



Madera County Grand Jury

P. O. Box 534, Madera, CA 93639
Tel. 559-662-0946
FAX 559-662-0848
info@maderagrandjury.org

December 21, 2020

Ms. Patricia Taylor, Executive Director
Madera County Transportation Commission
2001 Howard Road Suite 201
Madera, CA 93637

RE: Madera County's Unmet Transit Needs in Madera County: Riders without Riders
Report Date: December 21, 2020

Dear Ms. Taylor:

Enclosed please find a copy of the above report by the Madera County Grand Jury.

Attached is a copy of excerpts from Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05. Please note that subdivision (f) of Penal Code section 933.05 specifically prohibits any disclosure of the contents of a grand jury report by a public agency or its officers or governing body prior to its release to the public, which will occur three days after the date of this letter.

Penal Code section 933.05 requires that you respond separately to specified Findings and Recommendations contained in the report. Subdivisions (a) and (b) of Penal Code section 933.05 mandate the content and format of responses. Penal Code section 933 mandates the deadline for responses.


You are required to submit your response within 60 days as follows:

Send a hard copy to: Judge Michael Jurkovich
Madera County Supervising Judge
300 South G Street
Madera, CA 93637

Please also send a hard copy or electronic copy of your response to:
Foreperson, Madera County Grand Jury, PO Box 534, Madera, CA 93637

Responses are public records. The clerk must maintain a copy of your response.
Should you have any questions, please contact me at the above address.

Sincerely,


Nina Zarucchi-Mize
Foreperson, Madera County Grand Jury

§ 933. Findings and Recommendations (Excerpt)

No later than 90 days after the grand jury submits a final report on the operations of any public agency subject to its reviewing authority, the governing body of the public agency shall comment to the presiding judge of the superior court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the governing body, and every elected county officer or agency head for which the grand jury has responsibility pursuant to Section 914.1 shall comment within 60 days to the presiding judge of the superior court, with an information copy sent to the board of supervisors, on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of that county officer or agency head and any agency or agencies which that officer or agency head supervises or controls. In any city and county, the mayor shall also comment on the findings and recommendations. All of these comments and reports shall forthwith be submitted to the presiding judge of the superior court who impaneled the grand jury. A copy of all responses to grand jury reports shall be placed on file with the clerk of the public agency and the office of the county clerk, or the mayor when applicable, and shall remain on file in those offices.....

As used in this section "agency" includes a department.

§ 933.05. Responses to Findings (Excerpt)

- (a) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to **each** grand jury **finding**, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:
 - (1) The respondent agrees with the finding.
 - (2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefor.
- (b) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to **each** grand jury **recommendation**, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:
 - (1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
 - (2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.
 - (3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.
 - (4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.
- (c) However, if a finding or recommendation of the grand jury addresses budgetary or personnel matters of a county agency or department headed by an elected officer, both the agency or department head and the board of supervisors shall respond if requested by the grand jury, but the response of the board of supervisors shall address only those budgetary or personnel matters over which it has some decision making authority. The response of the elected agency or department head shall address all aspects of the findings or recommendations affecting his or her agency or department.

- (f) A grand jury shall provide to the affected agency a copy of the portion of the grand jury report relating to that person or entity two working days prior to its public release and after the approval of the presiding judge. No officer, agency, department, or governing body of a public agency shall disclose any contents of the report prior to the public release of the Final Report.



**Unmet Transit Needs in Madera County
Riders without Routes**

**Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report 1920-02
December 21, 2020**

SUMMARY

The 2019-2020 Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) was prompted to review the Madera County Public Transportation (MCTC) services after reviewing the MCGJ 2017 report. That report found the “*Madera County Transportation Commission efforts in obtaining public input are insufficient.*” The MCGJ also considered the Unmet Transit Needs FY 2019/2020 Report published by the Madera County Transportation Commission. In addition, in July 2019 the County awarded a five-year contract to the Fresno County EOC (FCEOC) for Madera County Connection (MCC) transportation services. The change to the new service provider would have given the County the opportunity to review the routes and connections but improvements were not considered. The only changes were cosmetic: a new logo, different uniforms, and a new name attached to the service provider. This MCGJ report reviews the improvements to secure public input and develop route improvements to meet needs geographically, demographically, economically while addressing the needs for all communities in the County of Madera.

GLOSSARY

FCEOC –	Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission
FY -	Fiscal Year
LTF -	Local Transportation Fund
MCC -	Madera County Connection
MCGJ –	Madera County Grand Jury
MCTA -	Madera County Transportation Authority
MCTC –	Madera County Transportation Commission
MPO –	Metropolitan Planning Organization
RTPA –	Regional Transportation Planning Agency
SSTAC –	Social Services Technical Advisory Council
STA -	State Transit Assistance
TDA -	Transportation Development Act
YARTS -	Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System

BACKGROUND

The MCTC publishes an annual report provided to them by the Social Services Technical Advisory Council (SSTAC) “Unmet Transit Needs FY 2019/2020 Report.” SSTAC serves as a citizen advisory committee to the MCTC on matters related to public transportation needs of the Madera County community. SSTAC holds two to three meetings per year, including the Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearing.

The function of SSTAC, which is comprised of MCTC staff and public volunteer representatives, evaluates public comments, holds public workshops, public hearings, and makes recommendations to the MCTC Board to aid the MCTC Policy Board in its review of public transit.

The composition of the SSTAC is set forth in statute and consists of representatives of the following groups; One representative of potential transit users who is 60 years of age or older, one representative of potential transit users who have a disability, two representatives of the local service providers for seniors, including one representative of a social service transportation

provider if one exists, two representatives of local social service providers for those with disabilities, including one representative of a social service transportation provider, if one exists, one representative of a local social service provider for persons of limited means, and two representatives from the local consolidated transportation services agency. The volunteer representatives of SSTAC have not been filled since 2018. The administrative role of the MCTC is to foster intergovernmental coordination. By conducting meetings with Caltrans, undertaking comprehensive regional planning with the region's public transportation operators, providing a forum for citizens input with citizen forums held once a year, and providing technical services to its member agencies.

The MCGJ's focus was on this annual report, and on the following items:

- MCTC efforts made to further engage and obtain public input
- MCTC efforts made to meet unmet transit needs
- MCTC efforts made to develop strategies to increase ridership and alleviate challenges of unmet transit needs
- MCTC efforts made to provide new or additional public transportation services routes
- MCTC efforts made to provide a public transportation service that services all communities in an efficient and cost effective manner.

Based on the findings presented in the MCJG 2017 report and the Unmet Transit Needs 2019/2020 Report, the MCGJ 19-20 revisited the agency and its operation.

