services as needed.

Car-sharing is a strategy that was identified by stakeholders as a potentially valuable option for people with limited automobile access. Car-sharing is typically a service that provides the public (usually pre-registered members of the car-sharing program) with access to a vehicle or fleet of vehicles on an hourly basis. A preliminary trial program administered in the county seat of Mariposa would be advisable to assess local interest and potential success in other towns, especially considering the relatively high capital costs that can be involved.

Many streets in Mariposa County do not have complete sidewalks or sufficient infrastructure to ensure pedestrian safety. Because of the county's rural nature and the long distances between communities, continuous pedestrian infrastructure is not expected nor is it feasible. Sidewalks should be limited to the densest portions of the county such as the county seat of Mariposa, where a greater number of people might benefit from these types of improvements, particularly if they provide connections to social service or senior-oriented destinations.

County transportation officials, in coordination with social service agencies and organizations for whose clients these transportation amenities will be especially important, should work together to advocate that these requirements be added
to plans and zoning ordinances.

Recommendations

Program Administration

Effective program administration is a crucial factor in ensuring the ongoing success of each new program implemented based on the strategies defined in this plan. As a first step, a sponsor or lead agency needs to be designated to manage each project. The lead agency would most likely be responsible for the following:

Later in this chapter, for each of the highest ranked strategies, a lead agency is suggested; however, in some cases numerous entities could serve in this capacity. The lead agency should have the administrative, fiscal and staffing resources needed to carry out the program on an ongoing basis.

Decision-Making Process

In addition to the staff administering the service or program (derived from the strategies) policy oversight is essential for formal decision-making. This function could rest with the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors and/or the boards of any of the agencies taking a leadership role in the implementation of strategies.

There is no permanent coordination body to carry forward some of the coordination activities that are encouraged in the various strategies. A recommended strategy to address this function, is to hold a quarterly meeting following the regular SSTAC meeting to further develop and formalize ongoing communication and discussions held during the process of developing this plan.

Service Standards

To ensure that programs developed from this Coordinated Plan are effective, it is recommended that agencies coordinating services or receiving any of the funding sources identified in this plan develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating services. Service performance should be monitored by the lead agency for each program and data should be reported to participating agencies, the SSTAC and the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors.

Facility Needs

Agencies in Mariposa County may wish to consider consolidation of some maintenance functions to reduce costs and enhance the level of transportation coordination within the county.

The goal of a consolidated maintenance program would be to more fully utilize existing facilities and staff by making services available to organizations and agencies that require a level of technical maintenance expertise beyond what may be available to them.

MENDOCINO COUNTY

Transportation Needs and Gaps (Combined)

Comments were received at MTA meetings or through written correspondence, from the SSTAC, from the public hearing, and from the Redwood Coast Community Transit Plan for South Mendocino Coast.

- Saturday service between Willits and Ukiah
- More bike rack space on MTA vehicles
- Service to Covelo with connections to Mendocino County
- Student pass for college students

- Service from Anderson Valley to Mendocino College
- Later bus returning to Willits from Mendocino College
- Service to the new Plowshares facility
- Transit service along Dora corridor to Grace Hudson School
- Saturday service to Mendocino College from Ukiah and Willits
- Additions to CC Rider, Route 65 service
- Additional summer service between inland and the coast
- Additional local service on the South Mendocino Coast
- More frequent service on Fort Bragg's BraggAbout
- Commute service from Inland Mendocino to Santa Rosa
- Commute service from outlying inland areas to Ukiah (including Willits and Redwood, Potter and Anderson Valleys) and vanpool service from outlying areas to more populated areas for work and/or services
- Assisted transportation in Ukiah on Sundays
- Connection from Brooktrails to transit in Willits (one trip in morning, return trip in evening)
- Connection from Fort Bragg to Amtrak stop in Ukiah
- Service between Albion and Santa Rosa
- Additional service between Laytonville and Willits
- Local dial-a-ride service in South Mendocino County
- Route deviation service on the "ridge"
- Activities van (pre-arranged) for group trips
- Adjustment for Sea Ranch apartments
- Establish volunteer mobility managers

Travel training: Some older adults and disabled passengers could benefit from travel training, which assists new riders with learning about available transportation services. This is especially the case where services may have recently changed, such as in Willits, which recently began operating a deviated fixed-route service.

Accessibility: Outside of Ukiah, Fort Bragg, and Willits, there are problems with accessibility, such as a lack of sidewalks to bus stops. This is particularly difficult for disabled passengers who do not qualify for paratransit.

Farmworkers: There were over 4,000 farmworkers employed in Mendocino County during 2006. In a survey of Mendocino County farmworkers, approximately 50% of respondents indicated that they drove their own car to work, while 39% drove with others. This group, which is primarily low-income, could benefit from affordable transportation options.

Transportation Resources

Public Transit

Mendocino Transit Authority

Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) is the public bus system that serves the most densely populated parts of the county: Ukiah, Mendocino Valley, and coastal regions of Mendocino County. MTA operates two flex/deviated routes, two dial-a-ride services, six inland and local bus

routes, and five coast bus routes, traveling as far south as Santa Rosa and as far north as Fort Bragg/Laytonville. The following sections describe services provided by MTA.

Willits Rider

The Willits Rider provides deviated fixed-route bus service within the City of Willits, traveling along Main Street and making stops at the Integrated Service Center, City Park/City Hall, JD Redhouse/Post Office, Safeway, Little Lake Clinic/Hospital, Evergreen Shopping Center, and Oak Glen Apartments. When the Willits Rider was established in 2007, it replaced the demand response paratransit system in Willits.

There are eleven roundtrips Monday through Friday and eight roundtrips on Saturday. Weekday service operates between 7:25 AM and 6:35 PM and Saturday service operates between 8:25 AM and 5:25 PM at 60-minute headways. Passengers may board the bus at a scheduled stop or at a “Flex Stop,” and are required to call in advance to arrange for flex service. This service is scheduled to connect with MTA Route 20 for service to and from Ukiah; with Route 65, the CC Rider providing service between the North Mendocino Coast and Santa Rosa; and Route 15 to Laytonville.

Ukiah Valley Bus Service (7 Jitney, 9 Local, 9 Evening)

Route 9 Local is a fixed-route bus service that serves the City of Ukiah and populated areas to the north and south, making stops at Mendocino College, Ukiah Adult School, the library, Wal-Mart, and locations downtown. The route operates on 30-minute headways from 6:45 AM until to 6:00 PM on weekdays. On Saturday, the bus operates on 35-minute headways from 8:25 AM to 6:00 PM.

Route 9 Local Evening Service operates Monday through Friday, providing extended evening service between Mendocino College and South State Street\Plant Road in Ukiah. Service operates from 6:10 PM until 10:50 PM. The last run leaves Mendocino College at 10:10 PM. Stops are also made at Ukiah Adult School, downtown Ukiah, Wal-Mart, Plowshares (a program that provides meals for very low-income residents), and the airport. This line operates as a deviated fixed-route service.

The Route 7 Jitney is a limited fixed-route service with service between Mendocino College and Plant Street/South State Street with stops at Redwood Academy, the Library, Ukiah Theater, the Public Health Department, and Greyhound (across from airport). There are four runs every day between 7:40 AM and 4:45 PM.

South Mendocino Coast Bus Service (Routes 75 and 95)

Route 75 operates between Gualala and Ukiah via Point Arena, Manchester, Elk, Navarro, Philo, and Boonville. There is one run in each direction: the northbound run leaves at 7:45 AM and arrives in Ukiah at 10:35 AM, and the southbound run departs Ukiah at 3:05 PM and arrives in Gualala at 5:55 PM. Stops can also be made at Sea Ranch by request. Service operates six days a week.

Route 95 operates between Point Arena and Santa Rosa, making stops at the Santa Rosa Greyhound and Amtrak stations, Sebastopol, Bodega, Jenner, Sea Ranch, and Gualala. It operates as a flex route in Santa Rosa. Service operates seven days a week from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

North Mendocino Coast Bus Service (5 BraggAbout, 60 The Coaster, 65 CC Rider)

The Route 5 BraggAbout provides hourly local service within Fort Bragg between 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM Monday through Saturday. The service is the Fort Bragg segment of the Coaster and the CC Rider routes, which are explained below.

The Route 60 Coaster provides fixed-route service between Fort Bragg and Mendocino or Navarro River, making stops in Caspar, Mendocino, Little River, and Albion. There are approximately six runs in each direction between 7:20 AM and 6:20 PM, Monday through Saturday.

The Route 65 CC Rider operates between Mendocino and Santa Rosa, making stops in Caspar, Fort Bragg, Willits, Redwood Valley, Ukiah, and Hopland. There is one run in each direction daily, leaving Mendocino/Caspar at 7:20 AM and arriving in Santa Rosa by 10:55 AM. The return trip leaves Santa Rosa at 2:40 PM and arrives in Mendocino at 6:20 PM.8 There is some route deviation allowed within Santa Rosa.

Inland Bus Service

MTA's Inland Bus Service, Routes 20, 21, and 30, provide weekday regional and commute service in Willits, Redwood Valley, and Ukiah. Routes 20 and 21 travel between Ukiah and Willits, and Route 30 travels between Redwood Valley and Ukiah.

Laytonville to Willits Bus Service (15 Laytonville)

Route 15 Laytonville travels between Laytonville and Willits, with connections to and from Ukiah weekdays only. There is one morning run from Laytonville to Willits and one evening run from Willits to Laytonville.

Dial-a-Ride

MTA operates two general public dial-a-ride programs, one in Ukiah and one in Fort Bragg. Within Willits, the deviated fixed-route service (described above) replaced a demand-response paratransit system. Dial-a-ride service operates from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM on weekdays and 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Saturday.

Transportation Offered by Social Service Providers

Senior Centers in Mendocino County

There are six senior centers in Mendocino County with locations in Boonville, Ukiah (two locations), Fort Bragg, Point Arena-Gualala, and Willits. The centers provide a variety of programs for older adults.

MTA distributes approximately 16% of Mendocino County's TDA funds to the senior centers to assist them with providing transportation services to older adults and the disabled. In addition, MTA provides assistance with vehicle procurement, grant review and support, vehicle maintenance, financial and performance review, and liability insurance.

The following details the types of services provided by three of the six senior centers in Mendocino:

Ukiah Senior Center

The Ukiah Senior Center provides a variety of services to older and disabled adults in Ukiah area. Providing transportation to participants in the Adult Day Health Program is a major part of the daily operations. Three buses are used to transport passengers to and from the senior center in the morning and afternoon. The buses have seven seats and are wheelchair accessible.

During the day, buses are used to provide door-through-door trips that are reserved in advance for any trip purpose from older and disabled adults in the Ukiah area and rural areas on the outskirts of the city. Same-day trip requests are accommodated when possible. The buses are not available for the general public in the afternoons when they are all used to transport clients from the Adult Day Health Program to their homes. Any older adult or disabled person is eligible for the transportation service. Service is provided Monday through Friday only. Transportation services are operated in-house with one program manager, one full-time driver/manager, four part-time drivers, and one dispatcher. Most of the drivers are older adults.

Redwood Coast Seniors

Redwood Coast Seniors provides a number of programs for older adults in the Fort Bragg area. Programs include home-delivered meals, suicide prevention, adult day care and a lunch program.

Approximately 75 home-delivered meals are provided from the Fort Bragg center to surrounding areas where older adults are homebound and isolated. Meals are delivered by volunteers using their own private vehicles.

Dial-a-Ride Service

The center provides door-through-door service for older adults and disabled passengers for any trip purpose. The transportation service is provided with three 10-passenger ADA-accessible vehicles, which were purchased using federal FTA 5310 funds. In FY 2006-2007, the organization provided 6,762 passenger trips.

South Coast Senior Center

The South Coast Senior Center is located in Gualala and Point Arena, and alternates its services between these communities throughout the week. The center provides dial-a-ride services to older adults and disabled passengers Monday through Wednesday. In addition, out-of-town trips are made once a week for shopping, medical appointments, etc. The center currently has one vehicle to provide in-house transportation.

Mendocino County Department of Social Services

With respect to transportation, the agency reimburses clients for mileage for eligible activities if they have an automobile; otherwise it purchases bus tickets and passes. No transportation services are provided directly.

Redwood Coast Regional Center

The Redwood Coast Regional Center (RCRC) is one of 21 private, nonprofit regional centers in California serving people with developmental disabilities. In Mendocino County, the Regional Center assists clients with transportation, but does not provide the service directly. The RCRC spends approximately $100,000 each year to purchase MTA bus passes. It issues them to clients who are able to take advantage of public transportation.

RCRC also contracts with MTA and pays approximately $69,000 to operate Route 97, an exclusive bus route for clients who are not capable of riding regular public transit. The route is a subscription bus service and it is not open to the general public. The service operates within the greater Ukiah area, taking clients to Ukiah Valley Association for Habilitation.

In addition, RCRC pays Hey Taxi and Transportation Plus, private taxi services, to transport clients to medical appointments. Hey Taxi operates throughout the county and also in Lake County, and Transportation Plus operates primarily between Ukiah and Willits. RCRC sponsors services that support clients in their own home. The center contracts the service to a private provider, who in addition to providing supportive services, provides transportation when necessary.

Community Resources Connection

CRC provides volunteer non emergency demand-response medical transportation that relies upon more than 40 volunteer drivers to transport residents in the volunteer's private automobile. Volunteers may request reimbursement, which is $25 per 250 miles ($.125 per mile).

Using volunteer drivers, CRC also operates a van that travels to Fort Bragg once a month and Santa Rosa weekly. This is a fixed-route service. CRC uses a Dodge Caravan leased from MTA for one dollar per year.

Consolidated Tribal Health

Consolidated Tribal Health is a community health clinic located in Ukiah and open to the public. It is administered by the Indian Health Consortium, an alliance of eight tribal governments. It has been in business for 25 years.

The clinic provides a free in-house transportation service to registered patients. Trips are provided to the clinic in Ukiah or to other specialized medical appointments at the University of

California Medical Centers in San Francisco and Stanford Medical Center in Palo Alto. The service area includes all of Mendocino County with the exception of Round Valley, where there is the Round Valley Indian Health Center. Transportation service is provided with six vehicles, two full time drivers, and two part-time drivers. In addition, the center provides bus passes to patients who can utilize existing transportation services.

Round Valley Indian Health Center

The Round Valley Indian Health Center provides medically necessary transportation to Native Americans in the Round Valley area. Older adults and diabetic patients are given first priority. The clinic owns a couple of vehicles. One vehicle is used to provide demand-response service to the clinic from locations in Round Valley. The other vehicle is used to transport patients to specialized services in Ukiah, Willits, and Santa Rosa. Approximately five trips a week are made out of the Round Valley area.

Hey Taxi

Hey Taxi is a private for-profit company that provides taxi and medical transportation in Lake and Mendocino counties, as well as Santa Rosa in Sonoma County. Hey Taxi is the only Sunday and late night service available in Lake and Mendocino counties. Taxi service is available in the following communities:

- Ukiah: Service is provided 24 hours a day and seven days a week
- Clearlake: Seven days a week, until 2:00 AM on weekends
- Lakeport: Service is currently more limited because there is not a full-time driver
- Willits: Monday through Saturday, 6:00 AM-midnight
- Santa Rosa: Medical trips only

Hey Taxi service operates 15 to 19 vehicles, and approximately 10 vehicles are devoted to medical transportation. The company currently employs approximately 30 drivers, including three owner-operators with independent contracts and employees.

Barriers

Barriers to Coordination

The following barriers or obstacles preventing or hindering coordination of public transit and human service agency transportation programs are not unique to Mendocino County; rather, they are universal in nature and are faced by local communities throughout the country.

Geography: Opportunities to coordinate service among transportation services in Mendocino County are limited in part by the limited number of service providers, and also by the size and geography of the county. Mendocino County is a large county with some very geographically isolated communities (e.g., Covelo, Laytonville, Manchester).

Specific client needs: By definition, customers of special needs transportation programs have difficulty or cannot independently make use of programs established for the general public. In many cases, these customers need a level of care that may not prove conducive to integration

with other passengers. Some agencies have established service standards or guidelines for consideration in transporting their clients, such as maximum time on a vehicle, the need for a higher level of care, required use of seat belts, etc. that may preclude transporting them with other client groups.

Funding restrictions: Social service agencies tend to fund or support transportation for their clients as an auxiliary service—as a means to support the end goal of providing a primary service such as training, medical assistance, etc. These agencies must ensure, often through cumbersome audit processes, that agency funds are being spent in support of eligible clients. While in theory some agencies have indicated support for mingling dollars and passengers through a single service delivery system, participants need to reach consensus on a methodology for equitably sharing the cost of service among various client groups.

Limited staff resources: In rural communities, transportation program staff often "wear many hats," and may be required to administer programs, write grants or funding applications, prepare reports and invoices, supervise staff and, on occasion, even drive a vehicle. Staff resources may not be available to pursue coordination strategies, which need to be developed and nurtured over time. In Mendocino County, the MTA serves as the CTSA. The CTSA is well positioned, by virtue of its designation and authority established in state statute (AB 120) to assume a leadership role in overseeing coordination projects and activities. However, there is currently no dedicated staff available for this purpose.

Priorities

The highest ranked strategies in Mendocino County include:

- Establish Mobility Management Program: This strategy recognizes the need to dedicate staffing for promoting coordination activities within Mendocino County.
- Expand dial-a-ride services: This strategy was recognized as a critical need by attendees in both workshops, as well as by other stakeholders providing comments who could not attend the workshops. There is a particular need for additional dial-a-ride services on the South Mendocino Coast.
- Provide more specialized paratransit services, including door-through-door services throughout the county: Again, participants in both workshops expressed the need to provide a higher level of paratransit or specialized services for older adults or persons with disabilities than what is now available.
- Increase mileage reimbursement rates for volunteer drivers and caregivers. Increased fuel costs over the past year is a key reason why this strategy ranked highly.
- Replace vehicles and other capital equipment in accordance with the Capital Replacement Program. This strategy recognizes the need to coordinate efforts to identify capital needs, such as facilities and vehicles, and to pursue opportunities to address those needs.

Recommendations

- Establish Mobility Management Program
- Establish expanded dial-a-ride services

- Provide more specialized paratransit services, including door-through-door services
- Increase mileage reimbursement rates for volunteer drivers and caregivers
- Replace vehicles and capital equipment in accordance with Capital Replacement Program

Program Administration and Oversight

Effective program administration is a crucial factor in ensuring the ongoing success of a new program or project. As a first step, a project sponsor or lead agency needs to be designated to manage the project.

For each of the highest ranked strategies, a lead agency is suggested; however, in some cases numerous entities could serve in this capacity. The lead agency should have the administrative, fiscal and staffing resources needed to carry out the program on an on-going basis.

Decision-Making Process

In addition to staff administering the program or service, a more formal decision-making process will need to be in place to ensure effective program oversight. As mentioned, MCOG is responsible to allocate and disburse state transportation funds, and will require the adopted Coordinated Plan. The SSTAC advises MCOG on various transportation issues and concerns. The SSTAC is appropriately the entity, within Mendocino County, to provide input as new services are considered and/or implemented.

Guidelines for Transportation Provider Agreements and Service Standards

Developing service agreements and monitoring system performance criteria are important tasks for transportation providers. Service agreements should include the following basic monthly and year-to-date operating and performance data. Agencies are encouraged to develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating transit and paratransit services.

Access to Jobs and Employment

Providing access to jobs and employment is a critical function of public transportation. For persons without access to an automobile, availability of transit can mean the difference in self sufficiency.

Examples of eligible JARC projects include:

- Late-night and weekend service
- Guaranteed ride home programs
- Vanpools or shuttle services to improve access to employment or training sites
- Car-share or other projects to improve access to autos
- Access to child care and training

Volunteer Transportation Programs

CRC currently operates a volunteer driver program to provide non-emergency medical transportation for the general public on the South Coast. The Willits Senior Center also operates a small program. However, volunteer transportation programs could be expanded to meet county transportation needs. Program administration is the key to the successful implementation and ongoing viability of volunteer programs, thus the need for an individual or community agency to be the champion is critical.

The issue of agency liability frequently is raised as an obstacle to the implementation of volunteer driver programs.

Becoming a Medi-Cal NEMT Provider

It is possible for local providers (including public agencies and non-profit organizations) to become providers of non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) under existing Medi-Cal arrangements. Medi-Cal is California's Medicaid health insurance program. It pays for a variety of medical services for children and adults with limited income and resources.

Student Transportation in Mendocino County

In Mendocino County, there are 13 school districts. Home-to-school student transportation operations during the academic year are primarily provided in-house by school districts. Ultimately, though, the responsibility for school bus operations and policies is delegated to the local districts, which traditionally have been uninterested in broadening their focus beyond student transportation.

MERCED COUNTY

Transportation Needs

At the most recent unmet transit needs hearings in October 2008, the public voiced concerns about the following:

- Create new or expand routes
- Provide discount for mental health consumers
- Need to extend hours on Saturdays and offer Sunday service to provide flexibility to the senior population.
- Improve Dial-A-Ride pickup time commitments for seniors and disabled.
- Increase availability of buses at the beginning of the month.

The SSTAC had greatest concern with transportation for college students during the evening hours. In Merced County all elementary, middle, and high schools have charted school buses to serve students to and from school.

During the 2008 unmet transit needs hearings, concerns were raised for the lack of public transportation service for after hour courses at Merced Community College (Merced & Los Banos campuses). However, past demonstration projects for the evening college students were attempted, but after several months the students no longer utilized the service.

The following transportation needs were identified via a survey of public, private, and non-profit transportation providers in Merced County:

- Getting to work during the hours of 8-5
- Late night or early morning work shifts
- Weekend/holiday trips
- Recreational activities
- Kids to daycare or school
- Going to the doctor/medical
- Counseling/mental health appointments
- Shopping and multiple errands
- Attending training, education classes or program sites
- Long distance trips for medical appointments and visiting family
- Emergency trips for family crisis
- Interviews/screenings

Planning partners also identified their need for replacement vehicles. Additionally, the survey identified that many of the respondents feel there is a lack of publicity about existing specialized transportation services. Many residents are unaware of the specialized transportation services available and/or are confused by the eligibility requirements for specific rides based on the requirements of the particular funding source. Existing efforts and resources to inform the public are insufficient to effectively reach those in greatest need.

The SSTAC held a joint workshop with private and public transportation providers to discuss other unmet needs that may exist that were not identified through the annual hearing process and survey. Unmet needs identified included:

- Out of county transportation, specifically to the Bay Area for medical appointments.
- Centralized transportation information; single point of information in English Spanish, and Mong.
- Transportation for 165 HSA clients that attend classes (employment, parenting, managing finances, etc.) during the evening hours.

In addition to the above-mentioned needs and the general concept to increase the coordination between Merced County's public and private agencies, the SSTAC also identified the need to coordinate services regionally, specifically with Madera and Stanislaus Counties.

Transportation Resources

Private Transportation Providers

- Central Valley Opportunity Center
- Kings View
- Love INC of Greater Merced
- Riggs Ambulance
- Turning Point Community Programs

Public Transportation Providers

- Merced County – Going Places
- Merced County Area Agency on Aging
- Merced County Transit – The Bus
- Merced County Human Services Agency
- Merced County Mental Health
- Merced County Mental Health Transitional Age Youth

Regional Transportation Providers

- Amtrak
- Greyhound
- Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)

Central Valley Opportunity Center

Central Valley Opportunity Center was incorporated as a community-base corporation in May of 1979. CVOC operates numerous employment, educational, economic development and social service programs in central California. CVOC services include vocational education, remedial education, English Language instruction, housing assistance, energy payment assistance, emergency supportive services, transportation, emergency food, youth employment, health care acquisition, childcare services and community education services. CVOC has effectively provided a comprehensive package of services to over a hundred thousand customers. Four (4) vehicles are available for daily transportation with four (4) paid drivers.

