



ITEM 4A

SOCIAL SERVICE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES

DATE

Tuesday, April 30, 2024

The regular meeting of the Social Service Transportation Advisory Council was held Tuesday, April 30, 2024, and was called to order by Chair Frank Simonis, at 12:03 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Frank Simonis, Chair, Potential Transit User Who Has a Disability – appeared via Zoom
Bertha Vega, Local Social Service Provider for Persons of Limited Means*
Olga Olivia Saucedo-Garcia, Local Social Service Provider for Seniors
Rosalind Esqueda, Social Service Transportation Provider for Seniors
Franklina Bogan, Potential Transit User Who is 60 Years of Age or Older
Lynda Schafhauser, Potential Transit User Who is 60 Years of Age or Older
Monty Cox, Social Service Transportation Provider for Seniors
Sabrina Garibay on behalf of Alycia Falley, Vice Chair, Social Service Provider for Persons with Disabilities
Vincent Parker, Social Service Transportation Provider for Persons With Disabilities

MEMBERS ABSENT

Michelle Hernandez, Local Social Service Provider for Seniors

MCTC STAFF PRESENT:

Natalia Austin, Senior Regional Planner
Evelyn Espinosa, Senior Regional Planner
Jeff Findley, Principal Regional Planner

VISITORS PRESENT:

Alycia Falley, Madera County Department of Social Services
Liliana Zapien, Madera County Public Works
Xochitl Villasenor, City of Madera Transit
Joann McClendon, City of Chowchilla
Cynthia Ortegón, Madera resident

*appeared after roll call

1. Roll Call

At 12:03 pm, Chair Frank Simonis called the meeting to order and instructed that the roll call for attendance be taken. It was determined that a quorum was present.

2. Public Comment

Franklina Bogan, SSTAC member, shared that she was traveling out on Avenue 12 near the Ranchos and was pleased to see a shelter at a bus stop that was very well lit as a result of the solar lights. Would like to see more shelters like this within the city of Madera. Xochital, Transit Manager for the City of Madera, noted that she also saw the shelter and was happy to see it.

3. Approve Minutes of the February 6, 2024, Social Services Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

Monty Cox moved to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2024, Social Services Transportation Advisory Council Meeting.

Seconded by Olga Saucedo-Garcia

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Frank Simonis, Olga Saucedo-Garcia, Franklina Bogan, Lynda Schafhauser, Monty Cox, Sabrina Garibay, Rosalind Esqueda

Noes: None

Abstain: Vincent Parker

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Unmet Transit Needs Comment Analysis

The SSTAC reviewed twenty-seven comments. During the discussion, seventeen of the comments were identified as potential unmet transit needs and were evaluated using the “unmet transit need” and “reasonable to meet” definitions.

The potential unmet transit needs that have been evaluated and the recommendations made by the SSTAC for Madera County (MCC) are as follows:

- CONNECT TO MERCED, SPECIFICALLY TO THE MERCED AMTRAK STATION

SSTAC Recommendation: Not an unmet transit need

Discussion: There is not enough documented demand for a route to Merced. There was a route in the past that was discontinued due to low ridership. There are options to get to Merced Amtrak utilizing existing local transit service combined with rail service. The Madera Metro Blue Line serves the Madera Amtrak Station (MDR). Amtrak tickets from Madera to Merced cost \$9.00 for a direct one-way trip and have six different time options. The train ride takes less than 35 minutes.

- ADD LATER SERVICE TO/FROM THE COMMUNITY OF LA VINA, SO RIDERS CAN MAKE IT BACK HOME FROM APPOINTMENTS THAT RUN LATE.

SSTAC Recommendation: Unmet transit need, not reasonable to meet

Discussion: There is not enough documented demand to provide later Fixed Route service to and from La Vina. The County is conducting a study to implement a microtransit service that could address the specific needs of the area and help document when increased fixed route service is warranted. A microtransit or demand-response type of service may provide the flexibility needed to serve the needs of this community better.