METHODOLOGY

Research

The MCGJ conducted research of documentation available online and provided at various governmental and non-governmental public meetings.

- Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) is tasked with guiding the decisions concerning the Madera County Public Transit System
- Inspected the Unmet Transit Needs FY 2019-2020 Report from SSTAC

Interview

The MCGJ conducted interviews with governmental and non-governmental agencies:

- Madera County Transportation Commission
- Social Services Technical Advisory Committee
- Madera County Public Works
- Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability

Interaction

The MCGJ attended governmental agencies meetings, town halls, and rode several public transportation bus services within the county:

- Rode public transportation

- Attended Madera County Transportation Commission Board meetings
- Attended Madera County Technical Advisory Board meetings
- Attended City of Madera City Council meetings
- Attended Madera County Board of Supervisors meetings
- Attended Town Hall meetings

DISCUSSION

Unmet Transit Needs Report FY 2019/2020

The 2019-20 MCGJ reviewed the geographical layout, demographics, socio-economics, and growth of the County. In recognizing the diverse transportation needs of the County, MCGJ examined the public transit system as referenced in the SSTAC annual report and the SSTAC's community outreach activities. Additionally, MCGJ reviewed SSTAC's community outreach activities. SSTAC meets two to three times per year as a committee. There is one workshop and one public hearing held annually, typically in April, for the public to bring forward public transportation needs in their community. The community may also submit in writing the public transportation needs in their community. The workshop and public hearing are held at the MCTC office on Howard Street in the City of Madera only. No other meetings are held in varying locations throughout the county.

The SSTAC's Unmet Transit Needs FY 2019/2020 Report which was delivered and accepted by the MCTC Board determined there are no unmet transit needs.

The definition of "unmet transit needs" according to MCTC is:

*"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*

The analysis of the 2019-2020 Report resulted in the following MCTC analysis

ANALYSIS OF THE COMMENTS RECEIVED AT THE PUBLIC HEARINGS

*Thirty-one of the public comments were considered by the SSTAC to be a potential unmet need. The SSTAC applied the MCTC Policy Board adopted definition of "unmet transit need" and "reasonable to meet" to those thirty-one comments and determined that for Fiscal Year 2019-2020 there are no **unmet transit needs, including transit needs that are reasonable to meet.** MCTC staff concur with the SSTAC's finding." Ref: "Unmet Transit Needs FY2019-2020*

Filed annually, the Unmet Transit Needs Report is required in order to receive Transportation Development Act (TDA) Funds. The administration of TDA funds includes the annual unmet transit needs process, which has three key components:

- Soliciting testimony on unmet transit needs
- Analyzing needs in accordance to adopted definitions of unmet transit need and reasonable to meet
- Adoption of a finding regarding unmet transit needs that may exist for the upcoming fiscal year. These tasks are to be performed in consultation with the Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC)

Based on the Report and analysis, the MCGJ determined the “unmet transit needs” definition is vague and fails to take into account the geography, demographics, economic inequity, and growth of the County.

- The geographical County spread is over 2,147 square miles.
- The demographic makeup of the county shows 14 percent of the population is over 65 years of age.
- The economic inequity exists with 20 percent of the population living at or below poverty level.
- The pockets of growth along major highways and with poorly presented and communicated bus schedules, routes, and connections show the current transit system is not serving the needs of the most needy.

Funding Sources and Mandates

Many levels of government and non-government officials are involved with the funding of the County Public Transit System. Major funding sources administered by the MCTC are as follows:

Local Transportation Fund (LTF):

As the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Madera County, MCTC is responsible for the administration of the Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds also known as Local Transportation Funds. TDA or Local Transportation Funds are funded through 25 percent of the statewide sales tax that is remitted back to the County of origin and is the primary funding source for most transit systems.

Measure T Fund:

Passed in November 2006, Measure T is the half percent sales tax in Madera County. By ordinance and voter-approved investment plan, 2 percent of the collected sales tax is allocated to Public Transportation.

State Transit Assistance (STA) Funds:

STA refers to State Transit Assistance. This is derived from sales tax on diesel fuel and is allocated by the State Legislature to the State Controller’s office. One hundred percent of allocations received by Madera County is spent on Public Transportation.

All three funding sources are allocated to the County of Madera, City of Madera, and City of Chowchilla based on population for operating and capital purposes. The sources and distribution of funding is complex as changing and new state and federal programs are implemented. The “Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act” or FAST Act passed in December 2015 provides Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 “urbanized area” funding apportionment in addition to Section 5311 and 5339 rural area funding. In April 2017, State Senate Bill 1, “Road

Repair and Accountability Act” was passed and will generate transit funding through the capital State of Good Repair (SGR) program and is augmented State Transit Assistance operations and capital funding. These are all complicated funding sources for the purpose of funding all modes of transportation. The new contract with FCEOC realized a \$2.5 million cost savings over a five-year period. There was no indication from the Public Works Department on how these new-realized savings will be used to improve public transportation services along with LTF, Measure T and STA funds.

Varying funding sources have provided sustained, operational, and capital revenue to the county’s public transportation service.

The following table shows the funding allocations, in US dollars for each fund over the last seven years. All figures expressed are in US Dollar

Fiscal Year	Local Transportation Fund \$			Measure T \$		STA \$		TOTAL \$
	Amount Collected	Amount Allocated to Public Transit	% to Public Transit	Amount Collected	Amount Allocated to Public Transit (2%)	Amount Allocated by State	Amount Allocated to Public Transit (100%)	
2012-13	3,438,947	775,592	22.55%	7,960,429	159,209	851,406	851,406	1,786,207
2013-14	3,633,786	452,344	12.45%	8,439,910	168,798	791,017	791,017	1,412,159
2014-15	3,841,484	612,426	15.94%	9,017,126	180,343	750,334	750,334	1,543,103
2015-16	3,802,382	899,250	23.65%	9,327,292	186,546	778,310	778,310	1,864,106
2016-17	3,882,097	1,049,186	27.03%	9,521,593	190,432	528,054	528,054	1,767,672
2017-18	4,179,802	1,150,064	27.51%	9,810,898	196,218	940,194	940,194	2,286,476
2018-19	4,370,474	1,020,605	23.35%	10,398,296	207,966	1,111,000	1,111,000	2,339,571

Information provided by Madera County Transportation Commission

Over the course of the last seven years there has been a net increase of roughly \$600,000 based on sales tax revenue, state, and federal funds. In addition a \$500,000 per year savings was realized with the new FCEOC contract. This provides for a \$2.4 million dollar annual budget for public transportation. Some unspent funds are reallocated to public works for roads. The \$2.5 million dollar savings from the FCEOC contract allocated those savings to roads, bike paths, and pedestrian walkways instead of being utilized for adding new transit routes for unmet transit needs.