Vehicle Capacity

One (1) vehicle 10-14 passengers Three (3) vehicles 15-24 passengers

Average vehicle miles a month – 3,600

Kings View Work Experience

Kings View is to be guided by the following practices and intents:

Provide full access to treatment, rehabilitation, and support services in a coordinated and comprehensive system of care that is culturally competent. Average daily attendance is 280 with all requiring transportation services (60 with wheelchairs).

Forty vehicles are available, capacity of 15-24 passengers, with 30 paid drivers. Client population includes frail seniors, persons with physical disabilities, persons with behavioral disabilities, and persons with sensory impairments.

Love INC of Greater Merced County

Love INC serves as a clearinghouse for local churches and coordinates resources of individuals, churches and agencies to help meet the needs of people in the Greater Merced area. Transportation budget is derived from fundraising and donations for bus passes and/or mileage reimbursement (average $500 annually). Additionally, up to 10 volunteers provide rides to clients using their own vehicles.

Medi-Cab

Non-profit organization providing specialized transportation for people with medical conditions that prevents them from using public transit.

Riggs Ambulance

Riggs is the exclusive provider of pre-hospital services for all of Merced County. They cover over 2,000 square miles and respond to over 26,000 requests annually. Riggs employs over 125 people and operates the county's medical dispatch 9-1-1 system. Their current fleet includes 21 ambulances, four Supervisor Units, an EMS Transport Cart, an EMS Explorer Post and several support vehicles.

Turning Point

Turning Point operates Merced County's Community Assistance Recovery Enterprise (CARE), which provides comprehensive mental health, supported housing, and employment services to those in recovery from mental illness, homelessness and possible co-occurring substance abuse disorders. Emphasizing "housing first" and development of employment and educational opportunities, CARE collaborates with other agencies to be sure Turning Point Community Program members receive "whatever it takes" to integrate homeless mentally ill back into the community. CARE is also designed to reach transition age youth including 18- to 25-year olds who may have children, and underserved Hispanic populations in Merced County, including 26- to 59-year olds.

Merced County Going Places

Going Places is funded by First 5 Merced County and is a collaborative partnership between VIA Transportation, Healthy House, and the Merced County Department Of Public Health. Going Places assists pregnant women and families with children 0 – 5 that have special health care needs with transportation to specialty medical care located outside of Merced County.

Merced County Area Agency on Aging

Mission - To work in partnership with the community to provide for the protection, care, and support of families and individuals, and to promote personal responsibility and self-sufficiency. The Senior Transportation Program provides transportation services to disabled and older

adults, 60 years of age or older. Monthly bus passes are available for purchase at a discounted price. Limited number of free bus passes also available.

Average daily attendance is 8 of which approximately 2 require transportation services. Transportation budget - $50,000 for bus passes. Funding sources are derived from local general funds, minimal donations, and the California Department of Aging. Client population includes seniors 60 years or older.

Merced County Human Services Agency

The Merced County Human Services Agency (HSA) provides immediate assistance in crisis situations to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. They also help people and families when they are temporarily unable toobtain food, clothing, and shelter. HSA assists senior citizens and disabled adults in achieving the greatest degree of independence possible, sponsoring services such as food deliveries, caregiver support, assistance with transportation, and help with home repairs.

HSA has a fleet of 98 vehicles that serve 9 or fewer passengers. 30-50 agency staff are available to transport clients at any given time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Merced County Health Plan

A variety of mental health services and programs are available to mental health consumers in Merced County. The County is able to provide a selection of mental health services to children, youths, adults, and their families. Merced County also offers drug and alcohol services. Mental Health services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can be accessed by appointment, walk-in, or by contacting emergency services.

Caseworker has access to one vehicle that serves less than 9 passengers and averages 500 vehicle miles per month. Transportation budget for bus passes is approximately $1,620. Funding sources are derived from Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Merced County Transit – The Bus

Merced County currently operates an urban and rural bus transit service, known as “The Bus”. The Bus operates on 17 fixed route lines and demand response services. Demand response services include services open to the general public in rural areas where fixed route service is limited or non-existent and is limited to seniors and disabled customers in urban areas such as Merced where extensive fixed route service is provided. The Bus currently operates 43 buses with 27 assigned to fixed routes and the remaining 16 providing Dial-A-Ride service to all of Merced County and a small portion of the City of Turlock in Stanislaus County. Generally, The Bus fixed route services operate from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday through Friday, and from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturdays.

In 1996, Merced County Transit – “The Bus” – began providing a consolidated public transit service throughout Merced. Prior to that time public transit service had been provided by some of the individual jurisdictions. The Transit Services Consolidation Agreement established a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between Merced County and the Cities of Atwater, Dos Palos, Gustine, Livingston, Los Banos and Merced. The County of Merced, through the Department of Public Works’ Transportation Division – Merced County Transit, administers and manages the consolidated services. The Bus serves the entire County of Merced with fixed route and demand response service.

The following agencies currently contract services for their clients with Merced County Transit:

- Merced County Human Services Agency
- Merced County Area Agency on Aging
- Central Valley Opportunity Center

Additionally, Merced County Mental Health contracts with Greyhound Bus to provide out of county travel for their clients.

Current Operations

- 43 buses
    - 27 buses on 17 fixed routes
    - 16 buses providing Dial-a-Ride
- System operates weekdays from 7 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. with limited
- Saturday service
- Annual operating cost = $9,400,000

Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System

YARTS provides regularly scheduled public transit service into Yosemite National Park and the gateway communities along its routes in buses that are air conditioned and equipped for rider comfort.

Gaps/Priorities

Strategies to Fill the Gaps in Priority Order

Priority 1: Create a One Stop Shop of Transit Information

Needs assessed by strategy: Problems with availability and quality of information. Sharing of information about programs and transportation services is one of the benefits that were derived in the process of developing the Coordinated Transit- Services Plan. Although representatives of agencies meet from time to time in different forums to share information about client needs, heath care needs, educational opportunities and funding issues, outside of the SSTAC, few opportunities exist for agency staff to convene to discuss coordination of services based on transportation. Furthermore, many agency staff are unaware of the availability of public transit services or complementary human service agency transportation programs that might benefit their own clients.

Priority 2: Establish Inter-County Transportation Program for Medical Appointments

Needs assessed by strategy: Lack of service outside of Merced County It is difficult to provide roundtrip transportation to a location that is a 2+ hour bus ride from Merced County. Many low-income individuals/families and senior residents require transportation to Northern California (i.e. Stanford, UC Davis, etc) and to the South Central Valley (i.e. Valley Children's Hospital, Fresno, etc.) for medical appointments on a regular basis. MCAG staff is investigating

coordinating with services in Stanislaus and Madera counties that currently transport to the Bay Area and to the South Valley.

This strategy proposes to seek New Freedom and 5310 funding to begin coordination with both Stanislaus and Madera Counties to create a regional partnership to provide transit services for the Merced County disadvantage for the purpose of medical appointments.

Priority 3: Establish Transportation Program for Merced County Human

Service Agency Clients for Evening Classes

Needs assessed by strategy: Lack of service for low-income population during

the evening hours. The Merced County Human Services Agency (HSA) has 165 clients (as of July 2009) enrolled in evening classes, which include courses for employment, financial

planning, parenting, etc. When HSA had funding available for transportation, 15 clients were consistently being transported from each direction of the County to classes on Main Street in the City of Merced. Due to lack of funding, transportation services were ceased. HSA staff has encountered many clients unable to attend classes due to lack of transportation, as the The Bus does not operate after 6:00 p.m.

This strategy proposes seeking JARC funding to develop a program to provide clients of HSA transit services after 6:00 p.m. to attend classes that will provide them the tools needed to become self-sufficient and employed.

Priority 4: Replacement of Old Vehicles

The following agencies have expressed the need to replace existing vehicles within the next 24 months:

- Human Services Agency
- Turning Point Community Services
- Central Valley Opportunity Center
- Kings View
- Riggs Ambulance

Recommendations

Several key strategies have been identified to improve transportation services in Merced County:

- Increased communication and collaboration between transportation providers and social service providers;
- Expanded information availability and marketing programs;
- Identification of new funding sources, and increased transit opportunities for the transit disadvantaged.

These strategies will require communication and participation from a variety of public agencies, social service organizations, and private entities, with strong leadership from MCAG, as well as smaller organizations whose clients have distinct and pressing transportation needs. Short-term solutions will establish a foundation for more comprehensive longer-term solutions.

MODOC COUNTY

Transportation Needs and Gaps (Combined)

Unserved Areas

The following Modoc County communities lack public transit service:

- Cedarville
- Eagleville
- Fort Bidwell
- Likely
- Lookout

Some stakeholders also expressed the need for expansion of public transit services to, Lakeview, Oregon. It is a growing area that may provide increased opportunities for employment and shopping in the future. There are no public transportation services to this area at this time. However, the Modoc Northern Railroad purchased track and operates regular freight service from Lakeview, carrying mostly lumber products from active timbering and milling operations.

Underserved Areas

The following Modoc communities were identified as being underserved:

- Adin
- Cal Pines
- Canby
- Modoc Estates
- Newell
- Tulelake

Sage Stage provides service through Adin, Canby and Tulelake on its intercity routes. Residents of these areas may access these services only on the days when those services run through their areas, and they are limited to the hours of the one round-trip that is provided on each of those days.

Sage Stage provides demand responsive, dial-a-ride service in a ten-mile radius around Alturas, which reaches two key regional subdivisions of Modoc Estates and California Pines. Some stakeholders expressed a need to expand this ten-mile radius to reach a larger area and more residents. Even with such an expansion, however, Sage Stage would not be able to reach some homes within the subdivisions that are located on or accessed via private, undeveloped roads.

By policy, Sage Stage buses do not travel on non-public or non-maintained roads.

Stakeholders indicated the following specific key destinations are currently underserved by public transportation:

- Adin Senior Center
- Cal Pines to Alturas for jobs, school, child care and after school programs – at the specific times when these trips are needed
- Non-emergency medical transportation to specialized facilities in California (Davis, Redding, San Francisco), Oregon (Klamath Falls), and Nevada (Reno) with accommodation for travel times and layover periods to coincide with specific passenger/patient needs or demands.
- Return trips from hospital stays or patient visitations, when departure needs do not match Sage Stage scheduled intercity bus service times back to Modoc County Stakeholders indicated certain key destinations isolated from regular public transportation services. They consistently identified non-emergency medical or health care facilities, medical and dental practitioners' offices, radiology and (elective) surgery centers that could not be accessed directly via Sage Stage. Since Sage Stage does provide service to many health care services and facilities, some people are constrained from using these facilities. Medi-Cal (California's Medicaid program) typically restricts clients to facilities located within California.

Often this means traveling to specialty medical facilities in Redding. Veterans travel to Reno, Nevada, the location of the closest Veterans Hospital. People carrying comprehensive private insurance typically travel to Klamath Falls, Oregon. Mobile dialysis clinics do not exist in Modoc County, so residents must travel outside of Modoc County for such services or for periodic examination or care by specialized health care providers; some persons noted that their specific destination is dependent upon their personal health care or insurance coverage (or lack thereof).

Cost Mitigation

The cost of providing transportation services, by public transit and human service agencies, is high, especially in this frontier region, with small populations dispersed throughout a large area. Travel distances are usually far with few passengers. CalWORKs reported transportation as its greatest expense next to staff salaries.

All organizations reported operating their transportation services at a loss. Organizations expressed a need to provide more gas vouchers to their clients.

The cost of accessing transportation for community members is also prohibitive for some people. While public transit is less expensive than owning and operating a personal vehicle, it is also difficult for some to afford bus fares, especially for the longer intercity routes. Evening and Weekend Service.

Areas of the county served by public transportation do not always have services at needed times. Sage Stage's Dial-A-Ride service is not available on weekends or before 8:00 AM or after 5:00 PM on weekdays, and Sage Stage intercity service is available only on certain weekdays.

Following are the specific needs reported:

- Stakeholders expressed a need for transportation during nontraditional work times within the Dial-A-Ride service area, particularly evening hours on week days
- Social service representatives also indicated a need for service from after-school programs to students' homes, as schools do not provide this service.
- Community members expressed a need for access to community activities in Alturas during evening hours in the summer months. Transportation Assistance for Seniors and People with Disabilities Sage Stage has budgetary constraints when trying to provide specialized services for people with disabilities that go above and beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Stakeholders who work with seniors and people with disabilities indicated that current intercity services offered by Sage Stage do not always work well for passengers with special needs.

The primary needs expressed on behalf of seniors and people with physical disabilities were door-to-door service and assistance with packages. Door-to-door service is available whenever possible. Seniors may need to transfer to local transit to reach their final destinations, which some seniors find difficult to do.

Agencies used to have volunteer transportation programs to assist seniors to make these trips, but the expense of insurance became prohibitive for agencies. The primary needs expressed on behalf of people with developmental disabilities were demand responsive and hand-to-hand services, even with the high level of service provided by Sage Stage noted above.

Some agencies serving clients with developmental disabilities also expressed the perception that passengers who have developmental disabilities negatively impact overall ridership on Sage Stage because the general public does not want to ride with them. This perception is based on the fact that the Modoc Work Activity Center, which provides transportation services to people with developmental disabilities, used to provide public transit services as well. During that time, they found that some people would not share rides with people with developmental disabilities.

Stakeholders noted that they have difficulties using public transit to access medical or other appointments because the schedules do not always align with each other. For instance, a person may have a medical appointment in Redding that they can reach on time by bus, but they may not be done with their appointments until after Sage Stage's return trip has already departed. This requires them to either stay overnight or attempt to find a friend or family member to come pick them up.

Information

Some stakeholders reported inaccurate information, demonstrating that they did not understand available public transit services. Others indicated that many residents have the misunderstanding that Sage Stage Dial-A-Ride (DAR) service is only for medical trips, when in actuality health care travel is given priority-scheduling reservations. Sage Stage DAR is available to anyone, on first come, first serve reservation basis; all trip purposes are eligible.

Some stakeholders indicated that their agencies could do a better job educating their own clients about the Sage Stage schedule, so their clients would make appointments to coincide with available public transit service days and hours.

Community members also expressed some confusion about where to find contact information for requesting a ride from Sage Stage or other transportation services.

Guaranteed Rides at Time Needed

Due to financial constraints and historical service demonstrations, MTA Sage Stage prefers advance reservations for service. While same-day service is provided on a resource-available basis, Sage Stage requests at least one business day advance notice for trip scheduling. The inability to rely on a guaranteed seat on the bus, however, makes it difficult for agencies arranging rides for their clients and residents trying to make travel arrangements. For instance, some students use Sage Stage to commute to school, and some agencies that would like to schedule rides for their clients to access work may not always be able to find seats available on Sage Stage at times to coincide with passenger-client specific need or desire for intermittent or one-time trip.

ADA Definition and Transportation Assistance

Participants identified the need for additional transportation support for people who are not defined as having a disability according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For instance, a community member with Multiple Sclerosis stated a need for assistance on long trips, but the cost of bringing a travel assistant along is prohibitive. If this person was defined as having a disability according to the ADA, free or reduced fares would have been available to the travel assistant.

Projected Transportation Needs

Many of these needs are expected become more severe over time if left unaddressed. Senior population growth is a fair indicator of growth in transportation service needs. As discussed in NEMT Coordination in a Frontier Rural Region report, other population growth rates, including Latino, Native American and lower income populations, will also influence the demand on transportation service needs. Their growth rates, however, are not expected to be nearly as high as the growth rate of the senior population. Therefore, the senior population growth rate is relied upon for a rough estimate of the increase in demand for transportation services.

According to the California Department of Finance projections described in Chapter 3, the senior population in Modoc County is expected to increase by 43% between 2010 and 2020, which roughly translates into a 43% increase in demand for transportation services over the next ten years.

Transportation Resources

Public Transit Operators

Sage Stage is the only public transit operator serving the Modoc County region. It is operated by the Modoc Transportation Agency (MTA) through a contract with MV Transportation, Inc. All of Sage Stage's six vehicles are wheelchair accessible. Sage Stage operates three intercity bus routes and general public demand responsive service within a ten mile radius of Alturas, the county seat. During fiscal year (FY) 2006-07, Sage Stage provided 12,695 one-way passenger trips, operating 145,513 vehicle service miles and 5,834 vehicle service hours.24 All of these performance measures have improved each year since Sage Stage began providing service in 1999.

Sage Stage operates three intercity fixed routes with deviated services providing transportation between communities within Modoc County as well as making connections to Reno, Nevada; Redding, California; and Klamath Falls, Oregon. Figure 4-3 shows these routes on a county map. All intercity routes make one round-trip per service day, which originate and end in Alturas. Service to Klamath Falls, Oregon is available through Canby, Newell and Tulelake on Wednesdays. Service to Redding is available on Monday and Friday with stops in Canby, Adin and towns along State Route 299 in Shasta County. Service through Susanville in neighboring Lassen County and on to Reno is available via US 395 on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday; the bus makes regular stops at the Greyhound terminal, Amtrak station, Reno/Tahoe International airport and regional medical centers.

All intercity services are provided on reservation basis.

Sage Stage operates Dial-A-Ride, a demand responsive service available to the general public within a ten mile radius of Alturas. Figure 4-3 depicts this service area on a county map, and Figure 4-4 offers a more detailed view of the City of Alturas. Dial-A-Ride operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Rides are scheduled on a first come first serve basis. However, priority is given to trips to healthcare appointments if they are scheduled in advance. Subscription trip service is also available for routine trips (such as commuting to work and school) with some limitations.

Social Service Transportation Providers

Many social service programs in Modoc County offer transportation as a secondary service in support of the primary services they offer. Some of these programs have staff or volunteers who directly provide transportation in agency-owned vehicles, while others use staff members' privately owned vehicles and reimburse mileage. Modoc County social service programs also supply transportation through purchasing bus passes, contracting with transportation providers, providing gas/fuel vouchers, and reimbursing mileage and carpool/fuel sharing costs. The following list summarizes the transportation offerings of social service programs in the county.

Developmentally Disabled

Far Northern Regional Center is a contractor for the California State Department of Developmental Services and provides transportation services in several northern California counties for work and community access. Depending on need, service provision ranges from gas vouchers and mileage reimbursement to direct service.

Modoc Work Activity Center, Dimensional Association Resources and Training (DART) provides daily transportation for their clients to access the work center, plus additional transportation for activity-related trips during the day. These transportation services are provided through a contract with Far Northern Regional Center.

Seniors

Modoc Senior Citizens Association operates the Modoc Senior Center, which provides door-to-door transportation services for seniors living within a five mile radius of Alturas. Transportation is provided to programs including the nutrition site, operating Tuesday through Friday. The Senior Center also offers transportation for grocery shopping, medical appointments, and other

personal business from 9:00 - 11:30 AM and 12:30 – 2:00 PM. The senior bus also delivers meals-on-wheels to homes of eligible seniors.

Tulelake Senior Center provides door-to-door transportation to its programs as well as for seniors to access community services. It also provides delivery services to home bound seniors. Surprise Valley Senior Center in Cedarville coordinates volunteer transportation among participating seniors, including transportation to the nutrition site. In conjunction with the Surprise Valley Hospital District, this center provides noon-time meals to eligible seniors two days per week and meals for eligible home-bound seniors.

Native American Tribes

Two federally-recognized Native American tribes own land in Modoc County – the Paiute Tribe, with the Cedarville Rancheria and Fort Bidwell Reservation, and the Pit River Tribe (and the Achomawi band of the tribe), with the Lookout and Alturas Rancherias and the X-L Ranch. Cedarville Rancheria directly provides transportation to seniors, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes and also offers mileage reimbursements for tribal members.

Fort Bidwell Indian Community Council, through the Warner Mountain Indian Health Project, provides transportation to tribal members to access health care, schools, job training and recreational opportunities through mileage reimbursement, gas vouchers, and direct transportation services with paid and volunteer drivers.

Pit River Health Services provides transportation through mileage reimbursement and direct services with agency-owed vehicles for Native Americans affiliated with the Pit River Tribe, headquartered in Burney, to access health care at their various facilities.

Strong Family Health Center (formerly the Modoc Indian Health Program) provides direct transportation with agency-owned vehicles for Native Americans from the Alturas and Cedarville Rancherias to access health services at a facility in Alturas.

Client-Based

- Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. provides transportation to support individuals seeking employment. Trips include program access, job sites, health care appointments personal business, shopping, education and job training, and social and recreation opportunities.

- Alturas Head Start provides transportation to its daycare site as well as to health care appointments.

- American Cancer Society – Road to Recovery provides patients with a mileage reimbursement.

- California Department of Rehabilitation provides transportation for health care in support of employment training. Services include mileage reimbursement, gas vouchers, carpool/fuel sharing reimbursement, and bus passes.

- Canby Family Practice provides gas vouchers to its transportation-disadvantaged patients to access health care at its clinic.

- Modoc County CalWORKs provides transportation to clients in support of securing employment. Transportation is provided through the purchase of bus passes, provision of gas vouchers, mileage reimbursement, and directly by staff.

- Modoc County Department of Health Services provides transportation to public health programs including mental health and drug and alcohol treatment through gas vouchers, mileage reimbursement, bus passes, and direct services with agency-owned vehicles.

- Modoc County Department of Social Services provides transportation with staff and volunteer drivers for health care appointments.

- Modoc County Head Start provides transportation for access to preschool, daycare, and health care appointments.

- Modoc County Office of Education offers a variety of transportation services to children and their families in support of their programs including trips to schools, daycare, Head Start, health care, job training, social services, and recreational opportunities. Transportation services are provided directly by staff and through bus passes, gas vouchers, and mileage reimbursement.

- Modoc County Veterans Services provides a volunteer-driven shuttle service from Alturas to
- Reno for Veterans to access health care. The shuttle vehicle was donated by AMVETS

- Department of California to the Reno Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center in Reno, NV; the latter provides fuel and vehicle maintenance. The County of Modoc assists through its Veterans Services Coordinator, which is a paid position. In addition, a local person provides voluntary services to schedule free transportation for veterans needing health care at the Reno facility.

- Modoc Medical Center provides transportation directly with agency-owned vehicles for people who need to access health care at the hospital, and for residents of its nursing facility. The MTA/Sage Stage donated a retired-from-service public transit vehicle to the County hospital for the benefit of patients to access the local hospital and nursing facility residents. Surprise Valley Health Care District provides transportation for patients and residents of the assisted living facility, who need to access the clinic or community hospital. They use paid staff and an agency-owned vehicle, which are supported by local taxpayers through a district property tax assessment.

- T.E.A.C.H. Inc. provides transportation through a variety of programs for access to various program sites, employment, job training, education, schools, and health care. Service is available through staff driving their own private vehicles with mileage reimbursement and via agency-owned vehicles, gas vouchers, and bus passes. Initiated in partnership with the Modoc Office of Education and County Superintendent of Schools, this organization is a separate entity supported by multiple grant funding, programs and collaborative relationships with community organizations, which provides ‘lifeline’ services and assistance to eligible recipients in Modoc County.

Barriers

Barriers to Coordination

The major transportation providers in this community expressed a desire to coordinate services more, an important first step in coordination. Each of the agencies, however, provide specialized services, and they cite funding restrictions, awareness of coordination opportunities, budget concerns, community culture and demands, the cost of transporting a widely dispersed population and insurance concerns as key barriers to coordination:

- Some organizations reported facing funding restrictions that prohibit them from transporting any passengers other than their own clients, limit the destinations they can serve, or prohibit them from sharing their program vehicles.

- All agencies are facing tight budgets and are concerned about any new efforts that would increase their transportation costs, even in the short term.

- Social service agencies are not always aware of vehicle availability when they need to use an additional vehicle, and they have not participated in any formal efforts to communicate about coordination opportunities.

