

GLENN COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

*Gary Hansen, City of Willows, Chairman
Bruce Roundy, City of Orland, Vice Chair
Jim Yoder, County of Glenn*

Tom Arnold, County of Glenn

Evan Hutson, City of Willows

Rick Beale, Public Member, County of Glenn

Monica Rossman, County of Glenn (Alternate)

Mathew Romano, City of Orland (Alternate)

**225 N. Tehama Street
Willows, California 95988**

*Mardy Thomas
Executive Director*

(530) 934-6540

FAX (530) 934-6103

transit@countyofglenn.net

ORLAND CITY COUNCIL BOARD REPORT

June 18, 2024

Submitted on behalf of the Glenn County Transportation Commission

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prior to allocating Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds, the Glenn County Transportation Commission, acting as the transportation planning agency, is required to hold a minimum of one public hearing to receive comments on unmet transit needs that may exist and that might be reasonable to meet. This is one of four public hearings being held; the other three are to be held before the City Council of Willows, the Glenn County Board of Supervisors and the Glenn County Transportation Commission.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

Conduct a public hearing to gather input on Unmet Transit Needs in Glenn County. Refer the collected comments to the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC), which will then convene to review the feedback and develop a recommendation to the Glenn County Transportation Commission.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND:

In 1971, the California Legislature enacted the Transportation Development Act (TDA) to ensure "the efficient and orderly movement of people and goods in the urban areas of the state." The TDA provides two funding sources: the Local Transportation fund (LTF), a ¼-cent general sales tax collected statewide and the State Transit Assistance fund (STA) which is now derived from an excise tax on gasoline and diesel fuel.

TDA recognizes that rural counties have different transportation needs. Counties with a population under 500,000 as of the 1970 Census may use LTF funding for transit and local streets and roads provided that certain conditions are met first.

The TDA, *Statutes and Administrative Code of Regulations*, requires specific actions on the part of local transportation planning agencies. One of these requirements (Section 99401.5) is that the Local Transportation Commission (LTC) explicitly define the phrases "Unmet Transit Needs" and "Needs that are Reasonable to Meet" in terms of local conditions, and that these definitions be documented by

A Regional Transportation Planning Agency Serving the County of Glenn and the Cities of Willows and Orland

resolution or within the agency's minutes. Definitions have been developed to both comply with legislative mandates and be responsive to actual community need within the TDA funding guidelines. Under TDA direction (Section 99401.5 (c)), the LTC has the authority to identify the unmet transit needs of their jurisdiction and those needs that are considered reasonable to meet. Staff has determined, through contact with Caltrans representatives, that clear and comprehensive definitions are helpful in ensuring clarity in this annual process. With the above in mind, the following discussion is offered:

An Unmet Transit Need can be found to exist when there is any identifiable group within the population that has no dependable and/or affordable access to community employment, medical, commercial, public, or social services. Transit needs are not static--they can fluctuate with such variables as unemployment, population demographics, land use and circulation patterns, and variations in the local economy. Because of this, transportation needs are annually re-evaluated and revised as necessary.

It was through this process that the need for a public transportation system was identified and implemented, which is Glenn Ride. Glenn Ride has been in operation for 25 years with ridership growing 203% since its beginning in 1998.

FISCAL/PERSONNEL IMPACT(S):

None.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

An unmet transportation need (as opposed to a desire) has, for purposes of our definition, two components:

1) A trip destination that provides a necessity of life, and 2) a physical or financial obstacle between the individual and the necessary destination, which the individual is unable to overcome.

Necessary trip purposes may be defined as follows:

- a) to obtain or maintain employment;
- b) to obtain non-emergency medical and/or dental care;
- c) shopping for necessities of life;
- d) to obtain social services such as health care, government funded nutrition programs, sheltered workshops teaching employable skills, County welfare programs, and education programs for physically and/or mentally handicapped individuals; and
- e) to obtain education
- f) for the maintenance of life, health, physical and mental well-being

The population groups with the greatest inferred needs are the very young, the handicapped, the economically disadvantaged, and the elderly. There may be considerable overlap among these groups; for instance, many of the elderly may be both economically disadvantaged and handicapped. However,

it is not to be implied that all, or even most of these people are transportation-disadvantaged. The aspects described simply identify sub-groups of the population that may tend to contain a disproportionately large number of people with transportation difficulties (in contrast to the general population).