Growth: If they build it, can we get there and back?

Throughout Madera County the existing public transit services and routes are insufficient. With increased residential development, commercial expansion, and access to recreational areas, the need for public transportation development is critical to the environmental conditions existing in the County. Without a quality transportation system, the County will face continued use of single person vehicles on the roads, thus impacting traffic congestion and air quality.

Unincorporated Madera County

As of 2019, Madera County is currently home to approximately 157,000 residents, and consists of two incorporated cities along with unincorporated mountain communities. The unincorporated mountain communities represent nearly half of the County's population. Eastern Madera County is the gateway to Yosemite National Park, which on average hosts over four million tourists every year. The sheer volume of traffic during the tourist travel season further increases the need for public transportation to reduce greenhouse gases and the number of vehicles on the road. According to the National Park Services' published statistics in 2017, Yosemite National Park employs 2,000 people throughout the year. Additionally, a number of volunteers and researchers spend time in the park. The transportation needs of area residents working in the tourism industry are an important consideration of the housing shortage in the surrounding communities.

Madera County is expanding housing and business developments within the cities of Madera and Chowchilla. Additional planned housing, businesses, and a medical facility in the unincorporated areas along the Highway 41 corridor in the southern part of the county bordering Fresno County are also in varying stages of development. New hotels in the Oakhurst mountain community are currently under construction. Expanded public transportation would encourage tourists, as well as the community-at-large, to visit other recreational areas, work in areas within and outside the County, and to attend events in Madera County, thereby further increasing revenue for all communities throughout the County.

Eighteen thousand new single-family homes have been approved by the Board of Supervisors to be built in the Rio Mesa area along the San Joaquin River. The Rio Mesa area includes two Master Planned Communities, which are under construction. These Master Planned Communities include the new Hillside School, a fire station, and commercial businesses. Community Medical Centers (CMC) purchased 200 acres, and planning is under way for the new medical campus to be located at the north east corner of Avenue 12 and Highway 41.

In the northeastern part of Madera County, the State Center Community College District selected a new campus site in Oakhurst. The 30-acre site, located off Highway 49, was purchased with Measure C bond funds. The \$25 million dollar state-of-the art campus will be built in phases with the first phase, a 21,450 square foot main building, projected to open in late 2022 or early 2023. The first building will feature seven classrooms, one for biology/chemistry lab plus a "prep" room, one art studio/classroom, one computer lab classroom and four general education classrooms that will allow for 2-way simultaneous broadcasting courses from other locations within the District. Without addressing the need for adequate public transportation, singular vehicle use will permeate the area already impacting the two-lane Highway 41.

City of Chowchilla

Chowchilla continues to approve new residential subdivisions, and the city is working to attract new businesses to downtown with incentive programs. Camarena Health relocated and expanded services. The new multi-family center campus health clinic is located on Prosperity Avenue. The center brings a variety of health services to the community.

City of Madera

Camarena Health also opened a school-based health clinic at Madera South High School. Camarena Health partnered with Madera South High School to build the first School-Based Health Center (SBHC) in Madera County. The SBHC is open to everyone in the community. It also houses the school nurse and health services office. The new Matilda Torres High School is anticipated to open in the fall of 2020 in the City of Madera. The high school will accommodate 2,200 students.

The Madera City Council approved a downtown incentive package intended to provide significant savings in city permitting and processing fees. The incentives fall under three categories: the development and redevelopment of downtown properties, remodeling and renovating older buildings and buildings that have experienced vacancies, and building projects that will be used for tax-exempt or nonprofit operations. The Madera County Economic Development Commission continues to actively pursue investors to support Madera County’s growth and expects an increased population and business base. With increased densities, it is critical to the mental health of individuals to have an opportunity to visit areas outside the city limits. Opportunities for exploring the rural areas must be available and provided by an available public transportation system from the Madera City Intermodal Hub. The existing public transit services and routes are insufficient. New housing expansions will further compound the problem. This growth and expansion will further increase the sheer number of single person vehicles on the road, impacting traffic congestion, and air quality.

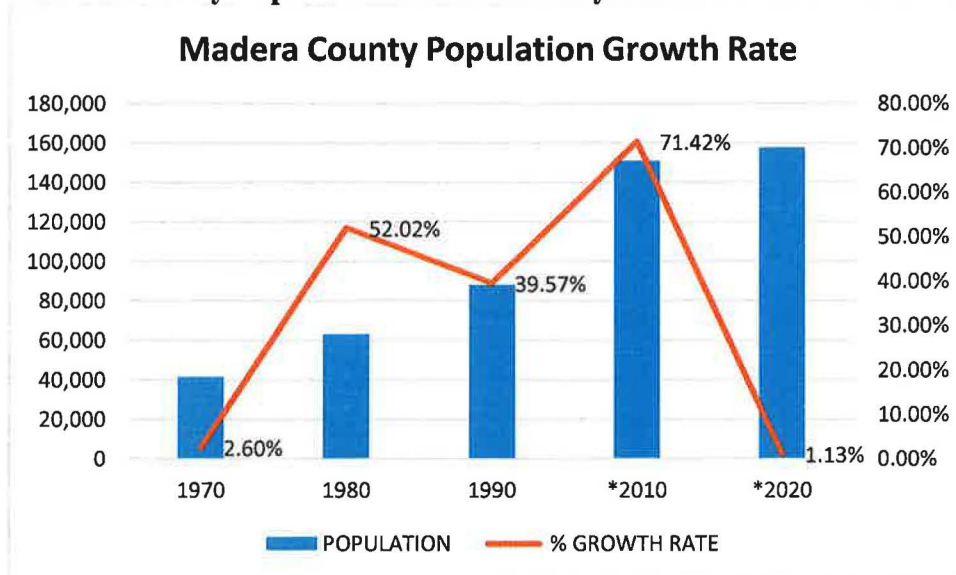


The Intermodal Hub, is located at 123 N. E Street in the City of Madera. MCC routes connect with Madera Area Express (MAX) and Greyhound at the Downtown Madera Intermodal Center.

The County encompasses 2,147 square miles with few population centers and many small, mountain communities. Seven of the top 17 population centers within the County are not serviced by the County transportation services leaving their transportation needs unmet. The graphic below depicts the population, distance of the incorporated and unincorporated areas to the Intermodal hub, and the number of bus routes through each area.