- A culture of independence – born of necessity in isolated, rural communities – sometimes limits people from taking advantage of transportation services. Some may be reluctant to be limited in their activities by the availability of the public transit or other transportation options, such as carpooling.

- Combining trips with general public and people with developmental disabilities has been identified as a barrier, based on historical experience in Modoc County. The Modoc Work Activity Center, which provides services to people with developmental disabilities, was the public transit provider before the Modoc Transportation Agency. Through that experience, they learned that some people without developmental disabilities would not ride with people with developmental disabilities. General public use of public transit services increased with the establishment of Sage Stage. People with developmental disabilities almost continue to almost exclusively use Modoc Work Activity Center's transportation services.

- The cost of providing trips to a few people across long distances is prohibitively expensive.

- Insurance concerns have been identified as a barrier to establishing volunteer transportation programs.

If these barriers can be adequately addressed, this community has a good opportunity to improve the efficiency of their services and community access to their services. To begin with, key agency leaders, such as the Modoc Transportation Agency and CalWORKs, have taken a leadership role in coordination efforts and to share information and resources that will help to make these improvements, and they have expressed a willingness to continue to do so. They also have the structure of the Social Service Transportation/Citizens Advisory Council that they can work with as well as the CALnections online tool that may be used to begin sharing information and coordinating services.

Priorities

High Priority Strategies:

- Coordinate Information, Schedules, Fares and Transfers
    - CALnections
    - 5-1-1/2-1-1
    - Sagestage.com
    - Google/transit

- Plan for Emergencies

- Volunteer Transportation and Assistance Programs
    - Volunteer voucher system
    - Bus buddies
    - ITN America

- Expand service hours

- Make transportation more affordable for riders
    - Bulk transit passes
    - Subsidize bus/gas vouchers and mileage reimbursements
    -

- Joint purchasing agreements

Medium Priority Strategies:

- Streamline payment process
- Upgrade level or type of service
- Expand Service Days
- Carpool/Rideshare
- Ride Sponsorship
- Expand Service Areas
- Transit Travel Training
- Share resources
- Contract for services

Low Priority Strategies:

- Create connecting transportation routes/services for to connect residents in remote areas to intercity transportation

Recommendations

Recommended Strategies

Program Administration

The Modoc Transportation Agency (MTA) has been a significant leader in meeting as many travel needs for Modoc County residents and visitors as possible. In conjunction with the MCTC, which shares staff and facilities with MTA/Sage Stage, and as the organization that has led the efforts to develop CALnections, the MTA could build on this leadership by taking a strengthened role in managing public transit and social services transportation coordination, but increased social service agency involvement, more energetic leadership and new funding sources or programs are needed to support increased efforts.

CalWORKs is a ready ally in this work, and other major social service transportation providers that currently serve on the Social Services Transportation and Citizen Advisory Council (SSTAC) are potential candidates for championing coordination efforts and taking an active role in informing decision-making.

Recommendation: Seek funding to further centralize and enhance the management of transportation coordination projects in the MTA by adding an additional staff person who can focus on building the social service agency relationships and commitments necessary to support the success and sustainability of these projects.

Decision-Making Process

The Modoc County Transportation Commission is currently the decision-making body for regional transportation related issues. The SSTAC meets at least once per year and advises the MCTC on Unmet Transit Needs (per the TDA) and social service transportation needs.

Recommendation: Strengthen and expand the SSTAC, incorporating change agents who have decision-making abilities in their respective organizations. The Council should meet on a regular basis and provide recommendations to the Commission regarding transit and/or social service

transportation policy changes that would improve the provision and coordination of services. The SSTAC could also oversee the implementation of this plan.

Service Standards

Developing service agreements with transportation providers and following through with monitoring system performance are important tasks for transportation providers. Where doable, agencies are encouraged to develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating transit and paratransit services.

Recommendation: Transit and social service agencies should jointly identify measures that provide information on the progress of coordinated transportation objectives, and the SSTAC and Modoc County Transportation Commission should review progress annually.

NEVADA COUNTY

Transportation Needs

Unmet Needs

Affordability

Many seniors who need medical transportation to doctors and specialists in Sacramento or Roseville cannot afford even the mileage reimbursement for the volunteer services that it offers. The Department of Social Services cite a need for discounted rates for people living in the homeless shelter, for social service clients, and for indigent individuals.

Yet, the Town of Truckee highlighted the fact that keeping services affordable presents a marked challenge to securing sufficient funds for operations and maintenance. Whereas it has been five years since Gold Country Stage increased the cost of its passes, its cash fares have not been increased in 18 years. The Transit Services Commission may need to consider raising fares, because costs have risen dramatically.

Needs of Special Populations

Certain people in Nevada County are being underserved because of specific problems. Stakeholders mentioned the following issues:

- Bilingual staff are needed for Truckee Trolley and Dial-a-Ride to serve the Spanish speaking population;
- Emergency transportation should be available for people who need immediate medical appointments, when calling one day ahead is not an option;
- Bus schedules in Truckee need to be coordinated with the school bell times and afterschool activities;

- Drivers should undergo sensitivity training for interacting with people with disabilities, including training in the use of lifts and how to tie down wheelchairs in a secure manner;
- Materials need to be published in accessible formats and available at community locations;
- Accessible taxis that can accommodate wheelchairs are needed;
- Accessible vehicles in the volunteer driver program are needed;
- County planning for emergencies should be reviewed to prepare for evacuation of those with mobility devices;
- Programs that target employers could assist entry-level workers in taking transit to work; and
- A larger van for the Family Resource Center could help fill in service gaps by serving more clients and saving multiple trips to one site and the corresponding gas costs.

Infrastructure Needs

In general, better access to bus stops should be provided. Often there is no safe path to the bus stop and the stop itself requires standing in puddles in the rainy season. Waiting pads, shelters, and pathway improvements are required to increase patron comfort and convenience.

One stakeholder stated that governmental agencies need to take the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities into account when housing developments are approved. He maintains that developers who construct senior housing should be required to provide their own bus service as a condition of approval if the housing is not on a transit route. Pedestrian paths should also be required to connect the housing with bus stops.

Coordination Among Agencies

Despite current efforts described in the next section, some stakeholders noted the need for more joint planning and communication among the various agencies. In addition, coordination with the van services offered by the assisted living facilities was cited as an opportunity that should be pursued.

Public Education

Several stakeholders called for more public education about the public transit that is already available. For example, whereas residents from North San Juan reportedly had difficulty accessing social services in Grass Valley and Nevada City.

At the same time some stakeholders observed that the bus on that route appeared to be underutilized. Travel training was mentioned as a way to foster confidence in riding the bus among those who need transportation but are hesitant to use public transit.

Transportation Resources

Public Transit Operators

Gold Country Stage

Gold Country Stage provides fixed-route local bus service on 11 routes in Grass Valley, Nevada City, Penn Valley, North San Juan, Cedar Ridge, Lake Wildwood, Alta Sierra and Lake of the Pines. It also serves the Placer County cities of Colfax and Auburn. Appendix B includes the route map and schedule published by Gold Country Stage.

Gold Country Stage operates two commuter routes from Grass Valley to the Auburn Depot train station. The buses traveling this route operate as an express, with limited stops. Operating hours of Gold Country Stage are 7:00 AM to 6:30 PM Monday through Friday and 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM on Saturday. Evening service is available on one route until 10:30 PM weekdays. There is no service on Sundays or major holidays.

Gold Country Telecare

Gold Country Telecare is a private non-profit company offering demand-response transit service and other transportation support in western Nevada County to older adults and persons with disabilities. Telecare's fleet is comprised of two large buses, three mid-size buses, five small buses, five modified vans, and a company staff vehicle. All of the buses and modified vans are wheelchair accessible and are designed to transport at least two patrons using wheelchairs. Volunteer drivers use their own vehicles.

The primary transportation service of Telecare is the complementary ADA paratransit service provided to Gold Country Stage. Gold Country Stage contracts with Telecare for this service. It is a door-to-door service operating along the same routes as Gold Country Stage, though service is not provided along longer distance routes of Gold Country Stage that go beyond Grass Valley and Nevada City, which are considered commuter routes and therefore not subject to Federal ADA paratransit requirements. Passengers may be picked up and dropped off generally up to a mile from the fixed-route service.

The service is available seven days a week, from 7:00 AM to 6:30 PM Monday through Friday, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturday, and from 8:00 to 2:00 PM on Sunday. Fares are $2.00 each way, or $4.00 for trips beginning or ending outside the three-quarter mile ADA corridor.14 Reservations must be made at least one day and up to 14 days in advance. To be eligible, passengers must fill out a form demonstrating that they have a disability qualifying them for the service.

Telecare also administers the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Volunteer Program, providing transportation for ambulatory seniors (60 years and over) and persons with disabilities for health related trips outside the normal Telecare service area. Drivers are local resident volunteers who use their own vehicles and are then reimbursed $0.55 per mile to offset transportation costs. Telecare currently has five volunteer drivers, who travelled 15,370 miles to complete 847 passenger trips in FY 2006-2007 through the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Program.

The third transportation service of Telecare is a charter service for the general public. Hours of operation vary, but the same vehicles are used as are for the ADA paratransit service. In Fiscal Year 2006-2007, the charter service accommodated 7,652 passenger trips, with most of the trips provided to the Nevada City Chamber of Commerce for various in-town activities such as parades and "Victorian Christmas."

Second, the Senior Voucher Program provides discounted fares for people 60 years and over, and the Senior Sunday Service Program helps fund transportation costs for older adults to local Sunday activities.

Truckee Trolley

The Truckee Trolley is a fixed-route service provided by the Town of Truckee, with service in the greater Truckee area during the summer and to Sugar Bowl and Northstar ski resorts in the winter. Summer hours are 9:15 AM to 5:15 PM, Monday through Saturday, with one-hour headways. Winter service is seven days a week, from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, with one-hour headways. Truckee Trolley has four vehicles: two 30-passenger vehicles with two wheelchair positions each, one 12-passenger vehicle with two wheelchair positions, and one 45-passenger vehicle.

Some relatively high-density residential areas in Eastern Nevada County are not served within ¼ mile of the existing Truckee Trolley services, while other lower-density areas have access to transit service. To some degree, this is due to the "trunklike" type of services provided along the SR 267 and Donner Pass Road corridors.

Truckee Dial-A-Ride

The Town of Truckee also provides a demand-response service, called Truckee Dial-a-Ride. It is a door-to-door service and open to the general public. The service is available Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM, with a lunch-break from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM, and Saturday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, also with a lunch-break from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM. Truckee Dial-A-Ride operates year-round. Truckee Dial-A-Ride has two 16-passenger vehicles, each equipped with two wheelchair positions.

Nevada County Health & Human Services – Department of Social Services

The Department of Social Services in the Nevada County Health & Human Services Agency provides several types of transportation services for county residents. It has offices in Nevada City and Truckee.

The department administers a volunteer driver program to provide rides for veterans to the Veterans Medical Center in Reno. Passengers can be picked up anywhere in Nevada County. In 2007, five volunteer drivers provided over 500 rides to Reno. The department also issues bus passes and mileage reimbursement to clients in Social Service programs including: CalWORKs Employment and Training, General Assistance, Emergency Assistance Program, and Child Welfare.

Social service workers will also transport clients for program directed services including SSI appointments, medical appointments, etc. These services are often provided on a case-by-case basis, however, dependent on the inability of clientele to arrange other transportation.

In Fiscal Year 2006-2007, 500 passengers received transportation services through the Veteran's Van program. Approximately 300 passengers received transportation services through the other programs of the Department of Social Services.

Area 4 Agency on Aging

The Area 4 Agency on Aging (A4AA) contributes funding to several transportation services in Nevada County, including several programs of Gold Country Telecare described previously. A4AA also directly funds and administers the Volunteer and Referral Center of Nevada County.

The Center operates the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), which recruits volunteers 55 years and older for a variety of service opportunities and covers their activities with liability insurance. Some volunteers provide rides to others in need of transportation, and are reimbursed by A4AA for their mileage costs.

Social Service Organizations Providing Transportation

Family Resource Center

Family Resource Center in Truckee has a 7-passenger van (including the driver), which it uses to transport clients to appointments. Besides taking people to appointments, the van is used every Tuesday and Wednesday for transportation to enrichment classes for babies and their mothers. Staff members themselves alternate driving the van. It serves about 200 families, representing about 600 individuals, half of whom are Spanish-speaking.

A non-profit organization located in Nevada City, Sierra Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired provides medical and non-medical transportation for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, and their families. In addition to providing local transportation on demand, Sierra Services sometimes travels as far as Sacramento.

Platinum Care Transportation

Residents living outside the paratransit service area in western Nevada County requesting wheelchair-accessible service are referred by Telecare to Platinum Care Transportation, located in Yuba City (Yuba County). Platinum Care provides door-to-door non-emergency medical transportation, as well as other non-medical trips. It operates in the Nevada City/Grass Valley area on an almost daily basis. Some trips it provides are MediCal sponsored non-emergency medical trips (NEMT).

Hospice of the Foothills

Hospice of the Foothills provides day-to-day support for individuals and their families who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness and have a prognosis of one year or less. This support sometimes includes transportation services.

Hilltop Commons Seniors Residence, Eskaton Village Grass Valley, and Highgate Manor

Hilltop Commons and Eskaton Village are two housing communities for active older adults in Grass Valley. Hilltop Commons advertises “conveniently scheduled transportation for doctors/ appointments, banking, and shopping excursions.” According to the brochure, “transportation is available for scheduled visits to the nearby historic Nevada City and other local attractions”.

Highgate Manor is a facility in Grass Valley for persons with various stages of dementia, including units where spouses can live together. It advertises a “Highgate van for scheduled transportation to appointments.”

Private Taxi Services

Eight private taxi companies operate in Nevada County, six serving the Truckee area and two serving western Nevada County.

Medi-Cal Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

There are no known Medi-Cal NEMT providers located in Nevada County. Platinum Care of Yuba County provides Medi-Cal NEMT transportation on a regular basis in Nevada County, however.

Gaps

Evening and weekend hours

Although fixed-route service does exist, stakeholders noted a number of limitations. One such limitation is the lack of evening, holiday, and Sunday service. For example, entry-level workers cannot take jobs, such as those in retail, which operate evening hours. Patients with appointments after 5 p.m. at Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital cannot use public transit to get home. Students cannot attend Sierra College's night classes.

Service frequency

Another issue is the limited frequency of service. Truckee Trolley has one-hour headways. Gold Country Stage has two routes that run every 30 minutes, but the rest have headways of 45 minutes to an hour and one-half.

Out-of-county routes have even longer headways. In particular, the Department of Social Services noted a need for increased frequency to and from service agencies such as the Nevada County Government Center, Sierra Medical Clinic, the Food Bank, and Child Support Services. Another stakeholder called for more frequent service to Penn Valley, which now has headways of an hour and one-half, and to Colfax, which only has three runs a day, spaced more than three hours apart.

Extended paratransit service

Several people surveyed identified a need for paratransit beyond the ADA corridor served by Telecare. Gold Country Community Center's response stated that there is a segment of those served by its meals program who are geographically isolated, low-income elderly without access to paratransit.

The Center indicated that respondents to past surveys believe that the bus is not convenient because of multiple transfers, causing long trips and long waits for return trips.

Unserved/underserved destinations and connectivity improvements

A number of important destinations are unserved by public transit. For example, there is no service between the eastern part of the county in Truckee and the western part of the county in Grass Valley and Nevada City, the county seat. FREED noted a need for improved connectivity to Yuba and Sutter Counties, the town of Washington, and Telecare service to North San Juan.

The Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital representative also mentioned Washington and North San Juan, and added Camptonville in Yuba County and Smartville and Downieville in Sierra County from which patients have difficulty accessing the hospital.

RSVP indicated that its clients need to go to Roseville and Sacramento for some services. Glenshire, Palisade, and Tahoe Donner in eastern Nevada County were mentioned as locations needing service. Stakeholders at the workshop listed medical facilities to which transportation is needed which include UC Davis Medical Center and Shriners' Hospital in Sacramento, hospitals in Reno and Auburn dental clinics in Sacramento and Marysville. Transportation is also need to the Sierra College main campus in Rocklin and the Caltrans employment office in Marysville.

Barriers

Major Barriers to Coordination

Funding is a critical barrier to coordination. Gold Country Stage and Truckee Trolley cannot afford to run evening and Sunday service.

Legal restriction on the use of funds and vehicles owned by the Department of Social Services (DSS) is a key barrier to coordination. The DSS vehicles in west Nevada County are used to transport clients to and from programs, medical appointments, visitations, and employment training activities. Its publicly-funded transportation resources are restricted to DSS clients and are unavailable to the general public.

Insurance concerns for volunteer driver programs are also a barrier to coordination for non-profit organizations that may have willing volunteers. These organizations are reluctant to sponsor programs without some assurance that their involvement will be protected from lawsuits if an individual volunteer driver, covered only by his or her own insurance policy, is in an accident.

Geography also presents a major barrier to coordination. The hubs of population in Truckee and in Grass Valley/Nevada City are over 60 miles apart along Interstate 80 and Highway 20, which can be difficult to navigate in the winter. Cell phone reception is non-existent over portions of Highway 20. Even though land line communication is good, the physical separation in the county makes coordination a challenge.

County boundaries weave in and out in this part of the state. For example, to get to more robust services in the Kings Beach area or jobs at nearby ski resorts, Truckee Trolley must travel into Placer County. Gold Country Stage must also travel into Placer County to bring Nevada County residents to the Amtrak rail station or to jobs in Auburn.

Priorities

The following section describes eight strategies presented at the workshop, along with sub-strategies within several of the main strategies. All of the strategies are preceded by an identified need which the strategy is designed to address. This section concludes with the prioritization ranking performed by the participants.

1. *Identified Need: Increase public transit hours and frequency* - Increased service on evenings and weekends has been expressed as a need for lower-income individuals to access entry-level and other jobs that may have non-standard shift hours and for service on Sundays to social events and religious services.

2. *Identified Need: Increase transportation options* - Subsidize taxis to act as feeders for people living beyond walking distance to bus stops, private taxis could act as feeders bringing them to the bus stops.

Lifeline Shuttle

An option suggested by Gold Country Stage is a lifeline shuttle operated with its mini-vans. The shuttle, which would be ADA-accessible, would be run two or three times a week to outlying areas, such as the town of Washington. The shuttle would operate on-call and would require a minimum number of people signed up for service before it would be dispatched.

Route Deviation for Expanded Service

Gold Country Stage and Truckee Trolley currently operate fixed-route services. Allowing for deviation from the fixed-route, under special circumstances, could enable the service to better serve persons with limited mobility. In addition, a route could deviate daily only on certain runs at certain times to a facility, such as a social service center offering a class at a fixed time or a senior center offering a noontime meal service.

Rideshare Reimbursement Program: A non-profit, church, or social service agency could organize volunteer driver programs in the Truckee area, where the rider either pays for the full-cost of the trip or reimburses mileage costs. A fund could be created so that people on fixed income could apply for trip costs to reimburse their volunteer drivers.

Volunteer Exchange Program: A member who needs a ride calls and is matched with a member who has volunteered to drive. Drivers' hours are recorded in a computer program and banked for services the drivers may need to draw upon for themselves, such as pet care or handyman services. No money is exchanged between members; it is simply an exchange of skills.

Rideboards: For seniors, a Rideboard could be implemented at individual facilities, such as senior centers and assisted living homes. People post a need for a trip and others post the desire for carpoolers to share the trip in their vehicle. Riders and drivers then match themselves. Someone at the site—either a participating senior or a staff person—would need to organize it and keep the postings current.

Share Resources with Assisted Living Centers

Several assisted living centers currently provide transportation services to their residents using their own vehicles and drivers. A lead public agency could organize a roundtable discussion with the assisted living centers to explore whether there are opportunities to share resources or provide coordinated schedules.

Apply for Grant for New Van for Family Resource Center

The Family Resource Center in Truckee has limited additional capacity on its current bus to meet demand for service. It has expressed interest in applying for Section 5310 funds to purchase a larger van to increase the number of passengers that can be carried and reduce per passenger operating costs.

Bicycle Program

Establish affordable bicycle program: A sponsor could recycle bicycles by repairing them and selling them at an affordable price to low-income individuals, including college students and laborers.

Use School Buses for Additional Public Transportation

The group concurred with one Grass Valley participant who advocated that using school buses be added as a new strategy. He said that barriers to mingling students and adults on school buses should be removed, as there are no such barriers on public transportation where the two groups intermix. School buses are a resource in rural areas that cannot support fixed-route transit, particularly for people who do not qualify for ADA service.

Another participant suggested the first step might be to utilize school buses when they are returning empty after dropping off students and midday when they are not in service.

3. Identified Need: Increase ADA options - Apply for grant for an accessible taxi. Currently, no taxis in Nevada County are available that are able to accommodate a wheelchair. Accessible taxis are more expensive than a standard taxi vehicle, but the need for one has been expressed by multiple stakeholders.

Replacement vehicles would enable them to continue the level of service they currently provide. It would be beneficial to obtain vehicles that can carry larger wheelchairs, which not all other vehicles are currently able to accommodate.

4. *Identified Need: Allow same-day transportation to non-emergency medical appointments* - Increased communication while drivers are en-route would allow same day appointments on a space available basis for individuals needing urgent non-emergency medical transportation, as well as better scheduling for those whose travel needs have changed, such as a dialysis appointment running longer than expected.

5. Identified Need: Increase use of fixed-route transit by seniors and people with disabilities - Sometimes, individuals are not aware of and/or comfortable with the use of public transit. Programs and informational material could be developed to help individuals become more familiar and comfortable with these transportation services.

6. *Identified Need: increase information about transportation options among Nevada County residents Explore using 211 as a one-stop call center for transportation information* - The Department of Social Services offers a comprehensive directory of transportation resources online at www.dial211.com . The Department currently has a community group exploring the development of an enhanced call center that would be available 24 hours/seven days a week by dialing 211. There is opportunity for this to also be a one-stop transportation traveler call center. Provide information about services in multiple languages and formats.

There is a need for more service coordination between Truckee Trolley in Nevada County and TART in Placer County. In addition, better information-sharing would help riders who need to cross county lines in their travel.

7. *Construct infrastructure improvements to make travel by transit easier* - Develop sidewalk and bus stop improvement plan for Grass Valley, Nevada City and Truckee Safe access to bus

stops and provision of shelters at bus stops was noted by stakeholders as an important need to improve public transportation in Nevada County.

Add bike paths that lead to transit—added by Truckee workshop participants. There is an extensive bike path system aimed at recreational riders around Lake Tahoe. Additional bike paths are needed to connect to bus stops.

8. Identified Need: new staffing resources to implement coordination projects - Create Mobility Manager position. The Mobility Manager would be a full- or part-time staff position housed in a lead agency to oversee local coordination efforts. A Mobility Manager would provide a focal point for coordination activities in Nevada County and, by designating a staff position, would increase the probability of implementing new mobility options for residents.

Recommendations

Replacement Vehicles for Telecare

Gold Country Telecare is submitting an application for Section 5310 funds to replace three vehicles which have exceeded their useful life. This is a high priority strategy, since it is imperative that ADA paratransit in the Grass Valley/Nevada City area continue at least at the same level of service.

Increase Hours of Truckee Trolley

Truckee Trolley ends service at 5:15 PM in the summer and 6:00 PM in the winter. These hours do not serve low-income workers without a car who may work evening shifts in the restaurants catering to tourists in the Truckee/Kings Beach area. The route could then connect with the Free Night Shuttle, which runs from Squaw Valley resort to Incline Village resort from 7:00 PM until midnight, opening up potential jobs at these resorts for teenagers and for adults without reliable automobiles.

Mobility Manager

Nevada County could consider applying for funding from JARC, New Freedom, or Section 5310 funds for a Mobility Manager. The Mobility Manager would be a full- or part-time staff position housed in a lead agency to oversee local coordination efforts.