An identified transportation need can be reasonably met by determining whether or not a transportation service can meet established need and meet the criteria found in the Transportation Development Act. This requires a cost-benefit analysis and feasibility study of alternative transit systems compared with existing service, level of performance, and cost. In any event, the cost of any transit system cannot exceed the apportionment for the jurisdiction providing or supporting the service.

Attached are the Glenn County adopted definitions of “Unmet Transit Needs” and “Needs that are Reasonable to Meet”. The Glenn County Transportation Commission and Regional Transit Committee/Glenn Transit Service aim to meet as many if not all transportation needs for County residents, and currently offers several services to address these needs, such as follows.

Glenn Ride is a public transit system that provides transportation services to the general public—there are no barriers to entry or restrictions, except payment of fare. Glenn Ride has been in operation since August 1998 and experienced consistent ridership growth until the COVID-19 pandemic. Though Glenn Ride has continued to meet its required fare box return, as mandated by the Transportation Development Act, limited services and safety measure mandates during the pandemic significantly decreased ridership numbers, though numbers have been steadily increasing.

Glenn Transit also operates a specialized paratransit program known as Dial-A-Ride. The program operates within 1-1/2-mile radius of the respective city halls of Orland and Willows, and to the Cannella/Huggins Drive area, Leisure Mobile Home Park, east of Orland, and the Willows Mobile Home Park, west of Willows. Individuals qualifying are those 60 years of age and older, permanently disabled, low-income social service assisted or low-income non-social service assisted (income guidelines are provided on the transit card application required for service). Transportation is door-to-door to each requested destination.

Glenn Transit also provides non-emergency medical transportation to qualifying Glenn County residents through its Volunteer Medical Transportation program. Volunteer drivers from the community provide transportation to individuals for medical appointments. Qualifying individuals are those 60 years of age and older, permanently disabled, low-income social service assisted or low-income non-social service assisted.

The GCTC has requested this time and advertised this meeting as an opportunity for residents in the community to provide input on transit needs within the Glenn County region.

I. UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS 2024-2025

For the purposes of allocating Transportation Development Act funds, an "Unmet Transit Need" is hereby recognized by the Glenn County Transportation Commission (GCTC) if any one or combination of the following criteria is found to exist:

1. Transportation needs identified by the GCTC which are desirable, but have not yet been implemented or addressed.
2. Transportation needs identified by the GCTC which have significant support, but have not yet been implemented or addressed.
3. Transportation needs identified through the public hearing process, whether delivered in writing or public testimony.
4. Those transit needs which, through transit needs studies or other methods approved by the Commission, are included by the Commission in the Regional Transportation Plan for Glenn County and have been designated a high need to be implemented or funded.

The above criteria for determining "Unmet Transit Needs" is further supplemented by the following guidelines:

1. A population group must have been defined and located which, by reason of age, physical or mental impairment, economic disadvantage, or a combination of these, has no reliable or accessible transportation for necessary trips. The size and location of the group must be such that the feasibility of providing service shall meet the criteria as defined as reasonable to meet. ("service" is defined as whatever accommodation or need is being requested by the public or partitioner).
2. Transit needs are to be determined in light of the following definition of "Necessary trips":
 - A. A trip destination that provides a necessity of life, and presence of a physical or financial obstacle between the individual and the necessary designation, which the individual is unable to overcome. Necessary trip purposes may be defined as follows:
 - a) to obtain or maintain employment;
 - b) to obtain non-emergency medical and/or dental care;
 - c) shopping for necessities of life;
 - d) to obtain social services such as health care, government funded nutrition programs, sheltered workshops teaching employable skills, County welfare programs, and education programs for physically and/or mentally handicapped individuals;
 - e) to obtain education; and

f) for the maintenance of life, health, physical and mental well-being.