RANK	CITY/TOWN	POPULATION(2010 CENSUS DATA)	# MILES TO MADERA INTERMODAL	# MCC ROUTES
1	MADERA	61,416	0.3	5
2	CHOWCHILLA	18,720	17	5
3	MADERA ACRES	9,163	4	5
4	BONADELLE RANCHOS	8,569	11	5
5	YOSEMITE LAKES	4,952	29	3
6	NORTH FORK	3,018	41	3
7	OAKHURST	2,829	42	3
8	PARKSDALE	2,621	3	0
9	PARKWOOD	2,268	5	0
10	AHWAHNEE	2,246	47	0
11	COARSEGOLD	1,840	35	3
12	FAIRMEAD	1,447	12	5
13	RAYMOND	1,324	26	0
14	ROLLING HILLS	742	19	0
15	BASS LAKE	527	49	3
16	NIPINNAWASEE	425	50	0
17	LA VINA	279	8	2
18	PICAYUNE	69	32	0

Madera County Population Growth History Trend



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Madera County Economic Development Commission

In 1970 there were 41,519 residents of Madera County, followed by a 52 percent population increase the following decade. As of 1990 the County population grew to 88,090, a 39.57 percent increase. The census year of 2010 showed the County ballooned by 71.42 percent bringing the number of residents to roughly 151,000. The 2018 census shows the County continuing to grow to a population of 157,327.

As the upward population trend of Madera County continues, the estimated population for 2020 is expected to be over 158,000 with the projected annual growth rate at 1.13 percent according to the most recent United States census data.

Can you get there from here and back?

Public Transit Services within Madera County includes:

Madera County:

Eastern Madera County Senior Bus Area (Figure 1)

Madera County Connection MCC (See Figure 2 fixed route service)

Medical Transit Service Dial a Ride.

YARTS

City of Madera:

The City of Madera is served by local public transit MAX and Dial a Ride Service.

City of Chowchilla:

The City of Chowchilla is served by local public transit CATX and a Dial a Ride Service.

Geography

Eastern Madera County Senior Bus Service

The Eastern Madera County Senior Bus Service is designed to provide transportation to medical appointments, senior centers, nutrition programs, shopping, and to various business locations in Eastern Madera County for 60+ year old seniors and disabled individuals. With the change in the contracted provider, the services in place for decades have had few changes. Limited service routes and hours continue to inhibit the usefulness of using public transit

Eastern Madera County Senior Bus Service Area

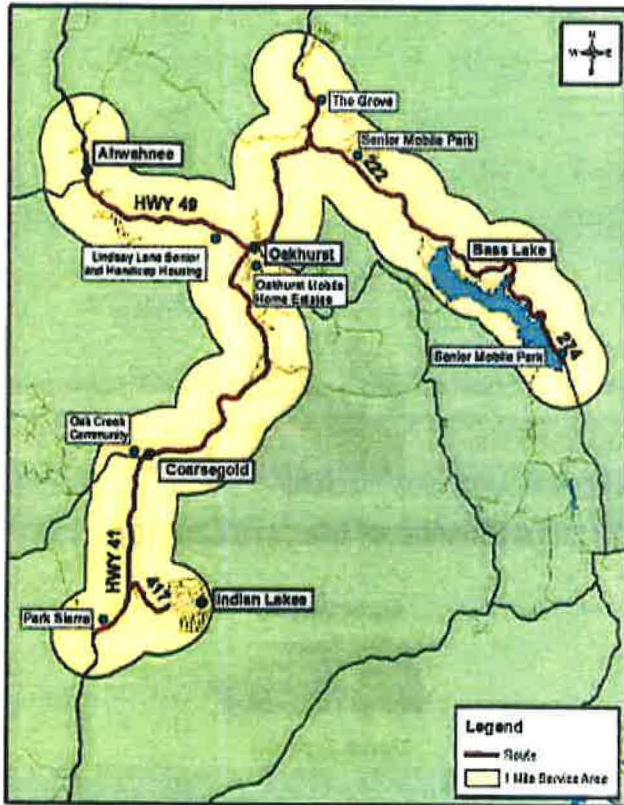


Figure 1

Service Area

The Madera County Senior Bus has a **limited Service Area** that serves residents in parts of Oakhurst, Bass Lake, Coarsegold, and Ahwahnee. *Note: The Senior Bus Service Area differs from the Medical Escort Service Area.*

Service Hours and Days

The Senior Bus operates Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 4 PM. There is no service on Holidays or weekends.

An application must be completed prior to using the Senior Bus Service.