Explore Using 211 as a One-Stop Call Center

For Transportation Information

The Department of Social Services (DSS) offers a comprehensive directory of transportation resources online at www.dial211.com. There is opportunity for this to also be a one-stop transportation traveler call center. Because DSS' analysis of a call center is already underway, this strategy may be ready for implementation soon and should be pursued immediately.

Develop Sidewalk And Bus Stop Improvement Plan

Safe access to bus stops and provision of shelters at bus stops was noted by stakeholders as an important need to improve public transportation in Nevada County. These amenities would improve public transportation services for all residents of Nevada County, and are especially important for older adults and persons with disabilities.

Advocate For Development Approvals For Pathways To Transit

New developments can be required to install completed sidewalks, especially to anticipate the need for people as they age, who may need to use canes and wheelchairs. Developments can also be required to install well lit bus stops with shelters and places for people to sit or to provide connecting shuttles or pathways to existing transit routes.

Increase Public Outreach

There is a need for more service coordination between Truckee Trolley in Nevada County and TART in Placer County. Better information-sharing would help riders who need to cross county lines in their travel in the Grass Valley/Nevada City area as well.

Establish A Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program In The Truckee Area

A non-profit, church, service club, or social service agency could organize volunteer driver programs in the Truckee area, where the rider reimburses the driver's mileage costs. A fund could be created so that people on fixed income could apply for trip costs to reimburse their volunteer drivers.

Use School Buses For Supplemental Transportation

School buses are a resource in rural areas that cannot support fixed-route transit, particularly for people who do not qualify for ADA service. The first step might be to utilize school buses when they are returning empty after dropping off students and midday when they are not in service.

Replacement Vehicle For Family Resource Center

Family Resource Center in Truckee owns a six-passenger van, which it uses to transport clients to and from the Center. The van serves about 600 individuals, which requires multiple trips to pick up and return families attending activities at the Center. A larger van would be able to transport more people at one time, freeing the staff to perform their primary duties by spending more time on the goals of the program.

Lifeline Shuttle

This recommendation is for a lifeline shuttle operated with Gold Country Stage's mini-vans. The shuttle, which would be ADA-accessible, would be run two or three times a week to outlying areas, such as the town of Washington. The shuttle would operate on-call and would require a minimum number of people signed up for service before it would be dispatched.

PLACER COUNTY

Transportation Needs

Unmet Needs

Reaching medical appointments was considered one of the greatest unmet needs for those who must rely on public transit or demand-responsive services. Issues identified with existing transportation services include:

- Those needing to reach medical facilities in another city or county can encounter difficulties trying to cross geographic boundaries, especially where eligibility requirements differ.
- Most demand-responsive services require advance reservations, making it difficult to reach a doctor for a same-day appointment because of an illness or emergency.
- It is hard to predict how long a medical appointment will last, so it is difficult to schedule a timely pick-up.
- Waits for pick-up can be long and generally difficult for someone in ill health.
- Transit agency demand-responsive programs, which are all curb-to-curb, require clients to wait outside for a pick-up, and if they are late it can be a particular hardship for someone who is frail or ill, especially in hot, cold, or wet weather.
- Some people are too frail to utilize curb-to-curb service, and require greater assistance to and from the vehicle.
- Seniors with dementia can be too confused to successfully reach an appointment without escort
- Van transportation itself can exacerbate certain medical conditions.
- Demand for demand-responsive services especially by dialysis clients keeps growing, decreasing capacity for other users.
- Schedules are not always coordinated between agencies on route connections to reach medical centers.

Transportation Resources

Fixed-Route Service

- The City of Roseville offers 14 fixed routes in Roseville, along with seven morning commuter buses to downtown Sacramento, and six evening returns.
- The City of Auburn operates two fixed routes in Auburn on weekdays, and one on Saturdays.
- The City of Lincoln operates three fixed routes within the city on weekdays.
- Placer County Transit offers five intercity fixed routes, making connections between Auburn, Sacramento Light Rail, Lincoln, Rocklin, Newcastle, Penryn, Loomis, Sierra College, Colfax, Alta, and Roseville.

Demand-Responsive Service

Roseville Transit offers city Dial-a-Ride service, including same-day and general public service subject to availability. Lincoln Transit offers Dial-a-Ride service to seniors, persons with disabilities and the general public. It serves passengers anywhere within City limits plus the Galleria in Roseville.

Placer County Transit Dial-a-Ride services for Granite Bay, Loomis, Rocklin, and along Highway 49

The Consolidated Transportation Service Agency of Placer County (CTSA), operated by PRIDE Industries, offers several specialized transportation services for Western Placer County residents.

Services include weekday service between Foresthill and Auburn, and subscription transportation for clients, especially those with developmental disabilities, participating in specific social service programs. CTSA also provides transportation for a fee for non-emergency healthcare appointments within Placer County.

Supplemental/Human Services Transportation

Senior Independent Services (formerly Foothill Volunteer Center) organizes volunteer drivers to take seniors and disabled adults to local doctor's appointments, the grocery store, bank, and other local errands. Service is door-to-door with a minimum of two days' notice for residents of Granite Bay, Colfax, Auburn, Roseville, and Lincoln, with limitations on service hours to avoid traffic.

Sacramento County

As the largest in the region in terms of population, Sacramento County also has a larger number of transportation providers.

Fixed-Route Service

The Sacramento Regional Transit District (Sac RT) operates two light rail lines and 77 fixed-route bus services in its 418-square-mile service area, with planning underway for an extension of the South light rail line to Cosumnes River College.

South County Transit (SCT/Link) operates service in the southernmost part of Sacramento County. SCT/Link offers 4 local fixed routes in Galt, one route serving other communities in the Delta, and an express route along Highway 99 connecting Lodi, Galt, Elk Grove and Sacramento.

e-tran is the City of Elk Grove's transit service. It offers mobility training and 17 local bus routes within Elk Grove and Laguna, including special school year and summer school service to middle schools and high schools. e-tran also offers 8 commuter routes to Sacramento, including connections to the Meadowview light rail station, and to SCT/Link's Highway 99 service.

Folsom Stage Line offers two local fixed routes Monday through Friday, including connections to the Iron Point and Glenn light rail stations, downtown, Folsom Lake College, Intel, Kaiser, and retail centers.

Demand-Responsive Service

Paratransit, Inc. is contracted by Sac RT to provide demand-responsive services in Sacramento County (except in the service areas of SCT/Link and e-van.) They operate over 150 vehicles. Paratransit, Inc. provides trip planning and services to 24 community partners, ranging from United Cerebral Palsy to the Women's Civic Improvement Center.

SCT/Link provides Dial-a-Ride service within Galt for seniors with disabilities and the general public. SCT/Link also provides service once a week for the general public between Southeast Sacramento County and the City of Galt, and twice a week for seniors and persons with disabilities between Galt and medical facilities in Sacramento.

e-van provides Dial-a-Ride service to Elk Grove residents who are 75+ or qualify for ADA. e-van operates within Elk Grove, and also provides service to medical and other destinations within urbanized Sacramento County.

Folsom Stage provides Dial-a-Ride service within Folsom city limits for persons with disabilities and those 55 and over.

Supplemental/Human Services Transportation

Other transportation providers in Sacramento County include the following:

- The American Cancer Society's Road to Recovery program provides transportation to ambulatory cancer patients without other alternatives to reach cancer-related treatment and medical appointments.
- The Asian Community Center uses two vans to offer seniors living in zip codes 95831, 95822, 95818, and 95814 transportation from home to classes, social visits, and day care, and group shuttles to senior housing, field trips, neighborhood errands, and medical appointments, with volunteer escorts for door-through- door assistance.
- Cordova Senior Center operates two vans that bring seniors to the center for activities.
- For a donation, Galt Concilio offers Galt seniors and persons with disabilities van or car transportation, provided by volunteer drivers with a week's notice, to medical appointments in Galt, Lodi, Stockton and Sacramento.
- The Society for the Blind offers transportation for those attending classes at its midtown location, as well as for its senior retreat program and Senior Impact Program.
- Stanford Settlement offers transportation to and from the Sister Jeanne Felion Senior Center for lunch using 15-passenger vans, plus door-to-door car transportation and escort for seniors to doctor's appointments using volunteers. To be eligible, seniors must live in zip codes 95815, 95833, 95834, or parts of 95836, 95837 or 95838, and request medical escort at least 3-4 days in advance.
- United Cerebral Palsy offers weekday fixed route, door-to-door service for people with developmental disabilities to various community educational and vocational programs throughout the Greater Sacramento area.
- United Christian Center's Health Reach program is a free service running two vehicles on weekdays to transport seniors and persons with disabilities in South Sacramento to medical appointments.

Gaps

Many trips are not easy for transit-dependent patients, requiring long trips, significant wait times and multiple transfers. For example, consulting transit agency websites for current routes and schedules:

- For someone trying to reach Kaiser Roseville from Auburn, the trip requires 3 hours and 5 transfers.
- Elk Grove to Kaiser South takes 1.5 hours and 2 transfers, with most of the trip time spent waiting to transfer.
- Yuba City to Kaiser Morse takes up to 2.5 hours and 2 transfers, with half the time spent waiting for transfers.

- Outside of Tuesdays and Thursdays when SAC-MED is available, depending on the time of day, traveling from El Dorado to Mercy Folsom can take up to 1.75 hours and one transfer, with an hour wait for the transfer.
- Davis to Kaiser South takes 3.25 hours and two transfers, with almost half of the time spent waiting.
- Auburn to Pride Industries is an extremely difficult trip on public transit – routing can take up to 10 hours and three transfers. These findings bear out the difficulties reported by stakeholders with travel across city/county boundaries, even to key destinations.

Fixed-Route Transit

For seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income families who can or do use fixed route transit, besides the concerns raised above, stakeholders across the region also identified these issues:

- Insufficient service, especially midday, evenings, weekends, holidays, and in more rural areas
- Lack of fixed-route transit near where people live and serving their destinations
- Ride times that are long, especially if there is a need to transfer
- Bus stops that are far from destinations and/or have poor physical access
- Cost, especially with fare increases and transfers
- Drivers not following rules and training concerning riders who are seniors or have disabilities
- Insufficient transit information reaching the public.
- Lack of system integration across the geographic boundaries of providers, resulting in poor timing and schedule coordination, difficulty for riders to connect for intercity travel, and/or requiring multiple transfers.

Demand-Responsive Service

Concerns extended to demand-responsive service generally. Stakeholders identified the following as issues with Paratransit/Dial-a-Ride systems region wide that inhibit mobility:

- Requirements for advance scheduling
- Insufficient service in terms of hours, capacity, and geographic areas served
- Long waits for pick-ups
- Difficulty of intercity connections
- Curb-to-curb service that is insufficient for those who need additional help to/from the vehicle or to carry packages.

Barriers

Placer County

- Intercity travel is difficult from Auburn, Lincoln and other outlying towns to Roseville for jobs, shopping, programs such as PRIDE, and medical services, and across county lines to destinations in Sacramento County.
- Small print size is difficult to read in transit information
- There are limits on shopping bags/packages

- Sun City senior communities in Roseville or Lincoln do not provide transportation services for residents who, as they age, are no longer able to drive, relying instead on resident volunteers. Most volunteer-provided services cannot transport people who use wheelchairs because of issues with disabled users' limited ability to transfer from a wheelchair to a vehicle.
- Clients with similar profiles may or may not qualify for transportation services because of eligibility requirements.
- Some contracting agencies don't permit CTSA to carry other programs' clients even when going to the same destination.
- Placer County Transit schedules do not necessarily coordinate with the light rail schedule at Watt/I-80.

Sacramento County

- Transfers are sometimes across the street and/or very tight, and if a bus is missed there can be a long wait for the next one given infrequent schedules.
- Riders may not know to ask drivers to communicate when there is a potential to miss a key transfer.
- Seniors have fears of getting lost, of safety at transit stops, and of using transit at hours when many teenagers are present.
- Bus drivers are unable to enforce priority seating for elderly and disabled persons.
- Incorrect information is sometimes provided by customer service agents.
- There is a lack of notice about stop location changes, route diversions, closures, road construction barriers, and the like.
- There is no braille signage at bus stops for the blind/visually impaired.
- No system or Transportation Management Association is available to help organize accessible taxi services or shuttles in neighborhoods.
- Individuals are sometimes denied a ride on Paratransit due to lack of next-day or same-day space.
- Light rail to/from Folsom does not run late enough to accommodate nontraditional work shifts or college students taking evening classes in Folsom or Sacramento.

Recommendations

Planning and Funding

1. Work with SACOG on funding resources to expand the availability of fixed-route, demand-responsive and shuttle services.
2. Incorporate issues and recommendations raised in this Plan and SACOG's Senior and Disabled Mobility Study into local transit operator studies, such as Short-Range Transit Plans.
3. Coordinate with SACOG and the county human services departments on mapping that overlays current transit routes with concentrations of CalWORKS recipients, and review transit routes and frequencies of service in those areas for service revisions/expansions to better meet local needs

Fixed-Route Transit Connections and Service

1. Review and consider schedule revisions to improve fixed-route connections across geographic boundaries to key destinations, such as major medical facilities. Transit agencies can build on information developed by Odyssey on the connections between providers to key destinations.
2. Develop a process by which transit agencies routinely provide notice to other transit providers in the region of service cuts, revisions, route changes or expansions under consideration, so that impacts on intercity connections can be considered up front in the planning process on the part of all affected agencies.
3. Seek funding support for local shuttle services from retailers and medical providers, in partnership with transit agencies and/or social service providers. Work with large
4. medical facilities, dialysis clinics, local governments, transportation management associations, and/or community-based organizations on public/private partnerships to provide transportation services to medical appointments and/or major retail centers. Work with businesses to provide discounts/incentives to use public transit.

Transit Stops

1. Develop community partnerships to implement safety improvements at key bus stops and light rail stations. Sacramento Regional Transit has already begun working with city/county law enforcement, the business community, educational institutions and others on light rail station safety improvements. Continue and expand such efforts.
2. Work with local governments to increase crossing times at key intersections using federal guidelines for the pace of older and disabled persons, and improve intersections and sidewalks for safe travel to and from key transit stops. Work with local governments and property owners/managers on accessible paths of travel through large parking lots at key destinations.
3. Develop volunteer bus stop audit teams composed largely of seniors and/or persons with disabilities to audit conditions at stops and stations. Develop an Adopt-a-Stop or bus stop enhancement program to encourage private and nonprofit organizations to help maintain and beautify bus stops and add amenities.

Demand-Responsive Service

1. Seek funding to offer more door-to-door assistance.
2. Improve coordination between demand-responsive service providers, and seamlessness of the system for the user, regardless of which program a client is eligible for, e.g., a one-stop application form or call-in system even if the user is being served by multiple carriers.
3. Review opportunities with other demand-responsive and nonprofit providers to utilize existing vehicles for multiple program clients, possibly with assistance from SACOG's Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee. The State's Mobility Action Program will also be looking at program and funding requirements that limit transportation systems' efficient use of vehicles in serving clients across different programs.
4. Work with facilities and local governments to obtain priority parking for Dial-a-Ride vehicles at common destinations.
5. Work with hospitals and clinics to offer on-site escort services for patients using curb-to-curb transportation services but needing more assistance to reach doctor's offices.

Information and Training

1. Improve passenger notice on changes to routes, stops, construction delays, Dial-a- Ride pick-up changes, etc.
2. Increase and reinforce driver training concerning rules and practices for transporting seniors and persons with various forms of disability.
3. Educate more people about the complex issues around aging and mobility. Better publicize the effects of housing choices on senior and disabled mobility, and the public and personal costs of individual choices to locate away from transportation and other services. Develop partnerships with Realtors®, visitors' bureaus, and other sources of information for those seeking housing in an area to help inform potential senior buyers and renters and their families of transportation and other services that are or are not available in the area, to encourage more informed choices.
4. Increase outreach and education on alternatives to driving and availability of mobility training programs. Increase publicity on public transit services. Improve the readability of transit schedules, including producing large print versions. Publicize the availability of ride-sharing and matching programs.
5. Establish mobility training programs in all jurisdictions to make transit and alternatives to driving more accessible and user-friendly to seniors and persons with disabilities, including those who may never have utilized it before. Develop transit ambassador/buddy programs to provide personal assistance to seniors and persons with disabilities who are learning to use fixed-route transit.
6. Partner with blindness organizations to expand and promote cane travel training for people who are blind/visually impaired in independent mobility and how to access fixed-route transit.

Local Government Policies

1. Work with local governments on policies requiring developers to pay for bus shelters and transit stop amenities.
2. Work with local governments to require developers of "active" senior communities to provide transportation or to contribute funds to mitigate the costs of local transportation services that will be needed as residents age, through development agreements, developer fees, or other mechanisms.

New Programs

1. Collaborate on a program of "transit scrip" to enable seniors and low-income persons with disabilities to reach fixed-route transit services via a connection by taxi, volunteer driver, or community organization. Work with CBOs to become scrip recipients for services and/or distribution mechanisms to populations needing the most financial assistance for transportation connections.
2. Catalyze shared driver cooperatives, in which a full-time driver provides service to a regular group of seniors and/or persons with disabilities who share the monthly cost of the driver and receive personalized transportation service when desired.
3. Increase availability of regulated, accessible, subsidized local and intercity taxi services (Yolo, Placer, Sacramento)
4. Establish a community-coordinated volunteer driver program (El Dorado)

PLUMAS COUNTY

<u>Transportation Needs</u>

Unmet Needs

Direct Chester to Chico Service

For Lake Almanor Basin communities, direct service to Chico, without having to travel to Quincy first, was described as a major unmet need. The length of time to travel to and from Quincy, along with long waits for the Chester to Quincy service, were seen as extreme burdens, especially for community members traveling to Chico for medical appointments. Similar direct service to Susanville (without a transfer) was cited, but to a lesser degree.

Weekend Service

Some stakeholders expressed an interest in weekend service. Weekend service was cited as important for community members who work during the week and need to shop or take care of personal errands on the weekend. FRC students, especially those living in the dormitories, need weekend service. Chester residents expressed the need for weekend trips to Susanville, even if just a few times a month for shopping needs.

Other Identified Needs

Other needs included travel to areas not currently served such as Chilcoot-Vinton and Bucks Lake. Lake Almanor Basin residents also expressed an interest in more service to Westwood in Lassen County for basic medical services. They also felt the region would benefit from some type of service to the Chester Airport.

Transportation Resources

Public Transit Operators

Plumas Transit Systems

Plumas County Transit, a division of Alliance for Workforce Development Inc. operates fixed route services for Plumas County. These general public services are heavily used by clients of the county social service agencies and Feather River College (FRC) students. Scheduled routes currently serve:

- Chester to Quincy (three daily roundtrips);
- Portola to Quincy (three daily roundtrips);
- The town of Quincy (six daily roundtrips with evening service);
- Quincy to Reno (two roundtrips a week); and
- Quincy to Chico (one roundtrip a week).

Riders with disabilities can request route deviations to access stops within ¾ mile of a route. All three daily routes serve Feather River College and students account for a substantial portion of system ridership. The current route designs and timing accommodate FRC student transportation needs. The Chester to Quincy route makes a stop at Hamilton Branch, about eight and a half miles southeast of Chester, where connections to Lassen Rural Bus are available. This provides a connection to Susanville.

Social Service Transportation Providers

Plumas County Senior Services

Within Quincy, Portola, Greenville and Chester, the Plumas County Department of Senior Services provides door-to-door local rides for senior and disabled residents. Most trips are to the four local meal sites, and are available five days a week. Rides from Chester to Susanville are operated twice a month after the lunch program. Trips from Greenville to Susanville are made infrequently based on request. . Citizens over age sixty and spouses of seniors are eligible for the service. The general public can use this service, primarily for medical trips but priority is given to seniors, disabled and special needs citizens.

Plumas Rural Services

Plumas Rural Services (PRS) operates two programs for community members with developmental disabilities. ALIVE (Adults for Learning and growing, PRS provides client transportation to and from programs in Quincy, regional events, and for errands.

The Far Northern Regional Center (state funded organization with responsibility to carry out components of Developmental Disabilities Act) reimburses local agencies for program-related trips, but not for non-program rides. PRS provides rides for developmentally-disabled clients, from the Quincy, Greenville and Portola areas, to and from its facility in Quincy, primarily through PTS bus passes. Program schedules are aligned with PTS bus schedules to facilitate the use of public transportation. Other clients use local bus service for various vocational placement programs and/or independent living program trips.

PRS also provides transportation through the CASS (Community Action Support Services) program which provides respite services for developmentally disabled clients and a few elderly customers. They provide local and long distance medical trips including destinations in Reno, Chico and Redding.

The Far Northern Region Center transports a couple of clients from Chester to similar programs in Susanville operated by Lassen Life Skills and North Valley Services. The Regional Center contracts with Ready to Transport to provide rides as need up to five days a week.

Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center

Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center (PCIRC) is a private, non-profit corporation that provides direct services or assists individuals and/or families in: obtaining services; providing educational opportunities in the community; and responding to emerging needs in the community.

Veterans Services

Plumas County Veterans Services coordinates the transportation needs for veterans requiring trips to the Veterans Administration (VA) hospital in Reno. Other trips to Redding and Red Bluff are made based on client needs. Trips from this area can start as early as 5:30 AM to accommodate subsequent passenger pickups to the east, en route to Reno.

CalWORKS

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKS) is a program of the California Department of Social Services. The county purchases bus passes from Plumas Transit ($2,000 per month) to meet program needs.

Native American Organizations

The Greenville Rancheria Tribal Health Organization provides a variety of transportation services for tribal members and the general public. These include:

- Medical trips to tribal clinics in Greenville and Red Bluff;
- Medical trips to referred facilities with regular trips to Chico, Reno, Redding and Davis;
- Transporting doctors for home visits.

The health program has nine vehicles including four-wheel drive SUVs and passenger vans. Service is highly personal with most trips made on a one-on-one basis with drivers staying with patients, including overnight stays on long distance trips.

The California Tribal TANF Partnership is a tribal welfare program that extends temporary assistance and services to Native Americans in need. The Greenville location uses program vehicles (passenger cars and vans) to take clients to training, counseling, court-ordered programs etc. that help clients find and retain employment. It serves the entire county, with most trips provided to Quincy. The local office also provides transportation to Nice, where the main program is based and where regular training takes place.

The Roundhouse Council is a local non-profit entity that provides school-based programs in the Greenville area. It has a van to transport students home from tutoring programs.

Other Providers

The following organizations provide some transportation services within Plumas County:

- Environmental Alternatives and Mountain Circle Family Services provide trips for foster children; and
- The Cancer Society and Sierra Hospice offer volunteer driver programs to out-of-county locations for medical trips.

Gaps

Frequency of Service

Workshop participants and stakeholders often cited schedule problems when describing where the current transportation services are deficient in meeting their, or their client's, needs. This is more often the case for intercity travel, where the frequency of bus service is limited.

The need to wait hours for the next bus after a medical or social service appointment, was frequently described as a problem. This was particularly true for those who cannot afford time away from work or have young children to take care of.

Travel from Chester and Greenville to Quincy for social service programs was often cited when describing this concern. The need for more service to Chico and Reno from Quincy was highlighted. This is required for medical trips as well as to increase opportunities for connections to Greyhound, Amtrak and air travel.

Local service in and around Chester and Portola is currently provided as part of the service to/from Quincy. The time between runs was often cited as a deterrent for using PTS for travel in and between these communities. Portola to Graeagle travel for short, non-work trips was highlighted as such a need.

Barriers

Major Barriers to Coordination

There are few systemic barriers to coordination in Plumas County. Most transportation resources in the county are not restricted in use by funding sources or administrative policies. The large distances between sparsely populated communities do make coordination difficult at times due to:

- A demand for infrequent, but long-distance trips to varying destinations;
- Limited direct communications between providers; and
- Difficulties in sharing resources, whether vehicles with extra capacity, or professional service in support of transportation operations.