3. Unmet transit needs specifically exclude:

- A. Trips for social events, recreational, or religious purposes are not considered as necessary. It shall be the policy of the GCTC, however, to serve these desires if they can be served concurrently within the limits of other defined "transit needs".
- B. Individuals requiring the assistance of a medical attendant (in addition to the vehicle driver) are not considered as needing a transportation service and shall be deemed to be more properly served by a medical emergency vehicle.
- C. Trips of less than one mile in length made by individuals who are not elderly or disabled are not considered as "transit needs". An able-bodied person can walk this distance in a reasonable amount of time without undue physical strain. Provisions for the elderly and disabled are made through the existing dial-a-ride/paratransit system.
- D. Minor operational improvements or changes, involving issues such as bus stops, schedules, and minor route changes.
- E. Improvements funded or scheduled for implementation in the following fiscal year.
- F. Future transportation needs.
- G. Trips that would duplicate transportation services to the general public.

II. REASONABLE TO MEET 2024/2025

An "Unmet Transit Need" identified under the above criteria and guidelines, as it pertains to the allocation of Transportation Development Act funds, may be found "Reasonable to Meet" only if the following conditions and standards of performance prevail:

Cost Effectiveness: 1) The new, expanded or revised transit service would not cause the responsible operator or service claimant to incur expenses in excess of the maximum allocation of Transportation Development Act Funds. 2) The new expanded or revised transit service would allow the responsible operator or service claimant to meet minimum state subsidy fare box and revenue ratios.

Community Acceptance: A significant level of support exists for the public subsidy of transit service designed to address the unmet transit need in Glenn County including, but not limited to, support from public groups and community meetings reflecting a public commitment to public transit.

Equity: The new, expanded or revised transit service is needed by, and will benefit, either the general public or the elderly and disabled population as a whole. Transit service cannot be provided for a specific subset of these groups.

Operational Feasibility: The new, expanded, or revised transit service must be safe to operate and there must be adequate roadways and turnouts for transit vehicles.

Financial Feasibility: 1) Supporting data indicates a sufficient ridership potential exists for the new, expanded or revised transit service. 2) Potential providers are available to implement the service.

ADA Conformity: The new, expanded, or revised transit service, conforming to the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act, will not impose an undue financial burden on the transit operator or claimant if complementary paratransit services are subsequently required.

System Impact: The new, expanded, or revised transit service will not result in a negative impact on the overall system's measures of efficiency and effectiveness, such as average passenger load per hour, average cost per passenger per hour, passengers per mile, cost per mile, and cost per hour.

Impact Limits: 1) Transit services designed or intended to address an unmet transit need shall, in all cases, provide coordination efforts with transit services currently provided, either publicly or privately, and transit services shall not duplicate services currently or hereafter provided either publicly or privately. 2) No transit need shall be determined reasonable to meet until it has been reviewed and evaluated to the satisfaction of and obtained subsequent approval from the Glenn County Transportation Commission.

Unmet Transit Needs Public Comment

GCTC receives public comments on unmet transit needs and refers the comments to the SSTAC. The primary purpose of the SSTAC is to review the Unmet Transit Needs comments.



SSTAC Review of Public Comments Received

SSTAC compares public comments to the definitions of "unmet transit need" and needs "reasonable to meet". Due to limited resources, the SSTAC prioritizes needs to serve county residents if they meet the adopted criteria.



SSTAC Recommendation

The SSTAC provides input and makes a recommendation to the GCTC.



GCTC Adoption of Findings

GCTC considers the recommendation of the SSTAC prior to adopting an annual Unmet Transit Needs finding. GCTC adopts one of three findings: 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, including needs that are reasonable to meet.



Feasibility Study

If finding #3 is adopted, then a feasibility study is conducted to determine how the need could be reasonably met.