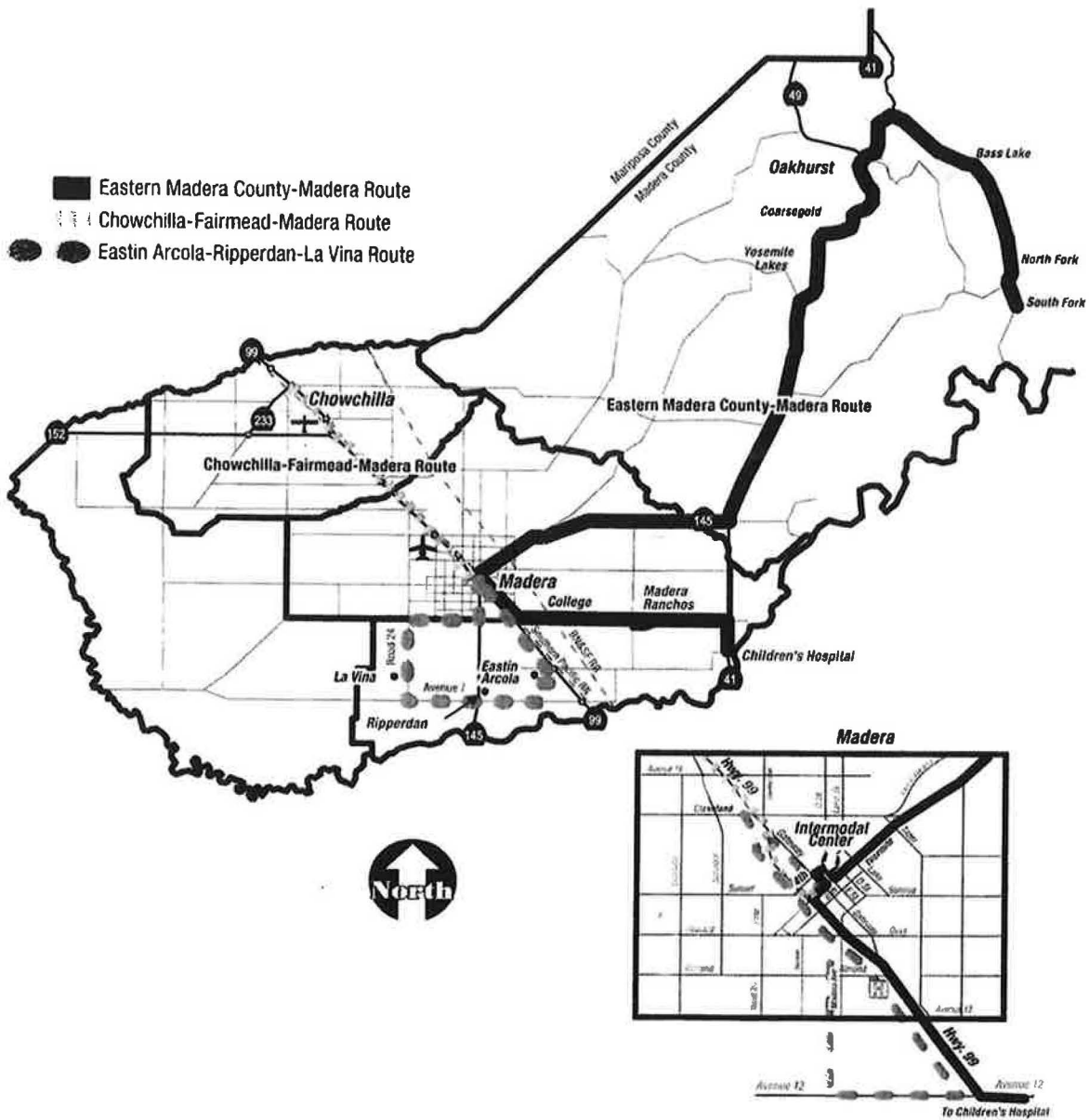
Limitations

The Senior Bus does not have direct routes into Madera or Fresno. No Senior Bus service is available for those seniors located in Raymond or North Fork.

Madera County Connection

The Madera County Connection services four routes: Chowchilla-Fairmead-Madera Route, Eastin-Arcola-Ripperdan-LaVina, College Route and Eastern Madera County-Madera. The Eastern Madera-Madera route services the communities of North Fork, Oakhurst, and Coarsegold.

MADERA COUNTY CONNECTION SYSTEM MAP



Madera County Connection (MCC) Figure 2

Service Area

The Chowchilla - Fairmead route provides five trips Monday through Friday from Downtown Madera to Chowchilla via Fairmead.

The Eastin Arcola - Ripperdan - La Vina route provides two loops on Wednesday and Friday through Eastin Arcola - Ripperdan - and La Vina before returning to Downtown Madera.

The College route provides five trips per day Monday through Friday from Downtown Madera to Children's Hospital.

The Eastern Madera-Madera route services the communities of North Fork, Oakhurst, and Coarsegold with three trips per weekday. This Eastern Madera Route operates three roundtrips per weekday – only one of these trips connects well with Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS).

YARTS - operates one year-round route (State Route 140 Route between Merced and Yosemite) and three seasonal routes, typically from May to September (Routes State Route 41 from Fresno, State Route 120 from Sonora, and State Route 120/395 from Mammoth Lakes).

Service Hours and Days -Reference Bus Schedule

The MCC bus schedule is difficult to read and follow. It is difficult to determine how to get to and from various destinations within the County. Reference the website or call 311 for further details. Bus schedule information is not available at bus stops. There is no phone contact information posted and not all communities are served. There is only one reasonable connection with YARTS and none with other general service providers and no weekend or holiday service.

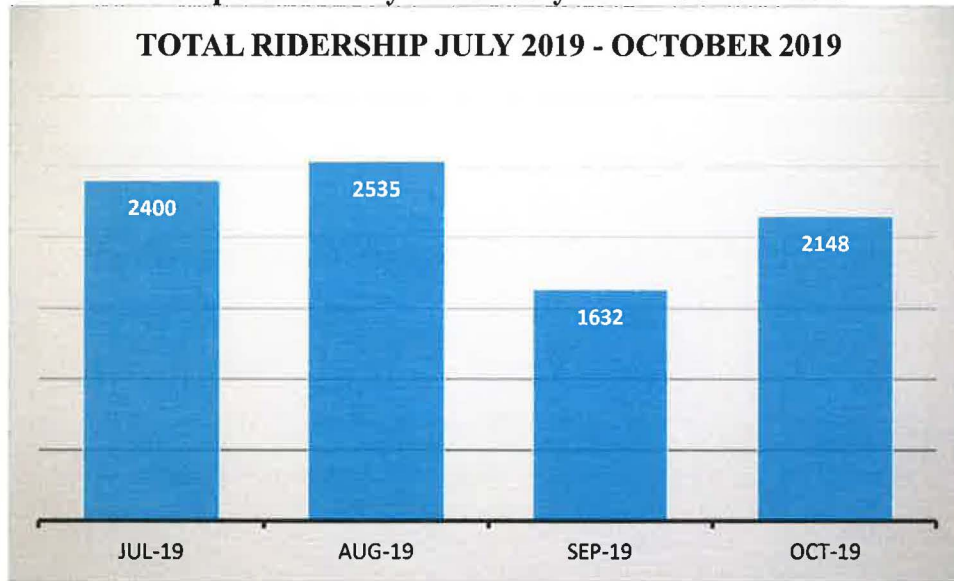
<http://mcctransit.com/routes/>

Limitations – There is no holiday or weekend services for any of the service area noted above routes. There are only two routes on Wednesday and Friday for the Eastin Arcola-Ripperdan-LaVina locations. MCC Eastern Madera Route arrives at Coarsegold at 7:05 AM and YARTS arrives at Coarsegold heading to Yosemite at 7:15 AM. Better coordination between YARTS and this route could yield at least one additional meaningful connection for area residents.

Based on the definition of unmet transit needs which is: to create routes that are feasible, serve the community, service a significant number of the population at an economical cost with effectiveness, the MCTC is failing to meet the needs of Madera County. This results in increased single vehicle use with resulting negative environmental impacts.

There have been no new service routes or expanded services in Madera County since the YARTS expansion in 2000 and the addition of MCC routes in 2002/2003 to Eastin Arcola, Ripperdan and LaVina.