Reasonable to Meet Requirements

Feasibility	Community Acceptance	Benefit to Population	Cost Effective	Consistency with Existing Service and Plans
Will be determined with microtransit study	Yes	Yes	Will be determined with microtransit study	Yes

- ADD MORE FREQUENT FIXED ROUTE SERVICE IN THE COMMUNITY OF LA VINA

SSTAC Recommendation: Unmet transit need, not reasonable to meet.

Discussion: There is not enough documented demand for more frequent Fixed Route service in La Vina. The County is conducting a study to implement a microtransit service that could address the specific needs of the area and help document when increased fixed route service is warranted. A microtransit or demand-response type of service may provide the flexibility needed to serve the needs of this community better.

Reasonable to Meet Requirements

Feasibility	Community Acceptance	Benefit to Population	Cost Effective	Consistency with Existing Service and Plans
Will be determined with microtransit study	Yes	Yes	Will be determined with microtransit study	Yes

- PROVIDE SERVICE TO VALLEY CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL AT 8PM (EVENING) AND BACK TO YOSEMITE AVENUE IN MADERA AT 7AM (MORNING)

SSTAC Recommendation: Unmet transit need, not reasonable to meet.

Discussion: There is not enough documented demand for transit service to Valley Children’s Hospital in the evenings. The microtransit study will provide guidance on the amount of ridership needed to support this service if implemented.

Reasonable to Meet Requirements

Feasibility	Community Acceptance	Benefit to Population	Cost Effective	Consistency with Existing Service and Plans
Will be determined with microtransit study	Unknown - There was only one comment regarding this need	Unknown - It is unclear how many people this will benefit	Will be determined with microtransit study	Yes

- PROVIDE MEDICAL TRANSIT SERVICE FROM THE MOUNTAINS (EASTERN MADERA COUNTY) TO HOSPITALS IN FRESNO, MADERA, OR MARIPOSA

SSTAC Recommendation: Unmet transit need, not reasonable to meet.

Discussion: The County provides the Medical Escort Service for residents in the Eastern Madera County communities, including the mountain communities. The service runs on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Some residents are not healthy enough to utilize this service, since the ride and wait times can be long. In some instances, riders are dropped off in the morning for their appointments and then wait to get picked up, in some cases several hours later, after the rest of the riders are done with their appointments to head back home. The County believes that microtransit service will assist in making these medical trips more convenient, increasing the benefit to residents.

Reasonable to Meet Requirements

Feasibility	Community Acceptance	Benefit to Population	Cost Effective	Consistency with Existing Service and Plans
Will be determined with microtransit study	Yes	Yes	Will be determined with microtransit study	Yes

- ADD A STOP CLOSER TO ROAD 200 IN NORTH FORK

SSTAC Recommendation: Unmet transit need, not reasonable to meet

Discussion: There is not enough documented demand for a new stop that would add ten minutes or more to the route at this time.

Reasonable to Meet Requirements

Feasibility	Community Acceptance	Benefit to Population	Cost Effective	Consistency with Existing Service and Plans
Will be determined with microtransit study	Unknown - There was only one comment regarding this need	Unknown - It is unclear how many people this will benefit	Will be determined with microtransit study	Yes

- ADD A BUS SHELTER AT THE STORE IN LA VINA

SSTAC Recommendation: Unmet transit need, not reasonable to meet

Discussion: There is not sufficient room for a bus shelter at the store; however, the County will continue to work with the store owner to find a solution. There may be a stop added on the other side of the street where there are planned sidewalks. Most of the MCC stops are in the unincorporated area that lacks infrastructure like sidewalks to add an ADA compliant shelter.

Reasonable to Meet Requirements

Feasibility	Community Acceptance	Benefit to Population	Cost Effective	Consistency with Existing Service and Plans
No – Existing infrastructure will not support a shelter	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

- ADD TRASH CANS AT THE STOPS IN LA VINA

SSTAC Recommendation: Not an unmet transit need

Discussion: The County transit administration will not allow trash cans at the stops because of the sustained maintenance that would be required.

