



**STAFF REPORT**  
Board Meeting of June 17, 2020

**AGENDA ITEM:** 5-A

**PREPARED BY:** Amelia Davies, Associate Regional Planner

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**SUBJECT:**

2020-21 Unmet Transit Needs – Resolution 20-06

**Enclosure:** Yes

**Action:** MCTC Staff recommends the MCTC Policy Board approve the Social Service Transportation Advisory Council's 2020-21 Unmet Transit Needs finding by Resolution 20-06

**SUMMARY:**

Pursuant to Section 99401.5 of the California Public Utilities Code, MCTC, as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency, must make a finding after holding a Public Hearing that there are no unmet public transportation needs within the jurisdiction of claimants which can be reasonably met before it may approve Local Transportation Fund claims for streets and roads.

The MCTC has determined that its definition of the term “unmet transit needs” includes all essential trip requests by transit-dependent persons for which there is no other convenient means of transportation, and the Commission has determined that its definition of the term “reasonable to meet” shall apply to all related public or specialized transportation services that:

- (1) are feasible;
- (2) have community acceptance;
- (3) serve a significant number of the population;
- (4) are economical; and
- (5) can demonstrate cost effectiveness

by having a ratio of fare revenues to operating cost at least equal to 10 percent, and the Commission has determined that its definition of the term “reasonable to meet” shall also apply to all service requests which do not abuse or obscure the intent of such transportation services once they are established.

The role of the Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) is to aid the MCTC Policy Board in its review of transit issues with emphasis on the annual identification of transit needs within Madera County. The establishment of the Madera County SSTAC is consistent with State Law (SB 498, Chapter 673, 1987) which mandates both the purpose and minimum membership of this body. The purpose of the SSTAC is to:

- A. Annually participate in identification of transit needs (Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearing Process).

B. Review and recommend appropriate action by the MCTC for a jurisdiction which finds, by resolution, that:

- (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 that are reasonable to meet.

C. Advise the MCTC on any other major transit issues, including the coordination and consolidation of specialized transportation services.

At the “Unmet Transit Needs” Public Hearing on Wednesday, May 20, 2020, the MCTC Policy Board opened the hearing to receive public testimony. The following staff evaluation was prepared in cooperation with the SSTAC. MCTC Staff, on behalf of the SSTAC, will submit that body’s findings to the Commission under separate correspondence.

## **NARRATIVE OF EVALUATION**

### **City of Madera**

There are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet at this time in the City of Madera.

MCTC staff has reviewed and discussed testimony regarding the City of Madera’s transit services with the Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC). The recommendation from staff and the SSTAC is that there are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet within the City of Madera. The recommendation is based upon the definition of an unmet transit need, which includes any essential trip requests by transit-dependent persons for which there is no other convenient means of transportation.

Testimony was received regarding the reopening of the Walmart stop. City of Madera Staff have worked with the shopping center manager in the past. For safety reasons, all analyses have been done, it is very unsafe for fixed route to travel into a shopping center. The City applied for a Caltrans planning grant, but they have not yet heard from Caltrans about the status. An alternative would be to develop a bus stop at the Pak N Save but there has not been much interest from the community for that. If planning grant is not awarded, the City will test out a bus stop around Pak N Save. Furthermore, Dial-A-Ride is available to drop off right in front of Walmart. This comment is being further studied but not reasonable to meet at this point in time.

There was also a request for 30-minute headways on all Madera Metro routes to make service more dependable. The City is already looking at re-routing for the timing. Route 1 operates in 30-minute headways already. For Route 2, they currently do not have the ridership to support the current route so it would be difficult to meet farebox recovery ratio and does not justify a change to 30-minute headways. Currently an assessment on routes is being performed. MV transit is doing preliminary re-routing assessment to improve efficiency/change the route. There will be an update this summer on this assessment by MV transit.

Extend the Madera Metro service operations on weekends was also requested. The City has been trying for two years to get the Caltrans grant to do a thorough assessment of routes to get data to make determination on whether extending service for the weekend is feasible.

Route 2 ridership is so low, this may not be cost-effective. Even Dial-A-Ride ridership is low on Sundays (possibly due to COVID-19).

### **City of Chowchilla**

There are no unmet transit needs in the City of Chowchilla.

### **County of Madera**

There are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet at this time in the County of Madera.

MCTC staff has reviewed and discussed testimony regarding the County of Madera's transit services with the Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC). The recommendation from staff and the SSTAC is that there are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet at this time in the County of Madera. The recommendation is based upon the definition of an unmet transit need, which includes any essential trip requests by transit-dependent persons for which there is no other convenient means of transportation.

Testimony was received for route and schedule improvements for the Chowchilla-Fairmead-Madera connection to ensure a dependable and user-friendly service. In FY18/19 the transit services were undergoing a major transition, this resulted in a better understanding of the need. Ellen Moy went to Fairmead and talked to the President of Fairmead community group. The survey for location of shelter was halted due to COVID-19. This will continually be followed up on based on demand.

A second stop must be added on the Northern side of Fairmead around the vicinity of Avenue 23, was requested. Ellen Moy has been working with the Leadership Counsel of Justice and Accountability on opening such a stop and will continue to do so once COVID-19 allows.

Testimony was also received for increased frequency of routes for Eastin Arcola-Ripperdan-La Vina route. Ellen Moy informed MCTC staff that the County plans to initiate additional runs to this current service on a pilot basis beginning July 2020. One will be added at in mid-morning departing the Downtown Intermodal Center at approximately 11:20am and one at 3:35pm. The County will closely monitor these runs and overall demand for cost effectiveness and for any warranted expansion.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

No fiscal impact to the approved 2019-20 Overall Work Program and Budget.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The MCTC staff and SSTAC considered the hearing testimony and written comments and recommend the Commission find the following:

**1. That the Madera County Transportation Commission finds that there are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet in FY 2020/21 within the jurisdiction of the City of Madera, City of Chowchilla, and County of Madera.**

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

The Chowchilla Area Transit Express (CATX) provides transportation services that cover the entire city of Chowchilla as well as Fairmead and Valley State Prison.

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 including the newly developed Eastern Madera County Escort Program transit service to Raymond. This service is provided on Wednesdays from 8:30am to 4:30pm.

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

Staff and 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:

- Madera Transit System - City of Madera (Dial-A-Ride and Madera Metro);
- Chowchilla Area Transit Express - City of Chowchilla;
- Eastern Madera County Escort Service; and Eastern Madera County Senior Bus;
- Madera County Connection