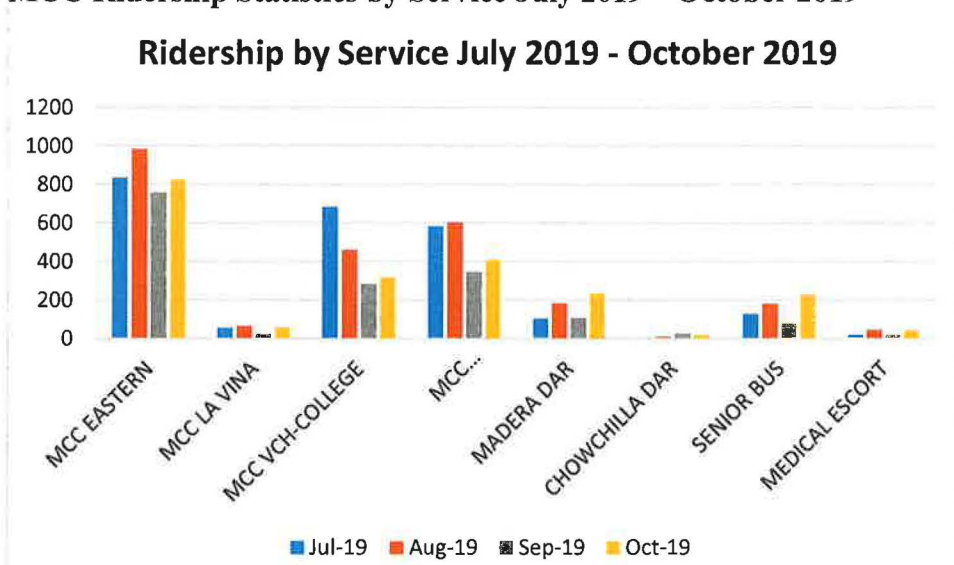
MCC Ridership Statistics by Month July 2019 – October 2019



Information provided by Madera County Public Works 2019. Ridership stats under new Public Transportation Provider FCEOC July 2019.

MCC 2019 ridership rates overall are tracking to historical ridership rates as shown on the Historical Ridership graph. The overall ridership in the four-month period above, shows an annual projection of 27,045 riders. Ridership information was not available from Public Works for November 2019-December 2019. Bus schedule information is an impediment to increase bus ridership. Up-to-date schedules are not available at bus stops, and there is no phone contact information listed and not all communities are served. There is only one reasonable connection with YARTS and none with other general service providers and no weekend or holiday service.

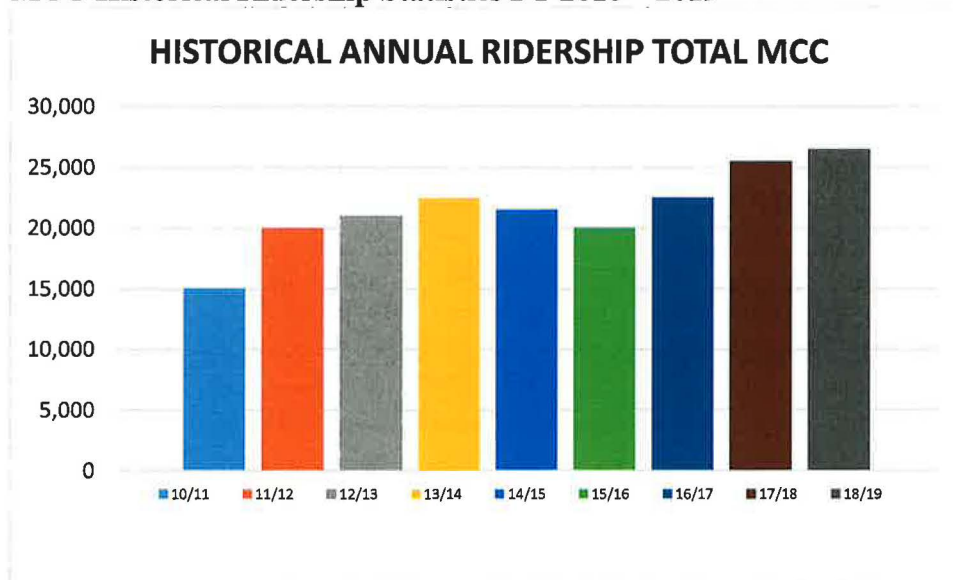
MCC Ridership Statistics by Service July 2019 – October 2019



Information provided by Madera County Public Works

MCC LaVina, Madera Dial a Ride, Chowchilla Dial-a-Ride, Senior Bus and Medical Escort are under used. When referencing the hours and the bus schedules, these services do NOT provide adequate hours or multiple bus route schedules. Bus schedule information is an impediment to increase bus ridership. Update to date schedules are not available at bus stops, there is no phone contact information listed and not all communities are served. There is only one reasonable connection with YARTS and none with other general service providers and no weekend or holiday service.

MCC Historical Ridership Statistics FY 2010 – 2019



Information provided by Madera County Public Works

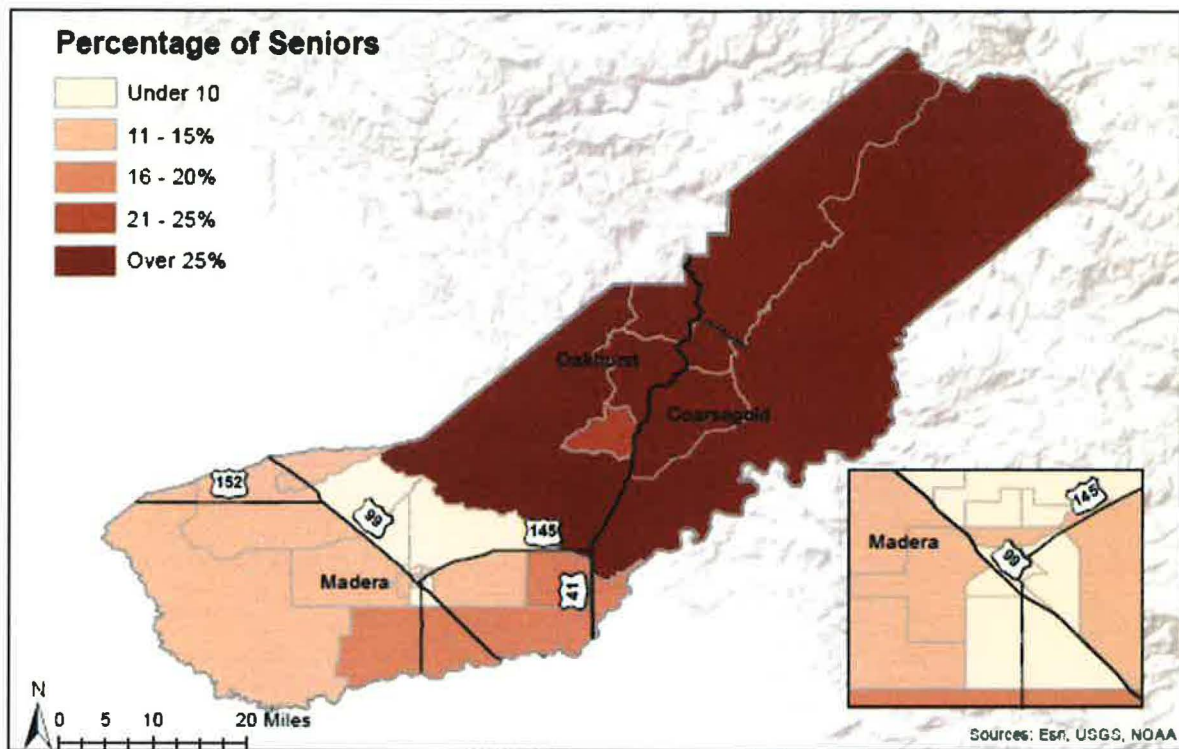
Historical ridership reports for MCC do not show any significant increases in ridership over the last three years and ridership actually dropped off for years 2014-2016. The graph above shows the combined ridership of Madera County Connection under the old service provider Merced Transportation Services.