- ADD MORE LIGHTING AT THE BUS STOPS AND ALONG THE ROUTES TO BUS STOPS IN LA VINA; ADD LIGHTED SCHEDULES TO SHOW IF THE BUS IS RUNNING ON TIME

SSTAC Recommendation: Unmet transit need, reasonable to meet

Discussion: The Transit App (by Swiftly) provides the location of the bus in real-time. The schedules are also accessible on the app. However, the app may not perform well in areas with weak internet service. The County has plans to install new schedule holders that have a solar light at bus stops throughout the county, including in the community of La Vina. Together with the app and the lighted schedule holders, this unmet transit need will be met.

Reasonable to Meet Requirements

Feasibility	Community Acceptance	Benefit to Population	Cost Effective	Consistency with Existing Service and Plans
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

- ADD MORE SHELTERS AND BENCHES AT STOPS IN LA VINA

SSTAC Recommendation: Unmet transit need, not reasonable to meet

Discussion: The residential areas of La Vina tend to lack the supporting infrastructure (sidewalks) for the installation of benches and shelters. The County continues to look for opportunities to add shelters where they can be installed safely and with adequate ADA access.

Reasonable to Meet Requirements

Feasibility	Community Acceptance	Benefit to Population	Cost Effective	Consistency with Existing Service and Plans
No – lack of support infrastructure prevents installation in many locations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The potential unmet transit needs that have been evaluated and the recommendations made by the SSTAC for the City of Madera (Madera Metro) are as follows:

- TRAVEL TO ST. AGNES MEDICAL CENTER IN FRESNO BY MADERA METRO DIAL-A-RIDE

SSTAC Recommendation: Not an unmet transit need

Discussion: There are options to get to Fresno for medical appointments from Madera. Madera County provides fixed route service from Madera to Valley Children’s Medical Center, where riders can connect to Fresno Area Express to get to destinations (including medical) in the City of Fresno. Madera County also provides the Medical Escort service on Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday specifically for medical trips to the Fresno and Clovis Area.

- ADD SERVICE ON SUNDAYS IN THE CITY OF MADERA

SSTAC Recommendation: Not an unmet transit need

Discussion: Dial-a-ride service is available on Sundays. A greater need would have to be established (i.e. community acceptance, potential ridership) before amending the budget and contracting with MV Transit to add a fixed route service on Sundays. Even though utilizing Dial-a-ride requires an advance reservation, same-day service is available if there are cancellations. The City of Madera conducted a Transit Plan Services Assessment that was completed in July 2023. The newest route changes that have been implemented have been based on the results of the assessment.

- PROVIDE A STOP NEAR SHERWOOD WAY TO GET TO MADERA COLLEGE

SSTAC Recommendation: Not an unmet transit need

Discussion: To get to Madera City College from Sherwood Way, there are a couple of options. A rider can reserve Dial-a-Ride to get to the college, or they can use the fixed route system. To use the fixed route system, get on the bus at one of the three bus stops along Sherwood Way. Take the blue line to Walgreens, then transfer to the green line to get to the college.

- PROVIDE SERVICE AFTER 5:30 PM IN THE CITY OF MADERA

SSTAC Recommendation: Unmet transit need, not reasonable to meet

Discussion: Many events, including public meetings, begin at the end of the business day. Providing public transit service later in the evenings would provide transit dependent persons with increased mobility options. However, when the City surveyed residents as part of its recent needs assessment, later service was not an issue. The need for later service would need to be established by further analysis and demonstrated possibly by a pilot study.

Reasonable to Meet Requirements

Feasibility	Community Acceptance	Benefit to Population	Cost Effective	Consistency with Existing Service and Plans
Unknown	Unknown – There was only one comment regarding this need	Yes	Unknown	Yes

- PROVIDE SERVICE TO ALL THE CAMARENA CLINICS

SSTAC Recommendation: Not an unmet transit need

Discussion: All but two of the Camarena clinics are being served by the current route system in the city. In most cases, the riders are dropped off right at the clinic.