Priorities

High Priority Strategies

Workshop participants rated the following strategies the highest against the identified criteria:

- Establish Mobility Manager Function
- Provide additional PTS Service within Plumas County and to Chico/Reno
- Establish Weekend Circulator
- Formalize Volunteer Driver Program

Recommendations

Program Administration and Oversight

Effective program administration is a crucial factor in ensuring the ongoing success of a new program or project. As a first step, a project sponsor or lead agency needs to be designated to manage the project.

For each of the highest ranked strategies, a lead agency is suggested; however, in some cases numerous entities could serve in this capacity. The lead agency should have the administrative, fiscal and staffing resources needed to carry out the program on an on-going basis.

Decision-Making Process

In addition to staff administering the program or service, a more formal decision-making process will need to be in place to ensure effective program oversight As mentioned, the LTC is responsible to allocate and disburse state transportation funds, and is required to adopt this Coordinated Plan. A broader entity comprised of a wide variety of stakeholders, including users of transit, and those representing the elderly and persons with disabilities should be involved to represent community interests and advise the LTC and provide ongoing program oversight as new services are considered and/or implemented. The SSTAC is not currently active, but could be used in this capacity.

Guidelines for Transportation Provider Agreements and Service Standards

Developing service agreements and monitoring system performance criteria are important tasks for transportation providers.
Agencies are encouraged to develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating transit and paratransit services.

Common Coordination Goals and Methods

Access to Jobs and Employment

This plan focuses on special needs transportation as these needs were identified as the most critical in Plumas County. Stakeholders feel that PTS services are well positioned to provide access to both jobs and job training services. Some residents in outlying areas, and those not working conventional shifts, could benefit from ridesharing programs and/or the proposed bicycle assistance program to directly access employment opportunities or to connect with public transportation for such purposes. The demand for these services should be reviewed on a regular basis as part of a continued coordination dialog.

Volunteer Transportation

Volunteer transportation has been prioritized in this plan. Stakeholders, especially those representing community members in outlying areas, see the opportunity to coordinate various volunteers and volunteer programs in order to maximize the benefits to the community.

Coordinating/Integrating School Bus and Public Transportation Services

The need to coordinate between pupil and public transportation is not a current issue in Plumas County. Local school districts did not participate as stakeholders in developing this plan and other participants in the planning process did not cite problems or opportunities for such coordination.

Consolidated Vehicle Maintenance

In the course of conducting this study, no specific facility needs for vehicle maintenance and operations were identified. PTS and the other providers use local vendors to perform routine vehicle maintenance. The important role a dedicated maintenance program can play to the social service community is clear. Human service agencies in rural areas, typically small non-

profit organizations operating very few vehicles, often rely on local vendors with little experience with transit vehicles and specialized equipment.

Driver Training

Opportunities could be available, however, to coordinate renewal training by preparing an annual schedule of classes in which all interested parties may participate.

Variations in licenses, endorsements, and training for drivers necessitate a well designed approach if consolidated training is to be effective.

Becoming a Medi-Cal NEMT Provider

It is possible for local providers (including public agencies and non-profit organizations) to become providers of non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) under existing Medi-Cal arrangements.

SIERRA COUNTY

Transportation Needs

Unmet Needs

Stakeholders commented that there should be some connection between the two halves of the county. A timed transfer between the Downieville and Loyalton vans would extend residents' travel opportunities and could help unify the county's population. Clients from the western half of the county who need transportation to mental health services in Loyalton could continue to be served with a timed transfer connection, as well as new patients who are not currently clients.

Another important connection that is lacking is daily commuter transportation to regional transportation services at central hubs in Portola, Nevada City, and Truckee. These connections to regional transportation services would help the general public who work or need to find jobs at locations outside of Sierra County. In addition, there are residents who need frequent access to social services for CalWORKS appointments, child protective services, and residential placement for drug testing.

A daily scheduled trip to Reno might help low-income residents who need to travel to Reno for job opportunities, which are generally lacking in Sierra County. However, once the worker begins getting paid, the worker must find his or her own transportation. Often, the worker then drives a car that is unreliable, particularly over snowy mountain roads in the winter, and loses the job. A public transportation option would help remedy this situation and keep the welfare-to-work participant on the path to economic independence, according to the Health and Human Services representative.

Transportation to jobs in Sierra County is acutely needed in the summer tourist season, according to one telephone interviewee. Young people can pick and choose their jobs because of a shortage of workers for local businesses in the summer. The various lodges in the lakes

basin are particularly in need of workers, but reliable transportation is an obstacle to attracting entry-level employees for cleaning hotel rooms, busing tables, etc.

In general, stakeholders noted the need for more frequent transportation and longer service hours.

Riders from Downieville want to go to Nevada City and Reno more than twice a month and would like trips to Quincy and Truckee. Gold Country Stage in Nevada County does go to North San Juan, and there have been previous unsuccessful attempts to establish a timed transfer point with the Golden Rays van in order to increase service from Sierra County into Nevada City.

Conversations with transportation providers and other stakeholders indicated that residents in the most rural areas often have unmet transportation needs to travel to more central communities. School children living in rural areas in particular have difficulty participating in after school activities and sports, because there is only one bus home immediately after school ends. Children in the western half of the county in outlying areas, such as Allegheny and Pike, have similar problems.

Having a centralized source of information could help these residents as well as the agencies that need to know how to assist them. A travel training program could help them allay fears about using transit.

Transportation Resources

Public Transit Operators

Sierra County has no public fixed-route transit service. However, two non-profits offer demand response and scheduled service to older adults and persons with disabilities, while also providing service to the general public if space is available.

These two organizations are Incorporated Seniors of Sierra County, offering service in Eastern Sierra County; and Golden Rays Seniors, offering service in Western Sierra County. Both are non-profit organizations providing a broader range of services for older adults and persons with disabilities.

There are no private taxi services in Sierra County. The closest taxi companies are in Nevada County‘s cities of Grass Valley, Nevada City, and Truckee, and in Reno, Nevada. Incorporated Seniors of Sierra Count Incorporated Seniors of Sierra County is based in Loyalton (see Figure 4-5). It offers demand response and scheduled service in eastern Sierra County and out-of county service to Reno, Nevada and other nearby communities in Placer and Nevada Counties. Older adults and persons with disabilities have priority, but the service is open to the general public on a space available basis.

Scheduled service includes a weekly trip to Reno, weekly shopping trips within Loyalton, and four to five recreational trips per month. The most common destinations include trips within Loyalton and vicinity, particularly to the Senior Center. Other destinations include inter-city trips to Portola and Quincy in Plumas County. Less frequent trips are made to Susanville (Lassen County), Truckee (Nevada County), Lincoln (Placer County), and Sierraville. Incorporated Seniors does not make trips to western Sierra County.

Trips are frequently for medical purposes, but often for shopping, errands, recreation, and social purposes. Service is also sometimes provided to church on Sundays. The service is available from 9 am until 2 pm Monday through Friday, except on major holidays. Saturday and Sunday service hours vary, depending on the type of trips being provided, since weekend trips are for special purposes.

Golden Rays Seniors

Golden Rays Seniors of Sierra County provides demand response and scheduled service in western Sierra County, based in Downieville. The service is primarily used by older adults and persons with disabilities, but is also available to the general public if space is available.

Scheduled trips include two trips a month to Reno and two trips a month to Grass Valley and Nevada City. Golden Rays also provides regularly scheduled trips for the Lions Club and Women's Republican Club, and to the Sierra Daycare Center. Frequent demand response trips are made in-town (Downieville) but a significant number of trips are out-of-town, including Reno, Grass Valley, Nevada City, Sierra City, and less frequently to Sacramento, Marysville, and Yuba City. The most common purposes are for medical trips. Other trips are for shopping and funeral services. Golden Rays currently does not provide service on Sundays to church or any other weekend service.

In FY 2006-2007, Golden Rays provided a total of 507 trips, with ridership consistent year-round. Golden Rays operates a single van that can hold eight to nine passengers. The van is lift equipped, though unable to carry some motorized wheelchairs. On average, Golden Rays carries four passengers per trip and aims to have at least three people on the van before committing to making a trip.

Other Services

Sierra County Health and Human Services

The Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol division of the Sierra County Health and Human Service Agency in Loyalton has a Transporter Program for its clients. Seven part-time drivers are hired by the County and paid by the hour to transport clients to necessary services in four County pool cars. The cars are shared by Social Services and Welfare-to-Work clients as well.

Because of liability concerns, the County does not allow the general public to ride in the pool cars along with the clients. Nor are the therapists allowed to transport clients in their private vehicles. The agency does not have a specific line item for transportation, but absorbs the cost within its overall budget.

School Bus Services

Service to transport students to and from school is provided by contractors to the Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District, which serves all of Sierra County and the southern portion of Plumas County.

Bicycle Shuttle

During the summer months, several privately operated shuttles carry people and their mountain bikes uphill from Downieville to various trailheads.

Gaps

The following examples of other transportation gaps are from both the Stakeholders' Workshop and the May 2007 minutes of the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council's meeting on Unmet Needs. Gaps include a lack of service for:

- People living in the Nevada County communities of North San Juan and Grass Valley and in the sparsely populated areas of Allegheny and Pike who want to schedule appointments at the Western Sierra Medical Clinic in Downieville.
- Students who want to attend Feather Ridge College in Quincy
- People with disabilities who could attend the adult daycare program under development by Golden Rays Seniors
- Welfare clients who receive food stamps once a month and need to transport large amounts of groceries
- People with disabilities who use power wheelchairs and scooters, which cannot be easily accommodated on the current Incorporated Seniors vans

Barriers

Major Barriers to Coordination

Agency funding and regulatory restrictions are a key barrier to coordination. For example, HHSA cannot transport members of the public in its vehicles due to liability insurance restrictions, even if there is space available. In a county with few resources, this existing publicly-funded program is essentially unavailable to the general public.

Insurance concerns for volunteer driver programs are also a barrier to coordination for senior centers and service clubs who may have willing volunteers. These organizations are reluctant to sponsor programs without some assurance that their involvement will be protected from lawsuits if an individual volunteer driver, covered only by his or her own insurance policy, is in an accident.

Geography also presents a major barrier to coordination. The population centers in Loyalton and Downieville are separated by about 50 miles along the winding roadway of Highway 49, which can be particularly difficult to navigate in the winter. Smaller communities off Highway 49 are even more isolated. The physical separation in the County makes coordination a challenge.

The political and geographic complexity is a barrier to coordination. For example, to transport residents to more robust services in the Nevada City/Grass Valley area of Nevada County, Golden Rays must pass first through Yuba County. To get to services in Reno, Incorporated Seniors must pass first through eastern Nevada County. Inter-county coordination can be necessary for some strategies to be implemented, involving many different jurisdictional entities and levels of government.

Priorities

The following section describes six strategies presented at the workshop, along with sub-strategies within several of the main strategies. All of the strategies are preceded by an identified need which the strategy is designed to address. This section concludes with the prioritization ranking performed by the participants.

1. Identified Need: increase information about transportation options among Sierra County residents

One-Stop Transportation Call Center

A One-Stop Transportation Call Center could be a useful focus for transportation information. It would be a source of up-to-date information on not only Sierra County's local transit providers – Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors – but also on the providers in surrounding counties.

2. Identified Need: expand service area and frequency of trips to other areas Increased Daily Service through Timed Transfers.

Option A: Timed transfer with Gold Country Stage at San Juan in Nevada County Riders from Downieville want to go to Nevada City more than the current twice a month provided by Golden Rays.

San Juan. The current schedule for Gold Country Stage is as follows:

Funding could be sought from JARC funds if it could be established that low-income residents seeking or retaining work in the Nevada City/Grass Valley communities could be accommodated by the 7:20 am transfer times. The arrival in Grass Valley would also allow workers to connect to the Gold Country Stage bus to Colfax at 8:20 am, expanding job opportunities into Placer County.

An application for New Freedom Program funds could be justified if people with disabilities would be served by gaining greater access to services in the Nevada City/Grass Valley communities.

Option B: Timed transfer mid-county between Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors Currently there is no public transportation between the eastern and western halves of Sierra County. A timed transfer between Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors at a mid-point, such as Sierra City or Sierraville, would extend residents' travel opportunities and could help unify the county's population.

3. Identified Need: provide transportation options for work and school trips, to retain independence for seniors, and to supplement existing van services

Establish Ridesharing Programs

The following are examples of formalized carpool programs that have been implemented elsewhere and could be adapted in Sierra County .

Option A: Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program

Option B: Volunteer Exchange Program

Option C: Rideboards

Option D: School Pool

Utilize Summer Bicycle Shuttles for Supplementary Transportation

The bicycle shuttles could be utilized as space permits on their regular run on weekdays to drop off people at work sites along the route. Expanding the shuttle service for general public passengers would provide an additional mobility option with the advantage that equipment and operators are already in place.

4. Identified Need: increase reliability of owner-operated automobiles

Basic Auto Maintenance Program

A class offered in basic automobile maintenance would help these owners keep their cars running longer while defraying the labor costs of hiring a professional mechanic. By offering the class in Sierra County, prospective students can attend in their own community instead of having to put even more miles on their car driving to a class in another county.

5. Identified Need: new staffing resources to implement coordination projects

Mobility Manager

Rather than selecting individual strategies, Sierra County could consider applying for funding from JARC, New Freedom, or Section 5310 funds for a Mobility Manager. The Mobility Manager would be a full or part time staff position housed in a lead agency to oversee local coordination efforts.

A Mobility Manager would provide a focal point for coordination activities in Sierra County and, by designating a staff position, would increase the probability of implementing new mobility options for residents.

6. Identified Need: accommodate electric wheelchairs and scooters

Section 5310 Vehicle Application

An application could be made to Caltrans for an additional vehicle that would better accommodate electric wheelchairs and scooters. In the discussion preceding the votes in Downieville, one participant noted that Lassen College had taught an auto maintenance program in the community for many years. This participant had attended the program, considered it very valuable, and strongly urged the others to vote for it to return, using all his three votes on that one program.

Participants were concerned about the liability individuals might face in a volunteer driver program or liability incurred by rideboards sponsored by the County or senior centers. They said they needed more information about how other counties had successfully structured the various carpool programs, not only concerning the liability, but also the level and funding source of mileage reimbursements.

The strategy to better accommodate electric wheelchairs and scooters was not considered applicable in Downieville, since Golden Rays can already transport people using these mobility devices.

Recommendations

Access to Jobs and Employment

To ensure that people have working automobiles, a Basic Automobile Maintenance Class is recommended as a priority strategy.

Another strategy is to increase the hours and frequency of public transit. Since transit is limited, two projects to create timed transfers—one in mid-Sierra County and one with Nevada County—are recommended.

If a position of Mobility Manger is created, a key task could be to develop viable carpool programs. Such programs are a low-cost way to increase access to jobs and employment out of Sierra County.

Volunteer Transportation

No volunteer programs are currently in operation in Sierra County. Volunteer drivers could help provide supplemental transportation to the services provided by Golden Rays and Incorporated Seniors, as well as rides for students after extracurricular activities. Therefore, the recommended high priority strategies include establishing such a program in Sierra County.

There were concerns over accident liability when an agency sponsors a volunteer driver program. The issue of agency liability is frequently raised as an obstacle to the implementation of volunteer driver programs. Efforts are underway through agencies such as Nonprofits United to create special insurance packages for individuals or agencies that offer an initial layer of coverage when a volunteer is operating a vehicle. This would supersede the coverage provided by the individual or agency when not in volunteer service. Early indications from Nonprofits United are that such coverage may be on the horizon.

School Transportation

A ridesharing program could help students stay later, for both extracurricular and supplemental academic support, and get a ride home with another student whose parent (or another trusted driver) is able to provide transportation. A rideshare program could be administered by an employee at the school, member of the PTA, or other individual who is entrusted to organize safe transportation for students.

Opportunities for Coordination

There may be opportunities to use school buses to transport the general public when the buses are running empty after dropping off students. Adult riders could then make their return trip when the bus travels to the school to pick up students at the end of the school day. Another option would be to institute a specific public transit route midday. The following discussion describes the state of combining school busing and public transit in California as well as some of the obstacles that might need to be overcome to implement this strategy.

Coordinating/Integrating School Bus and Public Transportation Services

In selected rural communities across the US, school districts are transporting students – particularly in high school – via the local/regional public transit system. In other rural areas, the general public is being transported on school buses, more often at times when the school buses

are not being used for student transportation, but in some cases, at the same time. And, in other communities, the same private carrier that operates student transportation services also provides public transit and/or paratransit services under a separate contract. One of the issues surrounding the inability to serve rural communities with public transit is unpaved roads. This has not been an obstacle for school buses, however.

Program Administration

Effective program administration is a crucial factor in ensuring the ongoing success of a new program or project. As a first step, a project sponsor or lead agency needs to be designated to manage the project.

For each of the highest ranked strategies, a lead agency is suggested; however, in some cases numerous entities could serve in this capacity. The lead agency should have the administrative, fiscal, and staffing resources needed to carry out the program on an on-going basis.

Decision-Making Process

In addition to staff administering the program or service, a more formal decision-making process will need to be in place to ensure effective program oversight. The SSTAC will advise the Transportation Commission to provide ongoing program oversight as new services are considered and/or implemented.

Guidelines for Transportation Provider Agreements and Service Standards

Program Administration includes developing service agreements with transportation providers and following through and monitoring system performance. Agencies are encouraged to develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating dial-a ride services.

SISKIYOU COUNTY

Transportation Needs

Projected Transportation Needs

Intercity connections within the county are served on weekdays by the local public transit agency, STAGE. However, some gaps in service currently exist, most of which arise from the typical challenges of serving a smaller, dispersed population. These needs are described below.

Circulator Service

Siskiyou County service providers identified the need for a circulator service in key areas, including Yreka, Weed, Mt. Shasta, Dunsmuir and McCloud. People who are dependent on others for transportation report that it is difficult to access the public transit routes.

Some agencies provide door-to-door demand responsive service, such as the Yreka Senior Center. These services are available for limited purposes, at limited times, within limited locations and for limited populations.

Expanded/Flexible Service Hours

STAGE does not run on evenings, weekends, or holidays, and no social service agencies routinely offer weekend service. Evening and weekend service is particularly important for people with lower incomes who are more likely to work non-traditional hours and days, people who need to take late classes at the College of the Siskiyous (until 10:00 PM) and people who need travel assistance on the weekends for shopping, recreational or other needs.

Because of the long distance between cities in the county and the design of STAGE's commuter service, the frequency of intercity trips are reportedly difficult for seniors and people with disabilities.

The STAGE schedule requires longer layovers in cities than may be viable for people with physical or developmental concerns, so stakeholders have identified a need for more frequent trips.

Assistance For Seniors And People With Disabilities

Travel assistance is important for some seniors and people with disabilities.

Demand responsive, door-to-door service is needed for those people who require assistance getting from their homes, into the vehicle and directly to their destinations. This need is particularly important for people who are in need of immediate medical care but may not be eligible for transport by an ambulance, since STAGE does not provide ADA complementary service, as previously mentioned.

Information and Training

According to community members as well as information reported in the current Short Range Transit Plan, contact information for STAGE is difficult to find in the phone book if people do not know it is operated by a County department, which ordinary citizens are not likely to know. This information barrier limits people's ability to make on-call stop requests. In addition, there is no coordinated information source about the various transportation services available in the county.

Stakeholders also identified a need for training on how to use public transit services. Reportedly, some community members do not use STAGE services because they do not know what to expect and/or are unsure of when and how to use these services to meet their needs.

After-school Programs

Transportation is not provided for students who participate in after-school activities. This particularly impacts families with lower incomes, potentially preventing the youth in these families from being involved in the full range of school opportunities.

Infrastructure Needs

Infrastructure needs include expansion of radio tower capacity, more covered and accessible bus stops, curb cuts, more vehicles to accommodate bus overflow, and reliable wheelchair lifts.

Radio communication - Radio towers are at capacity, so any growth in radio communication needs with expanded public transit service to additional areas in the county could not be accommodated within the current infrastructure.

Bus stops – Flagged stops are currently the norm in Siskiyou County, which have been identified as being less accessible for seniors and people with disabilities. Confusion about where and how to access the bus has been a result of this practice.

In addition, seniors and people with disabilities have expressed a need for a place to sit while waiting for the bus; the lack of seating has made public transit inaccessible for some.

Vehicles and wheelchair lifts – Some STAGE trips are highly trafficked, and as efforts to improve services are made, some have become over-full, potentially requiring the availability of additional vehicles.

Some concern has also been expressed about the reliability of wheelchair lifts on vehicles.

Roadway safety improvements – The majority of STAGE routes are on highways, and some are on high-speed, low-visibility roadways that raise safety concerns.

Curb cuts and left-hand turn protection have been identified are not available in some key areas where these safety concerns exist.

Emergency and Safety Needs

Emergency evacuation transportation - No emergency evacuation services have been identified for county residents in general, and these services are particularly important for the seniors, people with disabilities and people with lower incomes who are dependent on others for transportation.

Cost Mitigation and Coordination

Related to all of these issues is the issue of inadequate funding. Per capita costs are much higher for organizations trying to provide services for a population that is relatively small and spread out over an expansive geographic area.

Stakeholders urged the participation of all major stakeholders in coordination efforts in order to both improve services and reduce costs.

Transportation Resources

Public Transit Operators

Siskiyou County STAGE (Siskiyou Transit and General Express) provides transportation for the general public up and down the I-5 corridor. The system operates a fixed-route service designed primarily for intercity trips within the county. No paratransit service is offered. However, the system has accommodated requests as needed.

All of STAGE's 14 buses are wheelchair equipped and can accommodate 28 to 40 passengers. Bike racks are also available during daylight savings time. Recent purchases include one new bus in 2006 and seven more in 2007. Most buses run on 60-minute frequencies between the

hours of 7:00 AM and 8:00 PM on weekdays. No service is offered on weekends or county holidays.

STAGE's buses average 38,000 miles a month. Ridership has leveled off since 2006, with about 95 million riders per year STAGE recently started serving the Lake Shastina area and is considering circulator routes in Yreka and the southern part of the county. Currently, they have six routes serving various regions of the county:

- Routes 1 and 2 serve the south county corridor and run along I-5 between Yreka and the south county area, serving Grenada, Weed, and Mt. Shasta, with some trips serving Dunsmuir and others serving McCloud. In addition, several runs per day serve Gazelle along historic route 99. Service is provided weekdays all year, including commuter express runs for commuters from southern county to jobs in Yreka.

- Route 3 serves the north county corridor, running east along Highway 3 from Yreka to Montague and into the south county area, including Mt. Shasta, Dunsmuir and McCloud. Service is provided weekdays, including commuter express runs from Montague to Yreka.

- Route 4 serves the Scott Valley corridor and runs west along Highway 3, linking Yreka, Fort Jones, Greenview and Etna. Service in Scott Valley is provided in three round trip runs daily, between 11:30 AM and 6:00 PM.

- Route 5 serves the Klamath River corridor, linking Yreka, Klamath River, Horse Creek, Hamburg, Seiad Valley and Happy Camp along Highway 96. This corridor is served two times per week. A single roundtrip is provided from Happy Camp to Yreka every Monday and Friday. The bus leaves Happy Camp at 7:35 AM and arrives at the STAGE office at 9:30 AM. The bus departs the STAGE office at 3:00 PM for the return trip to Happy Camp. The five-hour layover allows time for shopping and other business in Yreka.

- Route 6 links Lake Shastina to Mt. Shasta, running from Lake Shastina south along A29 west along Highway 97, and south along I-5 to Mt. Shasta. Service is provided four times each day.