Statistics of Transit Dependent Persons

In the SSTAC assessment, transit-dependent population groups consist of the following classifications: Elderly – Individuals who are age 65 years or older; Disabled – Non-institutionalized, civilian members of the population who may be unable to operate vehicles or utilize certain modes of public transportation due to physical or mental disabilities, and Persons of Limited Means – Individuals who are defined by the federal government as having an income below the poverty threshold.

Based on the definition of unmet transit needs: to create feasible routes, to serve the community, and to service a significant number of the population at an economical cost with effectiveness, the MCTC is failing to meet the needs of the residents of Madera County. With the exception of the College Route, added in 2017, and one new bus stop in Fairmead in 2019, the usefulness of Madera County Public Transit remains unchanged, inadequate, and unable to meet the needs of the older residents, the disabled, and persons of limited means in the growing area.

Demographics and Persons with Disabilities



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year ACS (Table B01001)

FIGURE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATIONS AGE 65 OR OLDER BY CENSUS TRACT

Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of the aging population within Madera County. The majority of the aging population is concentrated in Eastern Madera County. Over 25 percent of the Eastern Madera County population are over 65 and aging. This represents over 13 percent of the entire county population. As the population ages, the need for adequate and readily available public transportation will become a much needed requirement and necessity.

As the over 65 population continues to grow, public transportation routes have not kept up to meet the needs in Madera County. To be effective, the Madera County transportation agencies have to plan for new and effective opportunities to meet the ever-growing transportation needs. For older residents, the need for public transportation services will increase for those no longer able or willing to drive. The number of older residents in Madera County is projected to grow to 34 percent by 2025.

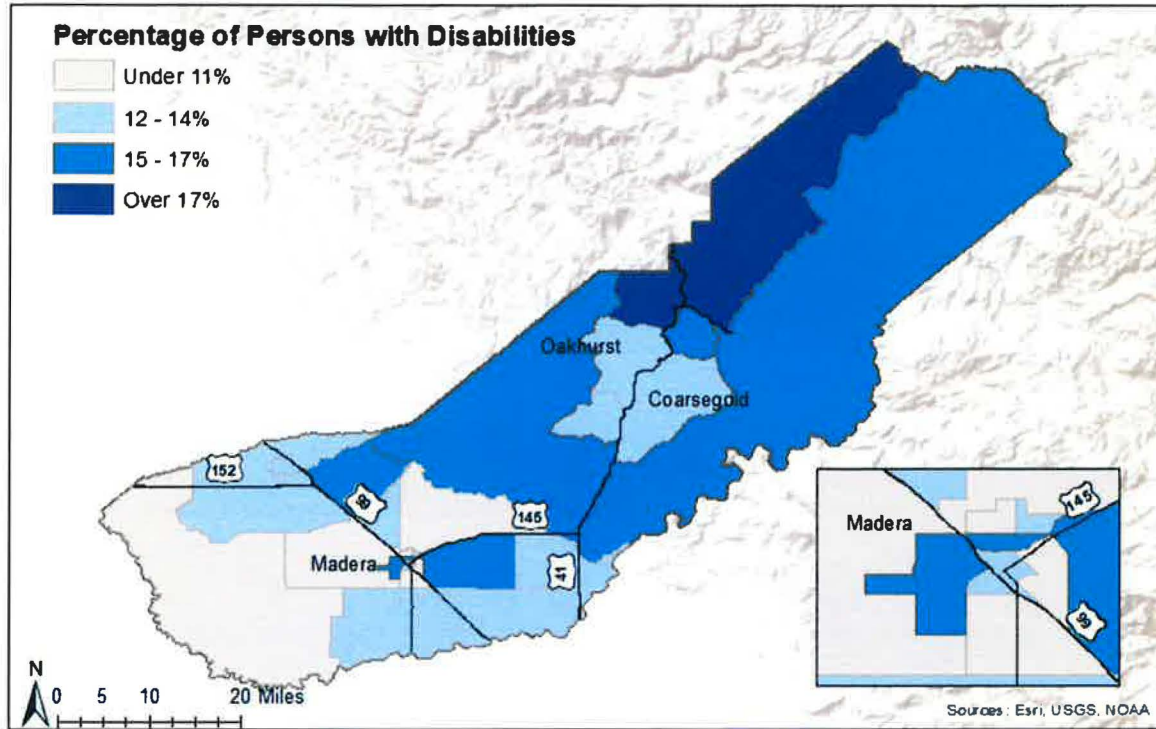


FIGURE 4: 2017 POPULATION ESTIMATE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year ACS (Table S1810)

Persons with disabilities are in or near the City of Madera, City of Chowchilla, Fairmead, and in Eastern Madera County. Over 35 percent of the County's population with disabilities are outside of the City of Madera and mainly located in Eastern and Western Madera County. The location of those with disabilities creates a greater need and that need is not being met. Expanded public transportation routes to these locations have not been added.