- ABILITY FOR USERS TO SAVE THE TRANSIT SCHEDULES

SSTAC Recommendation: Not an unmet transit need

Discussion: There are many ways for Madera Metro transit users to access and save the schedules. They are available in hardcopy or for download on the agency’s website.

The potential unmet transit needs that have been evaluated and the recommendations made by the SSTAC for the City of Chowchilla are as follows:

- PROVIDE SERVICE UNTIL 5PM AND ADD WEEKEND SERVICE IN CHOWCHILLA

SSTAC Recommendation: Unmet transit need, not reasonable to meet

Discussion: Several years ago, the City approved a pilot program with extended hours until 5 pm. For two years it was underutilized, so the service was discontinued. The City will continue to monitor community needs to determine if there should be an

extension of service hours based on information collected during outreach efforts and ridership data.

Reasonable to Meet Requirements

Feasibility	Community Acceptance	Benefit to Population	Cost Effective	Consistency with Existing Service and Plans
Unknown - it is unclear how many residents of Chowchilla would utilize the service in the evenings and on weekends	Unknown – There was only one comment regarding this need	Unknown	Unknown	Yes

The rest of the comments received were determined to be either operational or non-transit issues. Direction was given to forward these comments to the appropriate agencies to be addressed.

Monty Cox made a motion to recommend for Madera County:
There are unmet transit needs, including needs that are reasonable to meet.

For the City of Madera: There are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet.

For the City of Chowchilla: There are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet.

Seconded by Chair Frank Simonis

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Frank Simonis, Olga Saucedo-Garcia, Franklina Bogan, Lynda Schafhauser, Monty Cox, Sabrina Garibay, Rosalind Esqueda, Bertha Vega

Noes: None

Abstain: Vincent Parker

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Appoint SSTAC Representative to attend MCTC Policy Board Meeting on May 29, 2024

Monty Cox nominated Frank Simonis to represent the SSTAC at the MCTC Policy Board meeting on May 29, 2024.

Seconded by Linda Schafhauser.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Frank Simonis, Olga Saucedo-Garcia, Franklina Bogan, Lynda Schafhauser, Monty Cox, Sabrina Garibay, Rosalind Esqueda, Bertha Vega

Noes: None

Abstain: Vincent Parker

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. Discuss Future Meetings

The SSTAC agreed upon the following dates for upcoming quarterly meetings: August 6, 2024, November 5, 2024, February 5, 2025, and April 29, 2025. Meetings will continue to be held at noon at the MCTC office.

7. Announcements

SSTAC member, Olga Saucedo-Garcia, announced that Madera County Behavioral Health has partnered with the City of Madera Parks and Community Services to host a Wellness Walk at Town and Country Park on Friday, May 3, 2024, from 9:30am – 11:30am for older adults and persons with disabilities. Breakfast is included. SSTAC chair, Frank Simonis, announced that the annual Smokey the Bear Run-Walk at Bass Lake will be on September 28, 2024. The proceeds benefit the Madera County Sheriff Volunteer Program and the Cal Fire Prevention Program. This year celebrates the 80th anniversary of Smokey the Bear. The roads around Bass Lake will be closed for the event. SSTAC member, Olga Saucedo-Garcia announced that the City of Madera is hosting a Mother's Day luncheon for older adults at the Pan-Am Senior Center at 11:30am on Friday, May 10, 2024. SSTAC member, Monty Cox, introduced the new Madera County Public Works Analyst, Liliana Zapien. MCTC staff, Natalia Austin, mentioned that MCTC will be advertising to fill vacancies on the SSTAC for Representatives of a Social Service Provider for Persons with Disabilities and Seniors. SSTAC members were asked to forward contact information for anyone with those qualifications.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Frank Simonis at 2:00 PM.