Social Service Programs

Many social service programs in Siskiyou County offer transportation as a secondary service in support of the primary services they offer. Some of these programs have staff or volunteers who directly provide transportation in agency-owned vehicles, while others use staff members' privately owned vehicles and reimburse mileage. Some of Siskiyou County's social service programs also offer transportation in the form of bus passes, by contracting with transportation providers, providing gas and parking vouchers, and reimbursing mileage and carpool/fuel sharing costs.

The following list summarizes the transportation programs offered by social service programs in the county. A detailed inventory of these transportation services can be found at the end of this chapter.

Seniors and People with Physical Disabilities

Golden Umbrella is a non-profit agency serving seniors and people with disabilities within Siskiyou and Shasta Counties. It provides case management to seniors and people with disabilities in the hopes of enabling people to live safely in their own homes. The Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) serves Shasta, Lassen, Trinity, Modoc and Siskiyou counties, providing a variety of services for qualified seniors, including transportation on a demand basis for individual passengers.

Madrone Hospice, Inc. transports seniors and people with disabilities who are clients at the Adult Day Health Care Center in Yreka. Two private vans are used to provide door-to-door transportation from Mt. Shasta, Lake Shastina, Scott Valley and Montague to and from the Center in Yreka, Monday through Friday.

Mt. Shasta Recreation and Parks District, Senior Center, provides transportation for the elderly to senior centers, shopping districts, and medical sites. They also provide site nutrition and home delivered meals.

City of Yreka's Senior Program provides curb-to-curb transportation for seniors ages 60 and over. Their routes are limited to within Yreka's city limits. Their two drivers serve approximately 220 clients annually. The program also provides site nutrition and home delivered meals.

Siskiyou County Human Services Department (SCHSD) Adult and Children's Services provides STAGE passes or gas vouchers, in some cases, to dependent and elderly adult clients who need assistance to attend medical appointments or emergency services. Department transporters are also used in certain situations.

People with Developmental Disabilities

Far Northern Regional Center is a non-profit contractor for the California State Department of Developmental Services that coordinates and funds comprehensive services, including transportation, for people with developmental disabilities to help them access work and community needs. Far Northern distributes funding to local providers in Siskiyou County as well as several other northern California counties for the direct provision of these services.

They provide demand response transportation services while their clients are at the center and fixed-route transportation to access work programs through the center. Funding is received from Far Northern Regional Center.

Goodwill, located in Medford, OR, provides contracted transportation services to Siskiyou residents with developmental disabilities for medical appointments and shopping.

CASS provides medical transportation for low income parents with a child with developmental disabilities. They also transport Far Northern board members (DD clients) to board meetings in Chico and Redding. Their social recognition program transports their 47 participants all over Grant's Pass, Medford, Redding, etc.

Students and Children

The College of the Siskiyous Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) program provides gasoline vouchers and STAGE bus passes to eligible students who are single parents on CalWorks or TANF.

College of the Siskiyous Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) supports eligible students who historically have been underrepresented in education. STAGE bus passes are available between the college and various towns throughout Siskiyou County. The passes are meant to assist with the transportation cost between college and home. In addition, gas vouchers are given at orientation.

Siskiyou County California's Children Services (CCS) Program serves children needing out of county transport for special health care needs. These services are available to Siskiyou County residents from birth to age twenty-one.

Siskiyou County Human Services - Adult and Children's Services transports children who are clients of the program to visits with family and medical appointments using Department transporters.

Dole Transportation operates school buses and charter services for children and private parties. This private, for-profit company has 23 buses and 16 cars available for flexible service anywhere within Siskiyou County.

Low Income

Siskiyou County Human Services CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work program assists individuals receiving cash assistance in their transition from dependency to self-sufficiency. After meeting eligibility requirements, clients may receive STAGE passes or mileage reimbursement.

Occasionally, clients will be transported to medical appointments or SSI hearings using County vehicles.

Other Services

Mercy Mt. Shasta Medical Center Auxiliary Transportation System provides transportation to individuals with no other means of reaching Mercy Hospital, regional cancer centers, and doctors. Service is available for patients within Mt. Shasta, Weed, and Lake Shastina.

Siskiyou County Veteran's Services arranges transportation for eligible veterans to medical appointments to VA Medical Centers outside of Siskiyou County. Specifically, they offer routes to Redding, Martinez, Palo Alto, White City and Portland, Oregon as well as to Reno, Nevada. In addition, gas vouchers and bus tickets are available for eligible veterans.

Siskiyou County's Behavior Health program transports people with mental illnesses to and from programs all over the county and state with their 39 available vehicles.

Fairchild Medical Center provides transportation to hospital services within the Siskiyou County community for clients that have no family or public source of transportation. Service is provided with private vehicles and one Paratransit van, available on demand.

The HELP Center provides transportation for medical, counseling, and shopping purposes on an emergency only basis.

Community Resource Centers are non-profit organizations independently established within Dunsmuir, Happy Camp, McCloud, Montague, Mt. Shasta, Scott Valley, Tulelake, Weed, and Yreka. Demand response transportation services are provided, but this service is available for emergency use only as a last resort, when STAGE is not running.

Siskiyou County Human Services – Adult & Children's Services provides STAGE passes and gasoline vouchers to parents who need assistance in order to attend court-ordered visits with their children, medical appointments and/or required services.

Gaps

Service to Unserved/Underserved Areas

Several areas in the county have very little transportation services available to them, since bus service is only available along major highways.

- The Dorris/Tulelake area, in the northeastern part of the county, has no access to public transit, and no Siskiyou County providers regularly offer transportation services in the area.

- The senior center in Alturas, CA (Modoc County) provides home meal delivery to seniors who live in Tulelake but does not provide other transportation services.

- Copco, northeast of Hornbrook but not on any major highways, is another small community reportedly in need of transportation services.

- Happy Camp, in the northwestern part of the county on Hwy 96, has "lifeline" access to public transit. A single roundtrip is provided from Happy Camp to Yreka every Monday and Friday. Increased access to Yreka is desired.

- Somes Bar, south of Happy Camp on Hwy 96 in the western part of the county, currently receives no public transit services. However, the Karuk Tribal Health Program provides transportation to their clinic in Happy Camp for tribal members, upon request and when available.

- Lake Shastina, southeast of Yreka and northeast of Weed, is now being served by STAGE. However, it was reported by one stakeholder that there is no service to the area. Lake Shastina is a growing retirement area with potentially increasing numbers of people who will need access to public or other transportation services.

Barriers

Barriers to Coordination

Barriers to coordination between public transit and social service transportation providers include:

- Some funders limit the type of passengers that service providers can transport.

- Political will may also be a barrier to coordination efforts that aim to provide connecting transportation services to areas outside of the county.
- Funding, in general, is a potential barrier to coordination efforts. It will be necessary to utilize STAGE and social services agency sources of funds for coordination projects.

Priorities

High Priority Strategies :

- Public education program
- Bus stops and benches
- Communication between cities, STAGE and interregional providers
- Better and more frequent connections between and within communities
- Mobility management center

Medium Priority Strategies :

- Travel assistants (including incentives)
- Add consumers to local transportation commission
- Address insurance/liability issues
- Grants clearinghouse

Low Priority Strategies :

- Purchase vehicles/other infrastructure needs
- Ride match/carpool
- Subscription service for social
- service agencies

Recommendations

Decision-Making Process

Recommendation: Form a cooperative planning group to advise the LTC on the implementation of projects related to the coordinated plan. The planning group could consist of community members and policy makers in city and county governments and in social service agencies that

provide transportation services. All major transportation providers could be included in the planning group.

Program Administration

Recommendation: STAGE could be the primary administrator for all projects that involve public transit as a major component. For other projects in which social service agencies are the primary providers, the planning group could identify a primary administrator.

Service Standards

Developing service agreements with transportation providers and following through with monitoring system performance are important tasks for transportation providers. Agencies are encouraged to develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating transit and paratransit services.

Recommendation: Transit and social services agencies could jointly identify measures that provide information on the progress of coordinated transportation objectives, and the planning group and/or SSTAC and the LTC could review progress annually.

TEHAMA COUNTY

Transportation Needs

Summary of Unmet Needs

This assessment process revealed several significant unmet needs among transit-dependent individuals for:

- Weekend public transit service
- Weekday evening public transit service
- Expanded public transit service to include unserved areas in the county and additional parts of the county on weekends (beyond Red Bluff)
- More affordable and accessible services to medical facilities and appointments
- More options for employment trips
- More paratransit options for seniors

Transportation Resources

Tehama County Public Transit Services

Tehama Rural Area Express (TRAX)

The County regional transit system, Tehama Rural Area Express (TRAX), operates local, express, direct and deviated fixed route service as well as paratransit services (ParaTRAX) throughout Tehama County. The TRAX service area includes the cities of Corning, Red Bluff and Tehama, as well as the unincorporated communities along Highway 99E and Highway 99W, including Dairyville, El Camino, Gerber, Las Flores, Los Molinos, Los Robles, Proberta, and Richfield.

TRAX remains an effective and important link to Red Bluff, Corning and Tehama for residents in the unincorporated communities. TRAX also provides service to Shasta College students via a connection with the Shasta College bus in Red Bluff.

TRAX service consists of city routes in Red Bluff and Corning, commuter routes along Highways 99E & 99W connecting to city routes and Shasta College service to Redding, and regional routes providing linkage with unincorporated communities.

TRAX provides fixed route transit service and complementary ADA paratransit within Red Bluff known as ParaTRAX; it provides route deviation service, deviating only for people with ADA certification, elsewhere in its service area. Deviated route service is operated in conjunction with regular TRAX regional routes; pickup and return trips must coincide with regularly scheduled TRAX routes. Deviations of up to ¾ mile off the route may be requested by phone, a minimum of 12 hours to a maximum of seven days in advance. Requests can be left on a message machine anytime.

Service is operated from 6:30 AM until 6:30 PM Monday through Friday, with no weekend service. Buses run on fixed schedules and are accessible at any designated bus stop or by "flagging" down a bus anywhere along the route where it is safe to stop. In addition, off-route deviations may be requested in advance as mentioned above. TRAX uses 11 buses – six coaches and five cutaways. All TRAX buses have bike racks, are wheelchair lift equipped, and have relatively short wheelbases so they can operate in rural areas.

ParaTRAX ADA Complementary Paratransit Service

ParaTRAX is Tehama County's ADA paratransit service. Both TRAX and ParaTRAX are operated by Paratransit Services.. The existing contract between the County and Paratransit Services provides for a "turn key" operations of fixed route, ADA paratransit, route deviation, as well as a volunteer program METS.

The service area for ParaTRAX is within ¾ miles of the fixed transit routes. It covers the greater Red Bluff area, and represents the original general public demand response service area previously known as VanTrans.

In 2006 the general public ridership was shifted to the fixed route TRAX and the demand response service was limited strictly to ADA certified riders in the greater Red Bluff area. ParaTRAX operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturdays; however, hours will be extended to match TRAX hours on request with a 24-hour advance notice. Note that ParaTRAX operates on Saturday, where TRAX operates only on weekdays. This Saturday service is over and above that which is minimally required by the ADA, and is funded by the City of Red Bluff.

Advance reservations are required, with an extra charge for same-day service; same-day requests are on a first come-first served basis. Personal care attendants ride for free, while companions pay the same fare as the ADA rider.

METS – Medical Transportation Services

The Tehama County Department of Public Works also administers the Medical Transportation Service (METS) program. The daily operations of the volunteer driver program was shifted from

Public Works to the transit contractor Paratransit Services for purposes of consolidation and operational efficiencies in July of 2008.

METS provides non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) for ambulatory passengers to medical facilities in Butte, Glenn, Shasta and Tehama Counties. Transportation is provided by approximately 10 local volunteer drivers who use their own vehicles to transport clients to medical appointments. Volunteers are reimbursed at the existing IRS rate, which is currently $0.585 (fifty eight and a half cents) per mile.

METS service is available to Tehama County residents who are unable to find transportation to medical appointments through friends, family, or public transit. Clients must schedule rides at least two working days in advance of their appointment. Persons using wheelchairs are not accommodated since the wheelchairs will not fit into most personal cars, and the volunteer drivers do not wish to be responsible for transferring people in and out of wheelchairs.

Note that the American Cancer Society, based In Redding, and Tehama County work as partners, such that when a cancer patient in Tehama County calls the ACS to request transportation, they are referred to METS. Then ACS reimburses the METS program at .14 cent per mile for each trip.

For fiscal year 2007-2008, METS transported close to 800 clients, or approximately 145 per month.

Other Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Providers

Merit Medi-Trans

Merit Medi-Trans is a private for-profit Medi-Cal certified medical transportation carrier providing non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) as qualified below. Merit will pick up from residences within 10 miles of Red Bluff for a charge of $40. Merit will also pick up from medical and residential facilities throughout the county.

For residences outside a 10-mile buffer around the city limits, they will only pick up on a private-pay basis. The charge for these trips is a $26 base fee plus $2.25 per mile. Destinations include any medical facility within Tehama County or beyond; however, trips sponsored by MediCal or Insurance must be pre-authorized. Merit will also serve Medi-Cal-sponsored trips originating outside the 10-mile limit if the patient is (1) going to dialysis at least 3 times a week, (2) going to physical therapy or rehabilitation at least 6 times a month, or (3) going for cancer treatments at least 6 times a month. There is no special status for trips to and from Corning, as it is wholly outside the 10-mile limit and hence follows all the rules as above.

As of July 2008, the number of Medi-Cal trips has been reduced due to a reduction in their reimbursement.

Northern Express Transportation (formerly “Platinum Care, Precious Cargo”)

This private for-profit service provides non-emergency medical transportation to people with disabilities on a private-pay basis only; the company does not bill insurance or Medi-Cal. Based in Redding, Platinum will pick-up anywhere in Tehama County. The charge is $25 to be picked up plus $2.50 per mile. The company has 10 accessible vans.

American Cancer Society - Volunteer Program (Redding)

The American Cancer Society in Redding provides information referral services to local resources for transportation and, if none is available, will provide transportation services for their clients – exclusively cancer patients - regardless of income. Clients can receive monetary reimbursement for travel by car to chemotherapy or radiation treatments or can be assigned a volunteer driver to drive them to and from their treatments. The ACS provides an array of transportation-related services for cancer patients, including:

- Funding transportation to assist cancer patients to reach medical treatment. Priority is given to radiation and chemotherapy patients.
- Arranging or providing volunteer drivers to take clients to medical appointments.
- Reimbursing or subsidizing transit and taxi fares or personal car mileage. If they cannot provide a volunteer driver they will reimburse up to 14 cents per mile to the patient or family to drive the patient to cancer treatment. The cap is currently $400 per fiscal year (Sept. 1st to Aug. 31st).

Qualified cancer patients calling ACS for transportation from Tehama County are referred to METS; ACS reimburses METS for services rendered to these patients.

Catholic Healthcare West / Mercy Medical Center

Mercy Medical Center, a private non-profit hospital in Redding, operates a Mercy Outreach Van program which provides transportation for patients 30 minutes or more from Mercy Care Center. The service is free to the patients, and drivers are volunteers. The hospital owns and maintains three vans, one of which is wheelchair accessible.

Patients call the service in advance to schedule rides, and are picked up from and returned to their homes. Many riders have recurring medical appointments such as cardiac rehabilitation or radiation treatments for cancer. Van schedules depend on treatment schedules, with cardiac rehabilitation occurring on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Veteran's Administration Shuttle (Redding)

The Veteran's Administration in Redding provides transportation to medical appointments for veterans. The medical shuttle runs from Redding to Sacramento Monday through Friday, serving all the towns along Route 5, including Red Bluff, Orland, Willows, etc. On Mondays and Wednesdays, another VA shuttle starts in Redding and goes through Martinez to San Francisco. The service is fully funded by the VA, and ridership is not tracked.

Service Transportation Providers

Transportation is also provided by a range of social service agencies serving their clients in Tehama County. While some agencies provide transportation directly, others arrange for it on behalf of their clients by contracting with others, or by subsidizing transit fares. Most of the agencies listed below have a particular focus on the needs of those traveling to medical appointments, people with disabilities, or low-income individuals; however, some agencies may serve a broader group or a wider variety of trip purposes.

Tehama County Senior Nutrition Program

The Tehama County Senior Nutrition Program provides home-delivered meals and congregate meals to elderly residents in Red Bluff, Corning, and Los Molinos. In 2007, the Nutrition Program provided 3,100 trips to congregate meals, home delivery of more than 24,500 meals, and 16,000 congregate meals. In Red Bluff, they are able to both deliver food to homes and also bring people to the meal sites and take them home. In Corning, they are only able to deliver meals to homes, and take people home from meals at the congregate sites. As time allows, the driver will also stop at stores or pharmacies on the homeward bound trip, as time allows.

The fleet consists of three vans and one sedan; the vehicles are used for home delivery in all three communities and passenger transportation to the congregate sites in Corning and Red Bluff. There is no transportation provided to the congregate site in Los Molinos.

Far Northern Regional Center / North Valley Services

The Far Northern Regional Center (FNRC) provides services for persons with developmental disabilities. The center serves the following counties in Northern California: Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity. In Tehama County, the FNRC contracts with North Valley Services to provide transportation for their clients.

Based in Red Bluff, North Valley Services (NVS) is a private non-profit agency providing a variety of services to nearly 260 developmentally disabled clients in Tehama, Glenn and Lassen Counties. Clients are transported daily to a number of different programs using TRAX or ParaTRAX when feasible, or by the NVS fleet when public transit is unable to meet the client's specific needs.

NVS provides door-to-door fixed route service Monday through Friday on seven routes, although the routes change fairly often depending on the clients being served. The fleet consists of approximately 40 vehicles, including 14 buses, 15 15-passenger vans, and 17 cars/trucks, which travel approximately 14,000 miles per month.

In addition, FNRC also contracts with Lighthouse, described below.

Lighthouse

Lighthouse is a day program for adults with special needs. Clients are brought to their facility by Laidlaw, through a contract with the FNRC. In addition, Lighthouse owns one accessible 10-passenger van. They also provide mobility training through their Independent Living Services, which teaches clients how to use the TRAX system, including locations of landmarks and bus stops, in order to give them a greater degree of independence in the community.

CalWORKs

The CalWORKs program provides temporary financial assistance and employment focused services to families with minor children who have income and property below State maximum limits for their family size. Most able-bodied aided parents are also required to participate in CalWORKs employment services programs.

Tehama County CalWORKs owns three vans which are driven by Social Service aides to take clients to Welfare-to-Work activities such as training and interviews. These are not regularly scheduled but are on a case-by-case basis. The aides spend up to 80% of their workday solely on transporting clients.

For fiscal year 2007/2008, CalWORKS provided 5200 trips (2600 round trips) totaling 35,000 miles.

New Directions to Hope

New Directions to Hope (NDTH) is a non-profit organization providing mental health services for dysfunctional or emotionally stressed families. Their Wraparound program supports families in becoming independent of social services, and in keeping custody of children who might otherwise be placed in foster care. Wraparound Services has a transportation component, where clients are transported to job interviews, community resource centers, and to NDTH meetings. NDTH owns 2 vans and a car. Transportation is on a case-by-case basis.

Northern Valley Catholic Social Services (NVCSS)

NVCSS is headquartered in Redding, but has offices in Red Bluff and Corning, as well as in other northern counties. Their Home Help for Hispanic Mothers program serves approximately 300 undocumented immigrant Latinas with less than an eighth-grade education. Under this program, transportation to medical appointments using one four-passenger car is provided.

Pathways to Success

Pathways to Success is a day program offering activities and opportunities for individuals with developmental challenges. Transportation is provided to their adult daycare program using their two vehicles Monday through Friday.

Tehama Estates Retirement Home

Tehama Estates, a senior housing complex in Red Bluff, provides transportation for their residents for scheduled appointments and errands, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm using one van.

Lassen House

Lassen House in Red Bluff is a private for-profit assisted living facility housing approximately 70 residents. They own an accessible 12-passenger van which they use to transport their residents to a wide variety of activities, including medical appointments and social activities. They do not provide any transportation for the general public.

Student Transportation Services and Programs

Home to School Transportation

Fixed route school bus service for K-12 students is provided through the 18 school districts in Tehama County. School buses operated by or under contract to various school districts provide the primary source of transportation for students during the academic school year with numerous stops along major transportation corridors.

Red Bluff Elementary & High School Districts

For approximately 30 years, the Red Bluff school districts have been coordinating transportation services in the following ways:

- Joint procurement of vehicles – some bus owned by Elementary ; some by high school
- Shared routing and shuttling of students
- Shared expenses
- Elementary School District transfers their State funds to RB HS to operate transportation
- Shared Drivers are HS District Employees --- Note both districts OWN buses – but HS provides drivers
- One bus barn/ bus yard

Corning Elementary & High School Districts

The Corning Elementary and High School Districts have coordinated on filling the transportation of their students for almost 10 years, with a signed agreement between them. Per this agreement, transportation expenses are split with 40% being paid by the Elementary District, and 60% paid by the High School District. The Corning Elementary also school provides a 12-week block of transportation for after school tutoring.

Students beyond ½ mile from school are eligible for transportation. This includes Rancho Tehama Reserve, which, while it has its own elementary school with 90 to 95 students, sends middle (6, 7, and 8 grade) and high school students to Maywood Middle School and Corning High School in Corning. In addition, some elementary school children travel to Woodson Elementary in Corning. Several buses provide extensive service through RTR on paved roads.

Coordination between the two districts includes but is not limited to:

- Shared routes
- Shared facility (1 bus barn; bus yard)
- Shared mechanics
- Operating costs: fuel, etc.
- Shared drivers: drivers are employed by each district and bargain agreements are in place; routes are bid by seniority,
- Coordination of field trips: if the High School does not have a driver available, then the Elementary District fills in, and vice-versa.

Tehama County Department of Education After-School Program

The Tehama County Department of Education runs an after-school activities program which provides transportation to the student participants. Through their county-based after-school program, they transport students to 27 different program sites on field trips. For trips of fewer than 8 students, they can use the one of the four vehicles owned by the program; beyond that, all trips are contracted through North Valley Services, Paratransit Services, Laidlaw, or sometimes through school district which owns vehicles.

Head Start

Northern California Child Development is the grantee in Tehama County for Head Start. It is supported through Federal Head Start and First Five California Commission grants. NCCD owns 20 vans which they use primarily in their home visit program. Additionally, the vans are used to transport the children and their parent(s) to medical. Dental, or other social service appointments.

Other Local Transportation Services

The following providers offer other transportation options within Tehama County and beyond.

Taxi and Livery Services

There are two privately owned and operated taxi services in the City of Red Bluff. The Sunset Cab Company offers traditional taxi service 24 hours a day every day. The company operates two metered taxicabs, neither of which is accessible for wheelchairs; however, standard nonelectric wheelchairs can be accommodated in the trunk.

Senior Ride-On is a private for-profit licensed taxi service available for riders who are over 55 years old and ambulatory. Rides are available for any purpose, Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM. Riders make reservations for the service, sometimes months in advance, however, same day service is also available if the cab is not already reserved. While there is no meter, the vehicle is equipped with a special odometer allowing the operator to track mileage for up to two trips at a time.

In addition to these two taxi companies, Impressions Limousine in Red Bluff is a private for profit company providing hired car services using two Lincoln Town cars.

Gaps

All Three Target Populations

Tehama County's Medical Transportation Services (METS) volunteer driver program focuses on serving inter-county and intra-county medical trips unable to be served by TRAX and ParaTRAX.

However, there are some challenges:

- The demand for medical trips outstrips the supply of volunteer drivers. Indeed, a sufficient number of volunteer drivers is difficult to maintain because of the rising cost of gas compared to the reimbursement rate and because of insurance issues faced by the volunteer drivers.

- METS is unable to serve trips that require an accessible vehicle. While there are other private companies (e.g., Arcadia and Northern Express) that do provide medical transportation services, their rates are generally unaffordable by persons in the three target populations.