Economic Disparity

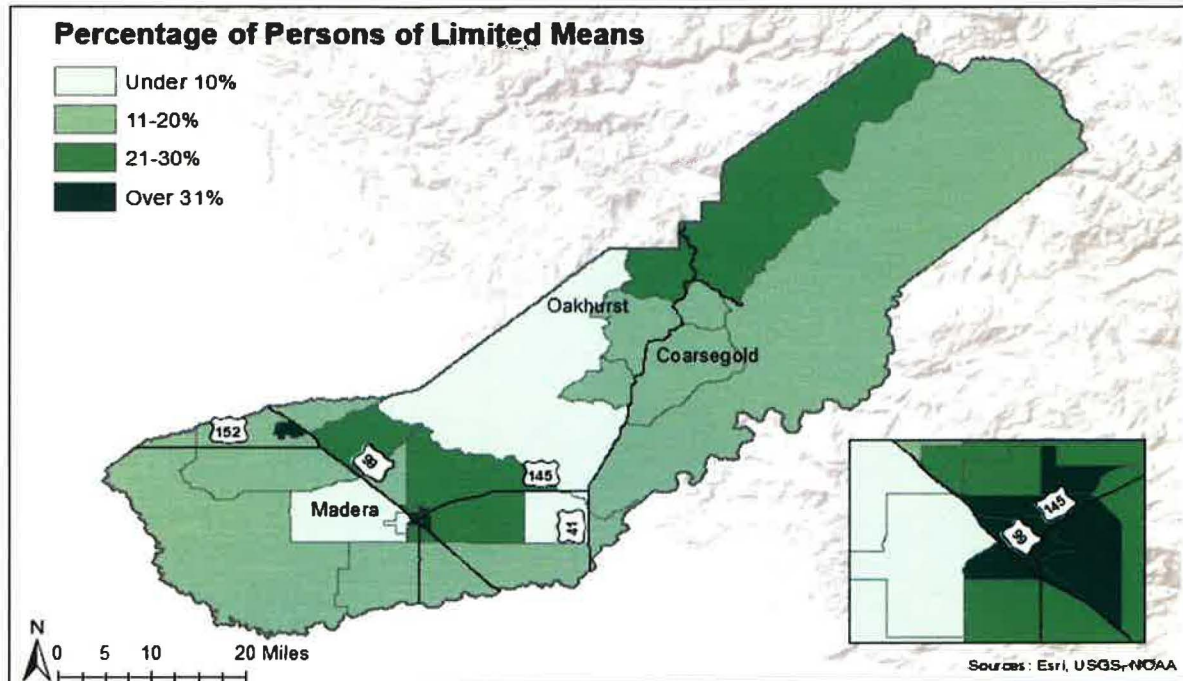


FIGURE 5: 2017 ESTIMATE OF PERSONS OF LIMITED MEANS

The concentration of persons living below poverty level by census tract is reflected in Figure 5 above. Darker colors reflect a higher percentage of people living in poverty, while lighter colors reflect a lower percentage. Over 20 percent of the population in Eastern and Southern Madera County are persons of limited means. Over 31 percent of the populations in and around Fairmead and Berenda are persons of limited means.

The ongoing lack of access to public transportation, and expanded route availability for these groups of residents, only further exacerbates the needs of the underserved. If these residents do not have access to affordable, available, and adequate public transportation, single person vehicles will continue to impact traffic congestion and safety, as well as air quality in Madera County.

FINDINGS

- F1.** The MCGJ finds that the definition of unmet transit needs is vague and fails to consider the geography, the demographics, and the economic inequity of Madera County.
- F2.** The MCGJ finds that bus schedule information is not readily available.
- F3.** The MCGJ finds that bus schedules are difficult to read and understand.
- F4.** The MCGJ finds that there is inadequate public outreach to secure community input for transit needs from low income, senior citizens, and from rural mountain communities.
- F5.** The MCGJ finds that there continues to be unmet transit needs throughout the county which will only increase in outlying areas as the population increases and ages.

- F6.** The MCGJ finds that MCC LaVina, Fairmead, Berenda, Madera Dial a Ride, Chowchilla Dial a Ride, Senior Bus and Medical Escort are underused.
- F7.** The MCGJ finds that when referencing the hours and the bus schedules, transit services do not provide adequate hours or diverse route schedules.
- F8.** The MCGJ finds that there are several volunteer unfilled positions on the SSTAC committee. This limits the input from the underserved populations in the community.
- F9.** The MCGJ commends the County on the consolidated contract agreement and, cost savings of \$500,000 per year over five years with the selection of FCEOC as the bus service provider under a single operator contract.
- F10.** The MCGJ finds that little is being done to market public transportation within the County.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1.** The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, the MCTC redefine the definition of “unmet transit needs” to be clearly outlined in layman terms.
- R2.** The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, bus schedules be posted at bus stops, inside buses, and be made available at local businesses.
- R3.** The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, bus schedules should be easier to read to promote ridership and ensure the clarity of transit availability.
- R4.** The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, SSTAC increase Unmet Transit Needs Workshops and Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearings to four times per year to promote community involvement from other County locations outside of the City of Madera.
- R5.** The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, an incentive programs, including FREE ridership days once a month for Seniors, Disabled and Persons with Limited Means , be introduced.
- R6.** The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, the Senior Bus, Dial-a-Ride, and Medical Transport County service be reviewed and expanded within Eastern Madera County, LaVina, Fairmead, and Berenda.
- R7.** The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, additional bus routes be added for Fairmead, LaVina, Berenda, Raymond, North Fork, and Eastern Madera County.
- R8.** The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, a concerted effort be made by SSTAC to recruit volunteers to serve on the SSTAC committee.
- R9.** The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, the annual \$500,000 savings be utilized to increase transit service routes in outlying areas; Eastern Madera County, La Vina, Fairmead, Berenda, Raymond, and North Fork.
- R10.** The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, the County Public Works Department proactively seek additional funding, either through grants or minimal fare increases, to brand themselves and actively market their services to improve community outreach and increase ridership.

REQUIRED RESPONSES:

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:
From the following elected county officials within 60 days:

**Madera County Board of Supervisors
200 W. Fourth Street, Madera, CA 93637**

From the following governing bodies within 90 days:

**Ms. Patricia Taylor
Executive Director
Madera County Transportation Commission
2001 Howard Road, Suite 201, Madera, CA 93637**

**Mr. Bobby Kahn
Executive Director
Madera County Economic Development Commission
2425 West Cleveland Avenue, Suite 101, Madera, CA 93637**

INVITED RESPONSES

**Mr. Philip Toler
Deputy Director
Madera County Public Works
200 W. Fourth Street, Madera, CA 93637**

**Ms. Madeline Harris
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
2210 San Joaquin Street, Fresno, CA 93721**

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Madera County Transportation Commission, SSTAC; Unmet Transit Needs FY 2019-2020
<https://www.maderactc.org/bc-transportation/page/unmet-transit-needs-findings-report>
Madera County Economic Development Commission; Annual Report 2017/2018
Madera County Transportation Commission; 2019 Federal Transportation Improvement Program
Madera County Public Works; REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE OF TRANSIT SERVICES
Madera County Transportation Commission; 2017 Public Participation Plan
Fiscal Years 2018-19 through 2021-22
Madera County Transportation Commission; Measure “T” Strategic Plan 2017
Measure T Citizens’ Oversight Committee; Meeting Minutes and Agenda
<http://yarts.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/YARTS-Short-Range-Transit-Plan-2019.pdf>

