



SSTAC Recommendation and Unmet Transit Needs Process

July 2021

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Unmet Transit Needs Process



- Overview
- Defining an Unmet Need
- Determining if an Unmet Need is Reasonable to Meet
- Public Hearing Process
- Meet with the Social Service Transportation Advisory Council
- Board Approves findings
- Conclusion/Questions

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Overview



- The unmet transit needs process is an annual review of transit needs of individuals or groups.
- Public hearings are held on an annual basis to determine unmet needs and receive comments from the public.
- Unmet transit need comments are also received and analyzed throughout the year.
- It is recommended that any complaint about a particular service or driver should be communicated at the time of the incident to the transit agency
- MCTC will continue to present and disseminate informational outreach around the Madera Region

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Defining an Unmet Need



Madera County Transportation Commission Definition of “Unmet Transit Needs”

- Includes all essential trip requests by transit-dependent persons for which there is no other convenient means of transportation

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Determining if an Unmet Need is Reasonable to Meet



- A transit need must pass the “reasonable to meet” definition.
- MCTC’s Definition of the term “Reasonable to Meet”
 - Shall apply to all related public or specialized transportation services that:
 - Are feasible;
 - Have community acceptance;
 - Serve a significant number of the population;
 - Are economical; and
 - Can demonstrate cost effectiveness

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Unmet Needs Public Hearing Process



- Each fiscal year Madera County Transportation Commission must adopt one of the following findings:
 1. There are no unmet transit needs
 2. There are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet.
 3. There are unmet transit needs, including those that are reasonable to meet.

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Unmet Needs Public Hearing Process



- As the administrator of Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds for Madera County, MCTC is charged with performing the annual Unmet Transit Needs process.
- The purpose of this process is to ensure that all unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet are met before funds are expended for non-transit uses, such as streets and roads.

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Unmet Needs Public Hearing Process



- MCTC typically performs the following to obtain comments from the public:
 - Social media posts and website updates
 - Public hearing notice published at least 30 days before hearing date
 - Visually appealing fliers posted around the County in key locations
 - Comment cards posted in MCTC offices and onboard transit systems
 - Online public comment form
 - Community workshops

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Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC)



- The SSTAC was established under the requirements of the Transportation Development Act (TDA), to ensure that unmet transit needs are identified within Madera County.
- The SSTAC reviews information on possible unmet transit needs as part of the Unmet Transit Needs process.

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Summary of Each Unmet Transit Need and the SSTAC's Recommendation



Unmet Transit Needs by System and SSTAC Determination

- **Chowchilla Area Transit Express (CATX)**
 - None to report.

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Agency Response and the SSTAC's Recommendation



City of Madera Response and SSTAC Determination

1. A bus stop is needed at Roosevelt and Olive across from Sierra Vista Elementary.
Not an Unmet Transit Need. This is an operational comment. The City of Madera will look into this. Dial-A-Ride service is available for to provide service when there is no bus stop.
2. There is currently a bus stop on Sunrise between A and Vineyard, a bus shelter is needed for shade and protection from inclement weather.
Not an Unmet Transit Need. The City of Madera will look into this and discuss with their Transit Advisory Board.
3. There is currently a bus stop at Olive and Martin near Planet Fitness, a bus shelter is needed for shade and protection from inclement weather.
Not an Unmet Transit Need. The City of Madera will look into this and discuss with their Transit Advisory Board.

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Agency Response and the SSTAC's Recommendation



City of Madera Response and SSTAC Determination

1. Transit users in the City of Madera report up to one hour wait times for buses on occasion and expressed the need for routes in the City of Madera to run more frequently.
Not an Unmet Transit Need. This situation has arisen due to pandemic restrictions that limit the amount of passengers that the bus can transport.
2. Residents and transit users continue to elevate the need for wastebaskets at bus stops in the City of Madera.
Not an Unmet Transit Need. The City reports that there are trashcans available at bus stops. However, depending on when this situation happened, the City notes that a couple of trashcans were stolen.

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Summary of Each Unmet Transit Need and the SSTAC's Recommendation (Cont.)



• Madera County Connection (MCC)

1. Year-Round Why YARTS year-round on HWY 41 to get to Oakhurst or Fresno.
Not an Unmet Transit Need. YARTS is a seasonal service. There is service by the Madera County Connection (MCC) that provide this connectivity.
2. Residents and transit users report a need for street lighting in La Vina and Fairmead to ensure transit users' first and last miles are safely lit.
Not an Unmet Transit Need. This need will be shared with the public works department to be further examined.
3. Residents and transit users in unincorporated communities have identified streets that need repavement and clean mobility infrastructure like sidewalks, crosswalks, and street lighting in order to facilitate their first and last miles, and thus, their use of public transit. A few examples that were elevated in our conversations were sidewalks and street lighting along Avenue 9 and within the subdivision of homes located in La Vina, and road repavement to Rd 26 in Madera Acres, Rd 29 in Parksdale, and Valerie Avenue in Madera Acres.
Not an Unmet Transit Need. The council recommends that this Need be forwarded to the appropriate agency for their knowledge.

