

NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING
OF
SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION
ADVISORY COUNCIL

Merced County Association of Governments
Conference Room
369 West 18th Street
Merced, CA 95340

Wednesday, October 19, 2011
11:30-12:30 PM

1. INTRODUCTION

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
MAY ADDRESS ANY ITEM
ON THE AGENDA DURING
CONSIDERATION OF THAT ITEM.**

2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

**AT THIS TIME, PERSONS MAY COMMENT
ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.**

**PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND
ADDRESS FOR THE RECORD.**

**ACTION WILL NOT BE TAKEN ON
ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA. IF IT REQUIRES
ACTION, IT WILL BE REFERRED TO STAFF AND/OR
PLACED ON THE NEXT AGENDA.**

ITEM

STAFF

* 3. Minutes of September 27, 2011 SSTAC meeting

* 4. Minutes of the October 3, 4, 11, 12, 2011 Public Hearings

* 5. Unmet Transit Needs FY2011/12

Terri Lewis

Recommend the MCAG Governing Board adopt Resolution 2010/11-18-01 with a finding of fact for FY2011/12 that there are *Unmet Transit Needs and it is unknown where or not they are Reasonable to Meet, yet due to the Short Range Transit Plan Update in progress (complete in May 2012), implementation of any Unmet Needs that are Reasonable to Meet will be addressed through the SRTP update and contingent upon the amount of financial resources available.*

6. Quarterly SSTAC Schedule of Meetings

Terri Lewis

For discussion and comment.

* Action # Attachment + Enclosure

COPIES OF THE STAFF REPORTS OR OTHER WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION RELATING TO EACH ITEM OF BUSINESS REFERRED TO ON THE AGENDA ARE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF MERCED COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS.

ANY PERSON WHO HAS ANY QUESTIONS CONCERNING ANY AGENDA ITEM MAY CALL MCAG TO MAKE INQUIRY REGARDING THE NATURE OF THE ITEM DESCRIBED ON THE AGENDA.

SEPTEMBER 28, 2011

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SSTAC), held on Wednesday, September 28, 2011 at Merced County Association of Governments, 369 West 18th Street, Merced, was called to order at 11:30 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Margaret Buchmann-Garcia, Disabled Transit Rider
Delores Flores, Merced Transportation Company, service provider
Delois Hamilton, Transit Rider
Don Vonarx, Riggs Ambulance

MEMBERS ABSENT

Rod Ghearing, TJPA - Merced County Transit
Maria Nava (or Chris Bobbit), Area Agency on Aging
Sommer Moniz, Human Services Agency
VACANT, Service Provider for Handicapped
VACANT, Service Provider for Handicapped

OTHERS PRESENT

Marjie Kirn, MCAG
Terri Lewis, MCAG Staff

1. Introductions

So noted.

2. Oral Communications

Marjie Kirn provided a status on the Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) update in progress. The Draft SRTP plan will be available for in February or March 2012. The Final SRTP is anticipated for Governing Board action in April/May 2012.

3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Don Vonarx made a motion to nominate Rod Ghearing as the SSTAC Chair.
Seconded by Delois Hamilton.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Delois Hamilton made a motion to nominate Don Vonarx as the SSTAC Vice Chair.
Seconded by Dolores Flores.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Role of the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council

Marjie highlighted the Transportation Development Act (TDA) legislation requirements, states sources of funding and the role of the SSTAC in the annual Unmet Transit Needs Process, including:

1. Conduct annual hearings and gather public testimony regarding any unmet transit needs that may exist in Merced County;
2. Make a formal recommendation to the transit governing body on the evaluation on public testimony; and
3. Stay abreast on Merced County Transit – *The Bus* services

5. Review of Unmet Need Transit Process

Marjie Kirn reviewed the structure of the annual Unmet Needs Transit Process, including:

1. The Schedule of the 2011 Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearings and the availability of staff members:
 - a. October 3, 2011 – City of Los Banos
 - b. October 4, 2011 – City of Atwater;
 - c. October 11, 2011 – City of Livingston; and
 - d. October 12, 2011 – City of Merced
2. Board Adopted definitions of “Unmet Need” and “Reasonable to Meet”;
3. Transportation Development Act (TDA) legislative intent; and
4. March 2011- Atwater Taxi Scrip program

6. Oral Report - Automated Vehicle Locator (AVL) Project Update

Marjie Kirn summarized the current status of the AVL (real-time bus locator) project and the positive impact that it will have providing transit riders with real-time information of the location of buses on their scheduled routes.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING WAS ADJOURNED BY MARJIE KIRN AT 12:30 P.M.

SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

MONDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2011

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SSTAC), held on Monday, October 3, 2011, at the City of Los Banos, City Hall - Council Chambers, 520 J Street, Los Banos, was called to order at 6:15 P.M. by Chairman Rod Ghearing.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Margaret Buchmann-Garcia, Disabled Transit Rider
Chris Bobbit (for Maria Nava), Area Agency on Aging
Delores Flores, Merced Transportation
Rod Ghearing, Merced County Transit
Delois Hamilton, Senior Transit Rider
Don Vonarx, Riggs Ambulance

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sommer Moniz, Human Services Agency

OTHERS PRESENT

Martin Arbelbide, Citizen
Mark Knapp, Citizen
Brandi Korver, Westside Transitional Center
Terri Lewis, MCAG

1. Introductions

So noted.

2. Oral Communication

None.

3. Public Hearing: Unmet Transit Needs

Rod Ghearing welcomed public hearing participants; highlighted the TDA public hearing requirements; and introduced SSTAC members.

Chairman, Rod Ghearing called the public hearing to order to receive public testimony on unmet transit needs in The City of Los Banos and Merced County.

CITY OF LOS BANOS PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY
October 4, 2011

Unmet Transit Needs

1. Route 14 – Need to increase route frequency (currently at 1.5 hours).
2. Need to extend transit service time to 7 pm.
3. Need to extend transit service time later on Saturdays.

Operational Issue(s)

1. There is uncertainty how to purchase bus passes and expend the least amount of fund needed.
2. Rider inquired on the qualification requirements to be able to ride use Dial-A-Ride.
3. Citizen expressed a Thank you for coming to City of Los Banos with the Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearing.
4. Citizen inquired on the status of the Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) update in progress and requested an opportunity for public review of the DRAFT SRTP when it is available.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE SOCIAL SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:45 PM.**

SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2011

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SSTAC), held on Tuesday, October 4, 2011, at City of Atwater Council Chambers, 750 Bellevue Road, Atwater, CA, was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Chairman Rod Ghearing.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Margaret Buchmann-Garcia, Disabled Transit Rider
Delores Flores, Merced Transportation Company
Rod Ghearing, Merced County Transit
Delois Hamilton, Senior Transit Rider
Sommer Moniz, Human Services Agency
Chris Bobbit (for Maria Nava), Area Agency on Aging
Don Varnax, Riggs Ambulance

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Louse Stalcup, Citizen
Terri Lewis, MCAG

1. Introductions

1. Rod Ghearing (Chairman) called the meeting to order and welcomed participants to the 2011 Unmet Needs Transit Process. Rod Ghearing highlighted the TDA public hearing requirements, and introduced the SSTAC members present.

2 Oral Communications

None

3. Public Hearing: Unmet Transit Needs

Rod Ghearing requested Unmet Transit Needs public testimony from participants.

CITY OF ATWATER PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY
October 4, 2011

Unmet Transit Needs

None

Operational Issues

1. Merced County Transit dispatch was thanked for calling DAR riders to give them a status on the arrival time.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE SOCIAL SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:15 PM.**

SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2011

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SSTAC), held on Tuesday, October 11, 2011, at City of Livingston City Hall, Council Chambers, 1416 C Street, Livingston, CA, was called to order at 6:05 P.M. by Chairman Rod Ghearing.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Margaret Buchmann-Garcia, Disabled Transit Rider
Delores Flores, Merced Transportation
Rod Ghearing, Merced County Transit
Delois Hamilton, Senior Transit Rider
Chris Bobbitt (for Maria Nava), Area Agency on Aging
Don Vonarx, Riggs Ambulance

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sommer Moniz, Human Services Agency

OTHERS PRESENT

Terri Lewis, MCAG

1. Introductions

So noted.

2. Oral Communication

None.

3. Public Hearing: Unmet Transit Needs – Gather Testimony

Chairman, Rod Ghearing called the meeting to order and acknowledged that there were no one from the public was present, therefore, no public testimony was taken. .

