



STAFF REPORT
Board Meeting of May 21, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 5-E

PREPARED BY: Natalia Austin, Senior Regional Planner

SUBJECT:

Recommendation to Shift the Unmet Transit Needs (UTN) Process from Spring to Fall

Enclosure: No

Action: Information and Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

MCTC staff recommends shifting the Unmet Transit Needs (UTN) process from spring to fall, beginning with the upcoming cycle (FY 2026-27).

Each year, MCTC conducts the UTN process as required under the Transportation Development Act (TDA). This process collects feedback from the public about transit needs that current services may not fully meet. While traditionally conducted in the spring, staff is recommending a shift to the fall cycle for several operational and strategic reasons.

There are three primary reasons supporting the proposed change:

1. Improved Coordination with Transit Budget Cycles:

Local transit agencies have indicated that the current spring UTN schedule does not align well with their budget development timelines. Budget planning for their upcoming fiscal year begins in January. Completing the UTN process before this time would allow agencies to incorporate public feedback and findings into their fiscal planning in a timely and effective manner.

2. Leverage Fall Community Events for Public Outreach:

The fall season includes several community events in which MCTC has historically participated. These events offer valuable platforms for public engagement and outreach. By conducting the UTN process in the fall, MCTC and local transit agency staff may collaborate to utilize these events as opportunities for soliciting feedback, increasing public participation, and improving the overall effectiveness of the UTN process.

3. Flexibility Under TDA Guidelines:

The TDA does not prescribe a specific timeline for initiating or conducting the UTN process. The primary requirement is that the final UTN documentation be submitted by August 15 of the fiscal year in which the TDA allocation is made, or within 10 days after the finding is adopted, whichever is later. A fall UTN cycle remains fully compliant with these statutory requirements and may even allow for earlier adoption and completion.

Recommended timeline:

September 2025 – Kickoff UTN Process

October 2025 – Required UTN Public Hearing

December 2025 – SSTAC makes UTN recommendation

January 2026 – MCTC Policy Board approves UTN finding by resolution

March 2026 – Send UTN documentation to Caltrans

Shifting the UTN process from spring to fall aligns with local transit agency budget planning, enhances public engagement opportunities, and remains fully compliant with TDA requirements. MCTC believes this scheduling change will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the UTN process.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact to the approved 2024-25 Overall Work Program and Budget.