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Summary of Each Unmet Transit Need and the SSTAC's Recommendation (Cont.)



Unmet Transit Needs by System and SSTAC Determination

• Madera County Connection (MCC)

1. Residents and transit users in La Vina continue to elevate the need for more frequent routes between La Vina and the City of Madera. Currently, the bus only runs on Wednesdays and Fridays, leaving transit-dependent persons with no other means of transportation without access to basic amenities (including healthcare, food, and other emergency services) most days of the week.
 1. **Unmet Transit Need not Reasonable to Meet due to Low Ridership.** The County reports that additional runs were added to this destination during the 20-21 Fiscal Year and that ridership was low and not cost-efficient. This service was suspended after a six month period. Further evaluation will be undertaken to determine the feasibility of additional service in the future.

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Summary of Each Unmet Transit Need and the SSTAC's Recommendation (Cont.)



Unmet Transit Needs by System and SSTAC Determination

• Madera County Connection (MCC)

1. Lastly, residents and transit users in Fairmead have elevated the need to continue working towards installation of a second bus stop in Fairmead. As we understand it, the status of this project is pending collaboration between the Fresno EOC and Madera County Public Works. We ask that MCTC direct these agencies to continue their work on this project as soon as possible, and oversee progress to ensure this project stays on track.
 1. Not an Unmet Need. The County reports that there was a pre-pandemic meeting to decide on the new transit stop specific location. Follow up to get this information has not been forwarded yet. The County is looking forward to continuing coordinating with the Fairmead community to narrow this down. It is outside MCTC's jurisdiction to direct agencies to continue their work and to oversee it.

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Other Comments Received During UTN Process



Notable comments received and SSTAC response

- More on-time schedules(All Systems)
 - **Not an Unmet Transit Need.** *This is an operational issue. The County will look at their on-time performance evaluation.*
- Not being skipped by dial-a-ride. (All Systems)
 - **Not an Unmet Transit Need.** *This is an operational issue. The County has not received comments about mistrips.*
- Residents and transit users report a need to expand rate assistance programs to provide free rides to people who are unable to pay their bus fare but who have transit needs nonetheless. This need was raised during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which many transit users have experienced additional financial hardships.(City of Madera)
 - **Not an Unmet Transit Need.** *Madera Metro offered free rides due to the pandemic and that status is still active. Madera County will be looking into offering a free-ride campaign.*
- Lastly, our organization requests a breakdown of transportation funding (whether from general fund dollars, local tax revenue, grant funding, or any other source of revenue) and expenditures on transportation and transit-related projects during the past two years in Madera County, the City of Madera, and the City of Chowchilla. This will be helpful in order for us to better understand the transportation and transit projects MCTC & other relevant agencies in Madera County have prioritized with the funding that has been available in the last few years.
 - **Not an Unmet Transit Need.** *The Madera County Transportation Commission will provide a letter with the information pertaining to this agency jurisdiction.*

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Recommendations



The MCTC staff and SSTAC considered each comment received and recommend the Commission find the following:

1. That the Madera County Transportation Commission finds that there are no unmet transit needs reasonable to meet at this time in the FY 2021/22 within the jurisdictions of the City of Madera, City of Chowchilla and County of Madera.

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Recommendations



The MCTC staff and SSTAC considered each comment and recommend the Commission find the following:

2. Maintain existing transit systems in Madera County: Madera Transit System (Madera Metro and Dial-A-Ride) in the City of Madera; Chowchilla Area Transit Express; Madera County Connection; Eastern Madera County Escort Service; and Eastern Madera County Senior Bus.

1. MCTC staff and the SSTAC recommend that the current public transit systems continue to operate in Madera County. The existing transit systems meet an existing need for public transit services in the county. The existing systems are:

City of Chowchilla

The Chowchilla Area Transit Express (CATX) provides demand-response transportation to the general public in a service area that encompasses the City of Chowchilla.

City of Madera

The Madera Metro and the Madera Dial-A-Ride provide transportation services that cover the entire City of Madera.

County of Madera

The Madera County Connection (MCC) provides inter-city transportation from Chowchilla, Fairmead, Madera, La Vina, Madera Ranchos and Eastern Madera County to Children's Hospital Central California where a connection can be made to Fresno via the Fresno Area Express (FAX).

The Senior Bus Program and the Escort Service provides transportation to the Eastern Madera County communities, with the Escort Service also service the Madera Ranchos area.

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