



STAFF REPORT
Board Meeting of February 21, 2024

AGENDA ITEM: 4-E

PREPARED BY: Natalia Austin, Senior Regional Planner

SUBJECT:

Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) Meetings Update

Enclosure: Yes

Action: Information and Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

SSTAC Meeting – August 8, 2023

The meeting was cancelled due to the lack of a quorum.

SSTAC Meeting – November 16, 2023

Nine out of ten SSTAC members were present, with two appearing via Zoom.

Two newly appointed members of the SSTAC attended. The local transit agencies provided system updates, including information about new electric charging stations for electric buses in the County, and the rollout of the new route to the Amtrak Station in December by Madera Metro.

MCTC staff gave a presentation overview of the role of the SSTAC, and the Unmet Transit Needs process. The MCTC Policy Board adopted “Unmet Transit Need and Reasonable to Meet Definitions” were explained.

Two public comments that were received during July 1, 2023 – November 2, 2023, via the online survey were considered. One comment was regarding transit services to St. Agnes Community Hospital in Fresno by Madera Metro Dial-a-Ride. It was determined by the SSTAC members that there is a need for residents of Madera County to access healthcare in Fresno since there are no hospitals in Madera. Further analysis will be made at a future meeting to make a final determination if this is an unmet transit need and if it is reasonable to meet. The other comment considered was regarding the ability of users to save the Madera Metro transit schedules. It was determined that there are many ways for Madera Metro transit users to access and save the schedules, so this comment did not rise to the level of an unmet transit need. Further discussion was made regarding the opportunities for residents to submit questions and obtain information regarding the Unmet Transit Needs process. MCTC outreach

events and MCTC Policy Board meetings were mentioned as options. It was also recommended to reach out to the Board of Supervisor's Town Hall meetings, adding information to utility bills, libraries, and senior centers to get the word out.

SSTAC Meeting – February 6, 2024

Eight out of ten SSTAC members were present, with one appearing via Zoom for just cause under AB 2449.

The County of Madera gave a system update, announcing two new staff members that have joined the transit department. A Request for Proposals is being prepared to find a new transit operator by July 1, 2024. A study to determine how to implement microtransit in the County is underway. It will be publicly operated, and users will utilize an app to access services. At the bus yard on Almond Avenue, new equipment for a bus wash and eight bus chargers will be added. The yard has the capacity for sixteen bus chargers. Solar canopies will also be installed. Schedules are being installed at all County bus stops and the website is being updated.

The City of Madera gave information on the new route system that was implemented in January 2024. They are waiting for more feedback before creating new brochures, since the rollout is in the pilot phase. The City also gave a progress report on the Unmet Transit Needs finding for FY 2023-24, the installation of shelters and benches at bus stops. Benches, including semi-seats, are being installed, but due to right-of-way issues, seating will not be available at 100% of the City's bus stops.

MCTC staff shared the updates for the City of Chowchilla since the transit manager was not able to attend the meeting. Chowchilla's Unmet Transit Needs finding for FY 2023-24 was that there are "no unmet transit needs", however the City is open to feedback from transit riders and the community to better serve the needs of the growing population. The City is planning to use SB 125 funds to electrify its fleet and modernize its transit system by providing a mobile/contactless payment solution. Two new bus shelters have been installed and two new vehicles were purchased using various funding sources, including Measure T. The City also plans to install new shelters and revamp existing ones on the west side of the City.

MCTC staff announced the initiation of the Unmet Transit Needs process for FY 2024-25 and provided information about the upcoming workshops and the public hearing on April 17, 2024.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact to the approved 2023-24 Overall Work Program and Budget.