Cancer Patients

The American Cancer Society also provides volunteer driver services but only to cancer treatments. As with METS, this program is unable to serve trips that require an accessible vehicle.

Medi-Cal-Sponsored Non-Emergency Medical Trips for Medicaid Recipients

One carrier in Chico, Merit Medi-Trans, provides non-emergency medical transportation to Medicaid recipients. However, rates for these private carriers limit the amount of service that they provide. Medicaid coverage is available only for pre-approved trips.

Dialysis Patients

ParaTRAX is available only to ADA eligible riders living in Red Bluff. While dialysis patients can also access METS, accessible vehicles and trained professional drivers are not part of METS.

Hospital Patients

Hospital patients who do not qualify for or have access to other medical transportation services in the county may receive service directly from the hospitals. St. Elizabeth's in Red Bluff and Catholic Health Care West in Redding occasionally provide transport to patients who have no other means to access care. However, Catholic Health Care West only has three vans available, so these services are limited.

Barriers

Major Barriers to Coordination of Services

Because of the low density and sparse population of Tehama County, transportation needs for individuals can be unique to their circumstances. Barriers include the perception of restrictions on the use of funds and vehicles; for example, while several stakeholders perceived that vehicles purchased with Section 5310 funds must be used solely for transportation programs for persons who are elderly and/or disabled, Caltrans guidelines do allow the use of vehicles for other populations.

Some programs are limited to a specific clientele (i.e., Veterans, seniors, developmentally disabled, etc.) and are not well coordinated with others; it may be difficult to transport certain populations with other people.

Some agency transportation is not on a regular schedule, which also makes coordinating with others difficult.

Priorities

Evaluation Criteria

Workshop participants reviewed the following criteria and provided comments. These criteria were used by stakeholders to rank the proposed strategies as high, medium, or low priority and serve as the basis for implementation of key strategies. The evaluation criteria used are as follows:

1. Meets documented need

2. Feasibility of Implementation

3. Coordination

Recommendations

High Priority

- Expand TRAX service days to weekends
- Expand TRAX service area o Chico and Redding, Rancho Tehama, Mineral, Sky Ranch and Cottonwood
- Expand TRAX weekday service hours to evenings
- Establish central directory of information about community transportation services
- Improve bus stop amenities

Medium Priority

- Share Resources
- Contract with Common Service Providers
- Establish Job Access Strategies
- Establish Taxi Subsidy Program
- Establish Agency/Employment Tripper Routes
- Establish Community Bus Routes
- Establish Volunteer Driver/Escort Program

Low Priority

- Consolidate functions
- Obtain Productivity-Improving Software
- Obtain Hardware/Software to Support Coordinated Service Delivery
- Improve Access to Bus Stops
- Expand Eligibility for Route Deviation Services

TRINITY COUNTY

Transportation Needs and Gaps (Combined)

General Transportation Needs

Stakeholders identified the following general transportation needs:

- Public information and marketing: Some stakeholders commented that Trinity Transit service should be marketed more effectively and aggressively so that residents can take advantage of what is currently available. Creative marketing strategies should be used to reach more people since not everyone knows about existing public transit services.

- A mass mailing, advertising, and an internet campaign would help to educate the county's residents about current services and help to build ridership. Hotels should be included in the marketing effort as they could be an effective way to disseminate information.
- Public information: Bus schedules need to be posted so that they are more visible to passengers.
- Improved service: Many stakeholders commented that existing routes should be more frequent, have a longer span of service, and be scheduled to meet the greatest number of people. The routes should be operated to maximize consistency and reliability, which may involve additional driver training.
- Fare structure: Some stakeholders suggested that an evaluation of the fare structure is needed.
- Capital needs: Southern Trinity Health Services needs a replacement van that is easy for older adults to board and alight. In addition, the Golden Age Center, which procured a van to provide non-emergency medical trips to Redding, is not considered suitable for non-emergency medical trips due to a lack of comfort.
- Accessibility: Older adults and the disabled need improved access to transportation services within the county and between neighboring counties.
- Bus furniture: Some stake Some identified a need for a reverse commute shuttle between Weaverville and Hayfork.
- There is a need for transportation between Hayfork and Mad River, which is approximately 30 miles south of Hayfork. Residents in the Hayfork area travel to Southern Trinity Health Services in Mad River as it is the largest medical facility in southern Trinity County.
- Stakeholders suggested that bus stops should include benches and shelters.

Southern Trinity County

Stakeholders outlined the needs of those residents living in southern Trinity County:

- Hayfork Valley residents need to travel to the community center and grocery store in the town of Hayfork. Most transportation resources cover expenses for medical trips only and there is no taxi service within Hayfork. There are approximately 800 residents in the Hayfork Valley and about 1,000 in the town of Hayfork.

- While Trinity Transit provides two roundtrips a day between Weaverville and Hayfork, they are oriented to commuters, making it difficult to travel at other times. Older adults have identified the current schedule as a barrier for them because they have to wait for several hours if they miss the bus.

- Regulatory barriers: In some cases, more efficient coordination efforts may be constrained because of regulatory restrictions or the perception of barriers.

- The roads surrounding Mad River, leading to Hayfork and Fortuna, are hazardous during the winter, due to snow and extreme grade changes. These conditions can isolate older adults and those without adequate vehicles or satisfactory driving skills.

- Mad River residents need to travel to Weaverville for social services that aren't provided in southern Trinity County.

Northern Trinity County

The following summarizes the major transportation needs of residents living in northern Trinity County:

- There is no transportation to Weaverville from Trinity Center and Coffee Creek, where there are growing retirement communities.

- There is some need to travel between Lewiston and Weaverville.

- There is no service targeted to the tourist market. Seasonal service could offer more frequent or later evening service during the summer to serve seasonal markets, such as between Weaverville and the Trinity Lake area and the lake resorts.

Weaverville

Weaverville, the county seat, is the primary hub for the county. There is a greater need to bring people to Weaverville than to transport Weaverville residents to other locations within the county. Weaverville residents have the greatest need to travel out-of-county for shopping, medical trips, etc.

According to several stakeholders, the Weaverville shuttle's routing is adequate, but the route would be more useful if it operated more frequently.

Down River Corridor

Stakeholders outlined transportation needs and issues for the "Down River" communities of Junction City, Helena, Big Bar, Burnt Ranch, and Hawkins Bar:

- Down River communities need transportation to Weaverville for shopping, social engagements, and non-emergency medical appointments and to Willow Creek for shopping and medical appointments.

- This area has a considerable number of low-income citizens who are vulnerable in a number of respects. Travel to Weaverville and Willow Creek can be expensive, especially given the increase in the price of gas.

- The Transportation Assistance Program, which provides reimbursement for gas to citizens traveling to medical appointments, is helpful for those with access to vehicles, but may not help extremely low-income populations without access to functional vehicles, insurance, etc.

<u>Transportation Resources</u>

Public Transit Operators

Trinity Transit

Trinity Transit is the public transit operator for Trinity County. It operates two fixed-route services in the county: the Weaverville Shuttle and the Hayfork-Weaverville bus. The non-profit Human Response Network began operating Trinity Transit in 1988. In 1999, the service was taken in-house by the Trinity County Planning Department Transit Division.

Weaverville Shuttle

The Weaverville Shuttle operates hourly within Weaverville Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. It stops at numerous destinations, including the Weaver Creek Senior Apartments, the Senior Center, the hospital, library, the Social Services complex, and the post office. The bus service is open to the public, but is utilized primarily by older adults traveling to the post office, bank, shopping, and medical appointments, etc. One-way travel time is approximately 30 minutes.

Hayfork Bus

The Hayfork Bus operates between Hayfork and Weaverville and acts primarily as a commuter shuttle for Hayfork residents working in Weaverville. Two round-trips are provided Monday through Friday: buses depart Hayfork at 6:30 AM and 1:50 PM and return at 10:00 AM and 5:00 PM. Both routes are deviated fixed-routes, which means that they deviate up to ¾ mile from the route for eligible riders who are older adults or persons with disabilities. The one-way travel time is approximately one hour and 15 minutes.

Pilot Program

Trinity Transit began a new pilot service in March 2008, adding routes between Weaverville and Willow Creek, Lewiston, and Trinity Center Services one day a week. There is no dedicated funding source for the pilot program; therefore, TDA funds used for the Weaverville Shuttle were redirected to pay for the additional service, and the Weaverville Shuttle has been cut back to two times a week.

Social Service Transportation Providers

American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society's Shasta County Chapter offers transportation to cancer patients in Trinity County under their Road to Recovery program. This is a transportation service in which volunteer drivers transport patients to their appointments.

In addition, the organization provides travel vouchers or fuel reimbursement to patients or their drivers for making the trip at a rate of $.14 per mile.

Far Northern Regional Center

The Far Northern Regional Center has a day program in Weaverville with approximately six to eight participants. The program provides transportation to about four of its program participants using one cutaway vehicle. One participant takes local public transportation.

Golden Age Center

The Golden Age Center, a senior center in Weaverville, provides an on-demand transportation service Monday through Friday to any of its eligible clients (55 years or older or disabled). Riders may take the bus to the Golden Age Center to participate in the lunch program or for any other trip purpose within Weaverville. Trips must be scheduled in advance. According to the Executive Director, there is adequate capacity to handle the few trip requests that are made each week.

The center is currently in negotiations with Trinity County to offer service to Redding once a month for medical trips.

Human Response Network (HRN)

The Human Response Network, a non-profit organization with over 25 programs advocating for personal empowerment, administers the Transportation Assistance Program. This program subsidizes non-emergency medical and social service trips by providing Trinity Transit bus passes and gas vouchers. Persons 65 and over, regardless of income, can utilize the program if they are unable to drive. Drivers are reimbursed on a mileage basis at $.25 per mile.

The organization provides direct transportation only for those who are enrolled in HRN programs. Program funds cover the travel expenses for specific programs. There are four vehicles (two vans, two wagons) used to make these trips. Two of the vehicle are leased and the other two were purchased with grant funds.

Platinum Care

Platinum Care (formerly Precious Cargo), based in Redding, is a private for-profit company that provides non-emergency medical transportation in northern California. The company provides service from Weaverville to Redding on a space available basis. Currently, Platinum Care does not operate regularly scheduled service to Weaverville.

Roderick Senior Center

The Roderick Senior Center, located in Hayfork, provides a variety of services to seniors (age 60 or older), including nutrition, information and referral, health monitoring, and transportation services. With respect to transportation, the center offers home-delivered meals and also provides transportation to and from the center. The senior center also provides demand-response transportation for medical appointments locally, and to Weaverville or Redding when possible.

Transportation is also provided for shopping, banking and hair appointments. Most trips are not regularly scheduled, except for home-delivered meals. The senior center operates the service in-house with one vehicle. Volunteer drivers use their own private vehicles to transport passengers into Weaverville or Redding.

Southern Trinity Health Services

Southern Trinity Health Services, a medical facility in the southern Trinity County community of Mad River, administers a transportation service between Mad River and Fortuna/Eureka once a week (Wednesday). Anyone is eligible to take the bus for any trip purpose, including shopping, medical appointments, and social outings. In addition, the facility provides rides for patients who

have no other means of transportation to the clinic Monday through Friday. The service area is approximately 1,250 square miles. These transportation services are operated by one employee, who when not driving the van, performs administrative tasks at Southern Trinity Health Services.

The clinic has one eight-person vehicle devoted to the regularly scheduled Mad River-Fortuna/Eureka service and the on-call patient shuttle. The facility has one additional van which is used for on-site dental care at the local public schools. The vans were acquired from the Southern Trinity Senior Center.

Trinity Cab Service

Trinity Cab offers general public taxi service in Weaverville and the surrounding areas. One-way service from Weaverville is also available to other parts of the county such as Lewiston, Junction City, Douglas City, Hayfork, Trinity Center and Coffee Creek. Trinity Cab offers service 24 hours a day seven days a week.
The owner and three part-time drivers staff the operation. The owner drives and dispatches the service with the use of a land line and cellular phone. Trinity Cab operates most of its service with the use of one mid-size automobile, but also uses a limousine when needed.

In addition to dial-up service, Trinity Cab Service has several contracts with Trinity County. These include a contract with Behavioral Health, Trinity County Hospital, and AFDC/Social Security and Mountain Care.

Transportation Services

Behavioral Health Services provides transportation to its clients that need assistance in receiving mental health or substance abuse services. The service area includes all of Trinity County, but excludes Mad River as there is a mental health facility in that community. Approximately 50-75% of the clients used transportation services in FY 2006/2007.

The organization provides the service directly using eight vehicles: two wheelchair-accessible vans and six jeeps. There is one full-time driver and three part-time drivers. Approximately 2,600 runs were provided in FY 2006/2007 with between 1-2 passengers per run. In addition, the organization provides gas vouchers, ranging from $250-$400 per month in total for those who have a vehicle to drive themselves.

Behavioral Health Services would like clients to take advantage of existing public transit service and welcomes the new pilot service introduced by Trinity Transit in 2008. In particular, transportation service “down river” (west along Highway 299) will benefit Behavioral Health Services as trips from communities such as Burnt Ranch are expensive to provide. In order to promote transit ridership, the organization will disburse free tickets, send case managers with clients to instruct them on using the system, and provide a comfortable waiting area when waiting for the bus.

Trinity County Health and Human Services

Trinity County Health and Human Services (HHS) provides services to members of the community who qualify for a variety of programs that provide health, employment, public assistance and social services. Clients, depending on their circumstances or needs, may be provided transportation directly; provided transit tickets; or have their transportation costs

reimbursed. Direct transportation services are provided through a fleet of 16 cars ranging in size from sub-compacts to a mini-van and two large SUVs which are assigned to various HHS programs, such as CalWORKs, or Child and Adult Protective Services(CPS).

Most trips are on an "as needed" basis except for the CalWORKs program, where a transportation aide transports three to five clients a day to Job Club, to ongoing Work Experience jobs, and to other activities that are required in their case plans. In the CPS program, depending on caseload needs, a transportation aide provides two to three rides per day and monthly trips out of county. The APS program transports one to two clients per month, usually in emergency situations. Transportation for clients in all programs is generally from their homes to the agency office, the courthouse, or to miscellaneous locations such as medical facilities or retail stores.

Barriers

Major Barriers to Coordination

The following barriers or obstacles preventing or hindering coordination of public transit and human service agency transportation programs are not unique to Trinity County; rather, they are faced by many rural communities throughout the country.

Geography: Opportunities to coordinate service among transportation services in Trinity County are limited in part to the limited number of service providers, and also by the size and geography of the county. Trinity County is a large, mountainous county with some very geographically isolated communities (e.g., Hyampom, Lewiston, Coffee Creek, Mad River).

Specific Client Needs: By definition, customers of special needs transportation programs have difficulty or cannot independently make use of programs available to the general public. In many cases, these customers need a level of care that may not be conducive to integration with other passengers.

Some agencies have established service standards or guidelines for consideration in transporting their clients, such as maximum time on a vehicle, the need for a higher level of care, required use of seat belts, etc. that may preclude transporting them with other client groups.

Funding Restrictions: Social service agencies tend to fund or support transportation for their clients as an auxiliary service—as a means to support the end goal of providing a primary service such as training, medical assistance, etc. These agencies must ensure, often through cumbersome audit processes, that agency funds are being spent in support of eligible clients.

Lack of Dedicated Staff: In rural communities, transportation program staff often “wear many hats,” and may be required to administer programs, write grants or funding applications, prepare reports and invoices, supervise staff and, on occasion, even drive a vehicle. Staff resources may not be available to pursue coordination strategies, which need to be developed and nurtured over time. There is currently no dedicated staff available to work exclusively on coordination tasks.

Priorities

Highest Priority Strategies

Based on the prioritization process that took place in the two workshops, as well as a comparison of each strategy with the evaluation criteria, the following section provides a discussion about the highest priority strategies in Trinity County.

The strategy to provide service between Trinity County and Redding stood out as the highest priority--participants at the public workshops in both Hayfork and Weaverville ranked this as their highest strategy. Participants in both workshops concurred it is equally as important to provide service between Hayfork and Redding. As a result, this strategy was modified to include Hayfork.

The highest ranked strategies in Trinity County include:

- Provide service between Hayfork and Weaverville to Redding for shopping and specialized medical trips.

- Establish new shuttle service between Mad River and Hayfork. This strategy was ranked especially high among workshop participants in Hayfork.

- Increase frequency of Weaverville-Hayfork service (reverse commute). This strategy was moderately ranked at each workshop, but when the results combined for both workshops it was one of the highest ranked strategies county-wide. This strategy is intended to improve the ability of commuters to use Trinity Transit, including reverse commute service between Weaverville and Hayfork.

- Increase mileage reimbursement rates for volunteer drivers and caregivers. Increased fuel costs over the past year is a key reason why this strategy ranked highly; furthermore, it can build upon the existing volunteer program sponsored by Human Response Network.

- Develop Capital Replacement Program. This strategy recognizes the need to coordinate efforts to identify capital needs, such as facilities and vehicles, and to pursue opportunities to address those needs.

Recommendations

Access to Jobs and Employment

Providing access to jobs and employment is a critical function of public transportation. For persons without access to an automobile, availability of transit can mean the difference in self sufficiency. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this plan addresses, in part, the need for low-income persons to access employment or training activities.

Within Trinity County, strategies to provide additional service between Weaverville and Hayfork for commuters from Weaverville, ranked highest among local stakeholders. A number of alternatives are suggested in this plan, as well as the latest TDP, that would provide some new or enhanced service for workers traveling within Trinity County.

Volunteer Transportation Programs

Successful volunteer driver programs require administrative oversight in order to recruit, screen, train and coordinate volunteers. Specifically, there is a need for constant ongoing recruitment, as there is usually a high rate of turnover in volunteers. Leaders or agencies within the community who will undertake the administration of the volunteer driver program should be identified.

The need for additional options for non-emergency medical transportation has been documented throughout the planning process in Trinity County. A volunteer driver program could help fill this service gap.

Becoming a Medi-Cal NEMT Provider

In many rural counties there are no Medi-Cal NEMT providers. Some rural counties are served by an NEMT provider in another county with very limited availability of service. By becoming a Medi-Cal NEMT provider, the local agency could help address a lack of providers now available and improve access to medical care for people who have difficulty using other modes, including ADA paratransit, volunteer transportation, or taxicabs.

School Transportation

There are approximately 1,905 students enrolled in public schools in Trinity County in twelve separate school districts. Student transportation services are provided to the major schools in Trinity County. In terms of coordination between school providers, maintenance for the school districts in the north part of the county is coordinated out of a single facility in Weaverville. The Junction City School contacted Trinity Transit to explore the option of providing service to their school from Weaverville one trip per day during the school year. While funding for this service has not been identified, it would need to be available to the general public and not just for school transportation in order to qualify under current funding arrangements.

Consolidated Vehicle Maintenance

In the course of conducting this study, no specific facility needs for vehicle maintenance and operations were identified. Trinity Transit currently utilizes a local garage for all maintenance required on their vehicles, as does the vehicles owned by the senior centers in Weaverville and Hayfork. The goal of a consolidated maintenance program is to more fully utilize existing facilities and staff by making services available to organizations and agencies that require a level of technical maintenance expertise beyond what may be available to them.

Program Administration and Oversight

Effective program administration is a crucial factor in ensuring the ongoing success of a new program or project. As a first step, a project sponsor or lead agency needs to be designated to manage the project.

For each of the highest ranked strategies, a lead agency is suggested; however, in some cases numerous entities could serve in this capacity. The lead agency should have the administrative, fiscal and staffing resources needed to carry out the program on an on-going basis; successfully applying for grant funds is just the first step.

Decision-Making Process

In addition to staff administering the program or service, a more formal decision-making process will need to be in place to ensure effective program oversight As mentioned, the TTC is responsible to allocate and disburse state transportation funds, and will require the adopted Coordinated Plan. The SSTAC advises the TTC on various transportation issues and concerns.

The SSTAC is appropriately the entity, within Trinity County, to provide ongoing program oversight as new services are considered and/or implemented. The SSTAC in Trinity County is very active and meets on a monthly basis and on special occasions to provide an advisory role to the Trinity County Board of Supervisors.

Guidelines for Transportation Provider Agreements and Service Standards

Developing service agreements and monitoring system performance criteria are important tasks for transportation providers.

Agencies are encouraged to develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating transit and paratransit services. While specific standards can vary depending on the service and operating environment, industry practice generally uses the standards to monitor efficiency, and service quality and reliability.

Many rural agencies do not have the staff resources to collect and analyze a broad range of performance data. Therefore the recommended efficiency performance standards are limited to key indicators that will provide agencies with a good picture of how well service is doing.

TUOLUMNE COUNTY

Transportation Needs

- Fare agreements with connecting transit services
- Transportation services oriented towards youth and trips to recreational opportunities
- Recreational bicycle and walking paths
- Improvements supporting safe transit operations at key destinations, such as the Save Mart and Wal-Mart parking lots

Other needs:

Concerns about Public Transit Reliability

Although most people said Tuolumne County Transit is a good, reliable service, some stakeholders expressed concern about transit on-time performance, both on the Tuolumne County Transit fixed routes and dial-a-ride.

Concern was also expressed about the ability of some dial-a-ride customers to arrive at appointments on time, or to schedule trips on dial-a-ride during high demand times, particularly for travel within Sonora. Some felt that transit would be used more frequently by clients if improvements could be made in these areas.

Time Cost of Public Transit Use

In a rural area, the combination of limited transit service frequencies, indirect routing for some riders' trips, and the distance riders must travel to and from bus stops contributes to a high "time cost" for public transit use. Limited frequencies can make a trip to an appointment an all-day event, particularly if gaps in schedules make it necessary for individuals to arrive at appointments very early, or wait for long periods of time before making a transfer. This limits and individual's or an agency's use of transit for routine trips, because it is not possible to complete the roundtrip in a reasonable amount of time.

Availability of Information and Training

Stakeholders commented that better availability of transportation service information and improving residents' understanding of how to use services could support more effective use of existing services.

Attempting to understand the transit system can be overwhelming. Stakeholders were interested in seeing more visible transit information throughout the county, and more outreach to make residents aware of transit options and connections and how to access them.

Transportation Resources

Public Transit Operators

Tuolumne County Transit

Tuolumne County Transit operates fixed-route, flex-route and dial-a-ride transit service within Tuolumne County. On weekdays, three fixed-routes and one flex-route serve Sonora, Jamestown, Columbia, Tuolumne, Crystal Falls, Twain Harte and Sierra Village. Figure 4-1 provides information on fixed-route hours of operation and frequency. Curb-to-curb dial-a-ride service is provided on weekdays for seniors (age 55 and over) and persons with disabilities in the same general areas served by Tuolumne County Transit fixed routes.

General public dial-a-ride service is provided on Saturdays between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM in the Sonora, Jamestown, Columbia, Twain Harte, Soulsbyville and Standard areas On Tuesdays, general public dial-a-ride service is available between Groveland and Sonora. This is essentially a lifeline service that connects Groveland residents to services and shopping destinations in Sonora. While this service is open to the general public, priority is given to persons with disabilities and seniors (age 55 and over).

The Tuolumne County Transit fleet includes 22 vehicles. All of Tuolumne County Transit's services are operated under contract by MV Transportation. Tuolumne County Transit vehicles are owned by the County and maintained by MV Transportation.

Recent service changes have included the addition of four hours per day to the fixed-route system in the last year, extension of Route 3 service to the Jamestown Food Bank, and conversion of the Belleview/Ridgewood segment of Route 4 from dial-a-ride to fixed-route service. The alignment of Columbia College service has also been changed, with a segment of service shifted from Route 49 to the Racetrack area (serving the residential area and high school). Staff reports that ridership on selected routes in 2008 is up by as much as 50%.

Social Service Transportation Providers

Most of the agencies listed below have a particular focus on the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, or low-income individuals, but some agencies may serve a broader group.

Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency

The various transportation programs are supported by state and federal funding (including No Child Left Behind Funds), funding from First Five Tuolumne County, and private donations.

- Family Learning Center: The Family Learning Center offers classes and support to low income parents. Because many of the Family Learning Center (FLC) clients live in rural areas with limited accessibility, the FLC often picks up clients at their homes to bring them to the center. The FLC also provides door-to-door transportation for its clients to health care and dental appointments. The Family Learning Center has two vans at its Sonora site and two vans at its Tuolumne site.

- Jamestown Homeless Shelter: ATCAA provides door-to-door transportation to school for children residing in the Jamestown shelter using a donated Chrysler Concord vehicle driven by shelter staff. ATCAA also provides bus vouchers to shelter residents who are looking for work or housing. The annual cost for transportation associated with the shelter is approximately $5,000.

- Jamestown Family Resource Center: The Jamestown Family Resource Center focuses on assisting high-need children, including children with disabilities and low income children. Part of this effort involves transporting homeless and high-need children to school (Jamestown Elementary) and medical appointments. The Family Resource Center also occasionally transports the family members of these children or others in need. Tuolumne County is the primary service area, but service is occasionally provided to Merced County. The Center has one Ford Expedition, and one full-time driver, one back-up driver.

Area 12 Agency on Aging

The Area 12 Agency on Aging is a Joint Powers Agreement between Amador, Alpine, Calaveras, Tuolumne and Mariposa Counties that provides funding to senior service providers and administers several direct service programs. Area 12 subsidizes transportation in two primary ways: it provides gas vouchers to older adults for trips to medical appointments through the Older Americans Act (OAA) and the Multipurpose Senior Services Program, and it funds the medical transportation program for seniors operated by Sierra Senior Providers, Inc. (see below).

California Children's Services (CCS)

In Tuolumne County, CCS operates under the aegis of the Tuolumne County Public Health Department. CCS is a medical program for children under 21 years of age who have been diagnosed with certain physically disabling medical conditions. CCS provides specialized medical care and rehabilitation for families that are unable to provide all or part of the needed care. CCS provides gas vouchers and occasional car rental for enrolled children to travel to out of-county medical services. These services are primarily Medi-Cal reimbursed.

California Department of Rehabilitation

The Department of Rehabilitation helps persons with disabilities — primarily mental health patients — find and secure employment. As part of this effort, the Department reimburses its clients for bus tickets to Columbia College, or to other classes and training programs in Tuolumne County. Alternatively, clients are reimbursed for their mileage to and from these courses.

Mother Lode Job Training/Job Connection

Job Connection is a one-stop employment resource center providing information and services intended to help residents find and keep jobs. Job Connection provides a range of services, including information and assistance for job seekers, basic skills training, and GED preparation. Mother Lode Job Training provides bus passes and tickets for program participants, as well as mileage reimbursement.

Mountain Women's Resource Center

The objective of the Mountain Women's Resource Center (MWRC) is to help women who have been victims of domestic violence or sexual assault become self sufficient and move beyond crisis. One of the many ways the organization does this is by providing transportation to residents of the domestic violence shelter. The MWRC has one van that holds seven passengers. Any MWRC staff person can drive the van. It is used, for example, when shelter residents are looking for employment or a place to live.

Sierra Senior Providers, Inc.

Sierra Senior Providers, Inc. provides scheduled medical transportation within Tuolumne County for residents age 60 years and older who are unable to use public transit. Examples of eligible trip purposes include medical appointments and trips to the pharmacy. The service is provided in one wheelchair-accessible van and in volunteers' private vehicles. The program has two paid drivers and multiple volunteer drivers.

Sonora Regional Medical Center

In very rare cases, Sonora Regional Medical Center will pay for patients to be transported home from the hospital in a taxi. Because it would be very expensive to provide this service on a large-scale basis, the hospital only pays patients' taxi fares under extreme circumstances (e.g., if the patient is too frail to drive and has no friend or family member to drive them, or when the hospital is over-capacity). Those who use this service often include low-income, elderly, and disabled patients. However, the taxi company will not transport severely disabled patients.

Funding for these taxi rides, which are typically provided three to four times per month, comes from the hospital's general fund.

In order to increase access to health services, Sonora Regional Medical Center also operates a free clinic (Project HOPE) at Wal-Mart two days each week using a new wheelchair-accessible "healthvan" that includes two exam rooms. Funding for the "healthvan" was raised through local fundraising efforts and charitable donations.

Thumbs Up!

Thumbs Up! is a community integration program for individuals with developmental disabilities in Tuolumne and Mariposa Counties. The organization's goal is to help its clients live as independently as possible. Valley Mountain Regional Center provides funding for Thumbs Up! to transport its clients (those who are unable to use public transportation on their own) between their homes and the Thumbs Up! program. Thumbs Up! also transports program participants to activities and outings in and outside of the county. The organization's vehicle fleet includes one 16-passenger van and two six-passenger vans. The organization also does mobility training to introduce their clients to Tuolumne County Transit's fixed-route and dial-a-ride services.

Tuolumne Adult Day Health Care Program

The Tuolumne Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) Program is a licensed community-based day care program that provides a variety of health, therapeutic, and social services to area adults who are at risk of being placed in a nursing home. The ADHC transports clients from their homes to the center weekday mornings and provides a return ride home in the evening. Clients generally live within the Sonora, Columbia, and Jamestown areas; the Center is located in Sonora. MV Transportation operates this service using a dedicated fleet of three buses within the Tuolumne County Transit fleet.

Tuolumne County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

Transportation is provided to residents enrolled in Mental Health, Alcohol, Drug, and Perinatal Programs, Monday through Friday. In order to receive transportation assistance, individuals must have no other transportation options, and service must be requested by their primary clinician. Transportation may be provided to out-of-county destinations, including Modesto, Merced, and longer distance destinations such as Sacramento, Fresno, and Reno. Services are funded by federal, state, and county funds. Behavioral Health also purchases Tuolumne County Transit tickets and passes.

Tuolumne County Department of Social Services

A variety of transportation services are provided by programs within the Tuolumne County Department of Social Services. Two of these programs are discussed below.

• Child Welfare Services. Tuolumne County Child Welfare Services provides, on a case-by-case basis, one-time use bus passes to parents of children in the child welfare program. The provision of bus passes is intended to help parents complete their case plan.

• Welfare-to-Work/CalWORKS. Through the Welfare-to-Work program, the Tuolumne County Department of Social Services provides individualized case management, supportive services, and training and employment services for CalWORKS recipients.

In addition to other types of support, CalWORKS and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients may be eligible for transportation assistance, including mileage reimbursement, bus passes, limited direct transportation, and gas cards.

Recipients can use this transportation assistance for a broad range of transportation needs; it is not limited solely to transportation to and from Welfare-to-Work programs. Direct transportation may be provided by the case manager or support staff using County vehicles for exempt clients' medical trips. The fleet of seven or eight vehicles used for direct transportation is assigned jointly to the Welfare-to-Work and Adult Protective Services departments.

Veterans Administration

The Veterans Administration (VA) provides out-of-county demand-response transportation for veterans, between Tuolumne County and VA Hospitals in multiple counties, including facilities in Palo Alto and Livermore. The VA vehicle fleet includes gurney vans and wheelchair vans.

Work Activities for Tuolumne/Calaveras Handicapped

Work Activities for Tuolumne/Calaveras Handicapped (WATCH) is a nonprofit organization that serves individuals with developmental disabilities in Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties. WATCH provides a variety of programs and services including residential homes, supported employment, training, and activities. Under a contract with Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC), WATCH is paid on a per-mile basis to transport persons with developmental disabilities between their homes and the WATCH program in Sonora. In addition to this, WATCH funds its own door-to-door transportation services, transporting its clients to jobs in the community and to social and recreational activities (e.g., bowling, movies) as far away as San Francisco and Lake Tahoe. WATCH has a combined 23 vehicles at its Sonora and Angels Camp locations and San Andreas group homes.

The fleet is comprised of cars, pick-ups, vans, and buses. All of the vans and buses are wheelchair accessible. VMRC purchases tickets and passes for WATCH program participants to utilize public transit services.

Other Key Agencies and Services

Although the agencies below do not directly operate transportation services, they play a key role in the Tuolumne County transportation system by funding or subsidizing programs that incorporate transportation services, or by providing information and referral to support the mobility of seniors, people with disabilities, or low-income individuals.

Disability Resources Agency for Independent Living

The Disability Resources Agency for Independent Living (DRAIL) is a nonprofit organization that aims to empower and improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities living in Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Mariposa, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus Counties. Among the many services the organization provides, DRAIL offers information and referral services for individuals with transportation-related needs, provides travel training on public transit, and helps clients apply for ADA paratransit certification.

First Five Tuolumne County

First Five is actively engaged in improving access to services for children and families in Tuolumne County, funding projects and programs that incorporate transportation components (such as the ATCAA Family Learning Center).

First Five also funds programs that bring services to residents in order to reduce the effects of transportation barriers. These programs include home visiting programs and dental services offered at preschool locations. In addition to its role as a funding agency, First Five works to foster collaboration and coordination among Tuolumne County service providers to better meet the needs of children and families.

Foothill Commuter Services

Foothill Commuter Services provides ride matching services for residents of Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and San Joaquin Counties, and serves as a clearinghouse for information and resources related to alternative commute modes, such as public transit, mainly through their website (foothillcommuterservices.com).

Valley Mountain Regional Center

The Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC) provides assistance to people with developmental disabilities who live in Amador, Calaveras, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne Counties. The VMRC's goal is to help its clients achieve their maximum potential through increased independence, productivity, and integration into the community. Finally, VMRC uses its contract with Blue Mountain Transit in Calaveras County (providing transportation to VMRC-vendored programs) to transport some consumers in Tuolumne County.

Other Transportation Services

Although the following providers do not offer social services transportation per se, they also offer important options within the spectrum of transportation services available in the county.

Dodge Ridge Employee Transportation

Dodge Ridge is a private ski resort that provides bus transportation to and from the resort for its employees. The bus service is not open to the public and is only offered between approximately December and April when the ski resort is open for business. The bus picks up and drops off employees at stops in Sonora and along Highway 108. Typically just one bus is in operation, but occasionally two buses are operated on weekends and holidays. The fleet for this service consists of two 45-passenger school buses.

Dodge Ridge also has three 16-passenger shuttles that it uses to transport resort patrons around the parking lot or between the parking lot and the resort.

Private Charter/Taxi Companies

Linkline Charter and Tours

Linkline Charter and Tours is a private charter service based in Sonora.

Storer Coachways

Storer Coachways is a private charter bus service based in Stanislaus County. Any group can charter one of Storer Coachways' private buses for a fee, which varies depending on the length of the trip. Destinations served include Merced, San Joaquin and Tuolumne Counties. The company's fleet includes 40 coaches, each of which holds 46 to 54 passengers.

Taxi Providers: Murphy's Cab Company and Forty Niner Cab

Murphy's Cab Company operates one six-passenger Dodge Grand Caravan. Demand varies widely between winter and summer months, and in the past demand has not been sufficient to support operation of two vehicles.

Stagecoach Limousine

Stagecoach Limousine operates two 10-passenger limousines serving both residents and visitors. Stagecoach Limousine serves Calaveras, Amador, and Tuolumne Counties with market-rate services.

Gaps

Some broad needs identified during both the TCTC Unmet Transit Needs process and the stakeholder interviews completed for the Coordinated Public Transit- Human Services Transportation Plan include the following:

- More frequent service
- Extended service hours (evenings and weekends)
- Improved on-time performance
- Additional transit information (supporting connections with other services and out-of-county trips)
- More benches and shelters at bus stops TCTC has done a careful job of evaluating public feedback from the Unmet Transit Needs process. TCTC has not been reluctant to try new services as pilot projects in the past, and regularly modifies services based on changing needs.

A broad theme emerging from stakeholder interviews was concern about the fragmentation of available transportation services (human service providers), and the outcome that people who do not fit certain criteria for program participation, or have transportation needs that fall outside of existing services, may slip through the cracks.

The major categories of gaps and unmet needs discussed by stakeholders are summarized below.

Difficulty Accessing Transportation Services/System Coverage

Accessing the Nearest Bus Stop/Transportation System Coverage

Several stakeholders noted that getting to bus stops or routes is difficult due to terrain, unpaved roads, and walking distances, which are often several miles to reach transit. This is particularly an issue for older adults and parents with children, but affects many individuals who live in remote, lower-cost areas that are not adjacent to transit route corridors.

Some stakeholders noted that there is a need for more options to travel from Groveland to Sonora, given the concentration of services in Sonora. One stakeholder suggested implementing a fixed-route deviation service in Sonora and Jamestown to provide greater transit coverage and enable individuals who are currently relying on dial-a-ride to have access to the fixed-route system.

Finally, stakeholders noted that public transit may not be the only option for serving some of these areas. They said access could be provided using other types of modes or contracted services, such as volunteer-based programs, taxis, ridesharing, and employer-sponsored transportation services.

Need for Smaller Vehicles

Some stakeholders felt that smaller and more maneuverable vehicles are needed in Tuolumne County to reach the homes of those who rely on transportation services. Larger vehicles often cannot reach homes due to tight turns and difficult roads or driveways (particularly in bad weather), and some riders are unable to walk out to meet vehicles due to terrain or mobility limitations.

Transportation Service Hours

Several stakeholders mentioned the isolating impact of limited evening and weekend service for their constituents, while others noted that limited service hours constitute a key employment barrier. Stakeholders specifically called out the need for transportation serving the “24-7” shifts of casinos, hospitals, and janitorial jobs as well as weekend and evening shifts at fast food restaurants, drugstores and other retail establishments.

Many stakeholders identified lack of transportation for trips home from night jobs as a key issue for those seeking employment at the casinos (particularly Black Oak Casino), retail establishments such as Wal-Mart, and food service establishments.

Later service on Saturday and Sunday service were also identified as key improvements that would support access to employment. Overall, stakeholders felt that more “nimble” or flexible employment transportation options are needed in the county.

One of the challenges in an environment like Tuolumne County is that demand for these services is limited. Based on Tuolumne County Transit’s recent experience providing evening transit service to Columbia College, low ridership makes it reasonable to question whether resources might be more wisely spent elsewhere.

Extending Tuolumne County Transit service hours offers a benefit to a limited number of people, but other options to increase ridesharing or employee-sponsored transportation are important pieces of the puzzle.

Barriers

Barriers to Coordination

Coordination of services is ongoing in Tuolumne County, and many stakeholders expressed openness to coordinating transportation resources. Nevertheless, a number of barriers to coordination exist.

These are either existing or perceived challenges that have resulted in the various agencies in Tuolumne County not coordinating as extensively as they otherwise could:

- Staffing constraints for human service agencies related to funding cuts and the difficulty of taking on anything new, whether it is planning for coordinated services or applying for funds that may come with a heavy paperwork burden.

- A lack of participation in efforts undertaken by TCTC to bring together a wide array of human service agencies. TCTC staff indicates that although they have been persistent in trying to encourage other agencies to come together, it is sometimes difficult for people to take time out of their busy schedules to talk about transportation issues.

- On-going funding issues that make staff from some agencies reticent to pursue short-term funding for new services. With limited funding overall, there is competition for the funds that are available, and agencies do not perceive that they will necessarily benefit by sharing their knowledge of different funding sources with the other agencies that are also seeking funds.

- Restrictions on vehicle use based on funding agency requirements. Many of the existing services are available to only subsets of the three target populations.

- Capacity constraints on existing human service transportation programs; some agencies would be happy to comingle clients with those of other agencies, but simply do not have extra space on vehicles.

- Liability concerns that may come with coordination among agencies. Organizations have specific missions, vehicle requirements and insurance requirements, which makes it difficult to coordinate with other agencies.

- Issues related to specialized training needed by drivers transporting certain client groups that inhibit coordination with other transportation providers.

- Specific service boundaries, along with long distances between communities, that make it difficult to work with other agencies that operate in more limited areas. In addition, some of the services that people in Tuolumne County use are outside the county, in Stockton or Modesto.

- Limited transit service hours that do not support all types of employment make it difficult to coordinate with major employers or seek private funding for services. Although some service extensions have been tried by Tuolumne County Transit, evening service has been generally unsuccessful at attracting high numbers of transit users.

Priorities

High Priority Strategies

A goods delivery program would be a convenient service for residents who live in communities that do not have supermarkets, pharmacies, or other types of businesses. The service could be provided for people with limited transportation options. It could also be provided for people who may not have the time to pick up these items for themselves, which in turn could reduce the number of vehicles on the road.

In the mid-1980s, Trinity County (population 13,300) worked with the local transit provider, Trinity Transit, to begin a goods delivery program as a means to increase revenue. As a regular part of their routes, Trinity Transit bus drivers deliver auto parts, prescriptions, documents, and letters; return videos; and drop off weekly newspapers to newsstands. The goods are delivered to Hayfork (population 2,300), approximately 30 miles away. All goods are left at a local video rental store in this town. A store employee accepts the goods and contacts the customer once their package has arrived and distributes the goods to the appropriate person as they arrive.

The program is administered through the transit agency, Trinity Transit.

A similar program is provided by Cuyama Transit, which offers a medical prescription pick-up service as part of its demand-responsive service to residents.

The purpose of developing a mobility manager role is to ensure that the organizational structure is in place to advance coordination activities and improve mobility throughout Tuolumne County. In addition to serving as a clearinghouse, a mobility manager program could address a wide range of transportation issues.

Based on the priorities of stakeholders in Tuolumne County, a mobility manager might serve as an initial human link to serve specific targeted populations (e.g., seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income families) within specific target areas. He or she would combine requests for information and clientele to assist in scheduling trips on services offered through multiagency collaboration.

A common strategy for maximum coordination of services and more comprehensive mobility management is a centralized broker by which scheduling and dispatch would also be centralized. A brokerage would require significant investment in program software and equipment. Thus, if Tuolumne County wanted to implement a comprehensive brokerage for mobility coordination, the county is encouraged to conduct a mobility management study that would define the specific elements for which a mobility manager would be responsible, define the governance and organizational structure of a brokerage program, detail startup funding sources and ongoing funding sources, define a marketing and communications plan, etc.

A longer term goal for TCTC is to consolidate transit and public information staff at a more centralized location in Sonora. This would provide opportunities for more face-to-face contact between transit staff and the public, allowing staff to answer questions and sell bus passes..

Employer or developer participation in providing transportation services for employees has been successful in a number of communities when transportation services are not available or are limited. A program sponsored by Wal-Mart would enable swing shift employees to get a ride home from work.

Employer transportation investments are typically carried out through subscription bus services, employer-sponsored vanpools, or employer subsides for regular public transportation services.

Subscription bus services are designed to serve large employment sites or educational institutions. Schedules are designed around work shifts or class schedules. To be productive, the services should be scheduled around specific shift times and limited to a maximum 60-minute one-way onboard travel time between the furthest points. Typically, subscription bus services are operated by a public transit agency.

An employer vanpool investment may minimize the call for expanded transit services to certain locations in Tuolumne County outside the effective transit service area or at times beyond the current service span. It can also address the need for more affordable transportation services.

Employer subsidies for transportation services allow employers to offer commuter benefits either directly to employees or to transit operators, reducing the direct costs for employees to use transit to get to jobs or costs. For example, Wal-Mart could choose to pay the actual cost for additional service to the store in Sonora for customers and employees to access the store.

About 600 Tuolumne County residents work in Calaveras County, and a transit link exists between Tuolumne County and Calaveras County, via a transfer at Columbia College to Calaveras Transit. This strategy provides a direct link between Tuolumne County and Modesto. It acknowledges that services have been attempted in the past and have not merited the ridership to continue the operation. Nevertheless, many agency representatives said their clients would use such a service if it existed.

The focus of this strategy is to replace the existing dial-a-ride service operated on Saturday with a scheduled local transit service. The feasibility of this service modification has not been reviewed, but this is identified as a strategy worthy of consideration to improve convenience and the effectiveness of the local transit service in the Sonora areas, and should be considered as part of the forthcoming Transit Development Plan update.

A fixed route service instead of dial-a-ride on Saturday could operate as a community bus route. It would be a fixed-route, fixed-schedule service, but would be designed around the origins and destinations and needs of transit users, including older adults and persons with disabilities. To eliminate the need for supplemental dial-a-ride service on Saturday, the loop route could deviate to pick up ADA-eligible riders, as needed.

A Saturday loop bus route would be an effective way to divert dial-a-ride resources to a service that has a lower subsidy per trip and also provides more convenience (no request required for most riders). A Saturday loop route is likely to be most successful if it focuses on serving the medium to high density areas in and around Sonora, linking housing to shopping, employment, the library, entertainment, and other services.

Medium Priority Strategies

Many stakeholders indicated they thought there would be significant value to operating public transit service on weekends. Although one strategy identified in this plan is to modify the dial-a-ride service operated on Saturday, and instead provide regular fixed route service, another strategy would be to offer service on routes both Saturday and Sunday. Many systems that run on weekends post about the same ridership as on weekdays.

Whether Tuolumne County Transit should operate service seven days a week is a matter to be determined as part of the forthcoming Transit Development Plan Update. Nevertheless, providing transit service seven days per week may help increase community members' access to life-enhancing opportunities, such as job training or other social services.

Evening service would also improve access. Many low-income people, in particular, have mobility issues that are not currently being addressed.

Service on Saturday and Sunday could be more limited than weekday service, and hours and frequencies could be reduced if needed. Evening services have a more limited market, especially during the winter when more of the evening hours are dark. The service is most useful for people getting back from jobs or classes, but can also be used for recreational purposes.

Low Priority Strategies

There are outlying communities that are not currently served by public transit that are served by school bus operators. One of the issues surrounding the inability to serve these communities with public transit is unpaved roads. This has not been an obstacle for school buses, however. Thus, there is possibility using deadheading school buses as feeders to link these communities with the public transit system before/after school routes are completed.

Recommendations

Recommended Strategies

Program Administration

Implementation of the recommended program strategies is a responsibility of the various agencies in Tuolumne County, as well as TCTC. As the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for the County of Tuolumne and the City of Sonora, TCTC is the designated planning and administrative agency for transportation projects and programs in Tuolumne County.

TCTC will also play a role in program administration, because they are responsible for allocating TDA funds and adopting the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. Effective program administration is a crucial factor in ensuring the ongoing success of each new program implemented based on the strategies defined in this plan.

For each of the highest ranked strategies, a lead agency is suggested; however, in some cases numerous entities could serve in this capacity. The lead agency should have the administrative, fiscal and staffing resources needed to carry out the program on an ongoing basis.

Decision-Making Process

In addition to the staff administering the service or program (derived from the strategies) policy oversight is essential for formal decision-making. This function should rest with the TCTC Board and/or the boards of any of the agencies taking a leadership role in the implementation of strategies.

There is no permanent coordination body to carry forward some of the coordination activities that are encouraged in the various strategies. Although the SSTAC focuses on the array of transportation issues that arise in Tuolumne County, coordination has not specifically been one of the SSTAC's primary areas of focus.

A new group could be established for the continuation and enhancement of coordination activities, or these responsibilities could be assigned to the SSTAC.

Another potential strategy could be to conduct a coordination meeting that follows regular SSTAC meetings, or to piggyback on the standing meetings of the Senior Network, Central Sierra Continuum of Care, Supportive Housing Coalition, or any of the other housing or aging subgroups.

Establishing a permanent coordination committee, or including an agenda item on coordination for future SSTAC meetings would further develop and formalize ongoing communication and discussions held during the process of developing this plan.

Service Standards

To ensure that programs developed from this Coordinated Plan are effective, it is recommended that agencies coordinating services or receiving any of the funding sources identified in this plan develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating services. Service performance should be monitored by the lead agency for each program and data should be reported to participating agencies, the SSTAC and the TCTC Board.