**CITY OF LIVINGSTON PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY
October 11, 2011**

Unmet Transit Needs

None.

Operational Issues

None.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE SOCIAL SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:10 PM.**

SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2011

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SSTAC), held on Wednesday, October 12, 2011, at City of Merced Civic Center, 678 18th Street, Merced, CA, was called to order at 6.00 P.M. by Chairman Rod Ghearing.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Margaret Buchmann-Garcia, Disabled Transit Rider
Delores Flores, Merced Transportation
Rod Ghearing, Merced County Transit
Delois Hamilton, Senior Transit Rider
Chris Bobbitt (for Maria Nava), Area Agency on Aging
Don Vonarx, Riggs Ambulance

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sommer Moniz, Human Services Agency

OTHERS PRESENT

Roy Adamson, Transit Rider
Anthony Baggett, Merced College Student
Jaunita Codey,
Lynn Downum-Hanzal, Resources for Independence Central Valley
Tina Devault Anthony, Merced County Transit – *The Bus*
Brian Esquevel, Merced Transportation Company, service contractor
Irma Gaither, Citizen
Chris Giesy, Student
Keyomi Jones, Citizen
Terri Lewis, MCAG
Kathy Ostranda, Citizen
Natasha Polinko, Disabled transit rider
Eddie Reese, Ceres Unifield school District
Misty Richardson, Citizen
Jean Shaw, Citizen
Brenda Trevino, Transit rider
Steven Williams, Merced College

1. Introductions

So noted.

2. Oral Communication

None.

3. **Public Hearing: Unmet Transit Needs – Gather Testimony**

Chairman, Rod Ghearing welcomed the participants, highlighted the TDA public hearing requirements, and introduced the SSTAC members present.

Rod Ghearing commented on the definitions of “Unmet Transit Needs” and “Operational Issues”.

Rod Ghearing called the public hearing to order to receive public testimony on unmet transit needs in Merced County.

**CITY OF MERCED PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY
October 12, 2011**

Unmet Transit Needs

1. Taxi Scrip (Atwater) – Riders can purchase only a single taxi scrip packet in a month. Riders should be able to purchase however many scrip packets they need in a month - Unlimited.
2. Atwater Dial-A-Ride (DAR) trips take too long.
3. Route 7 (Atwater – Merced) needs to provide Saturday service.
4. There is no transit service in the evening to be able to get to and from Merced College classes (7-10 pm).
5. No Fixed Route (FR) route stops (pick –up or drop off) on Olive Avenue.
6. Need to provide evening service to Merced College evening classes with lots of community advertisement and the commitment to keep the service running for an entire semester.
7. Fixed Route (FR) service is needed after 6 pm in the evening.
8. Need Sunday Transit service.
9. DAR riders cannot contact dispatch by phone from 4:45 pm – 6 pm. Rider waiting for a DAR bus needs to be able to confirm that they will be picked-up for their scheduled pick-up.
10. Route 22 service needs to be available later on Mon –Thurs as the UC Merced (UCM) Library is open until 12:00 am.
11. Route 22 service needs to be available later on Saturday and Sunday.
12. All Fixed Routes should have a UC Merced destination included in the route.

13. No evening bus service available.
14. Merced County Transit service needs to use Facebook on the internet.
15. Routes 1 & 2 need to be changed back to old route stops that included 13th street. (Signed Petition submitted by 2 individual participants).
16. *The Bus* schedule should run a regular schedule for “minor” holidays (i.e Columbus Day – October 10, 2011).
17. DAR (ADA) service needs to be available later than 4:45 pm.
18. Buses need to include LED “visible” message screens so deaf riders know when their stop is approaching.
19. Route 16 needs to be connected with Route 8.
20. Bus Routes need to have timed transfers – “all routes need to be synchronized”.
21. Public Transit service is needed earlier in the day.

Operational Issues

1. Bus schedule brochures need to local landmarks as well as pictures of local transit riders and not “stock photography” pictures from the internet.
2. UCM CatTracks buses use Merced County Transit bus pull-out areas, yet UCM bus drivers will not move to accommodate MCT buses.
3. More Bus stops are needed on Fixed Routes.
4. DAR drivers are trying to put shoulder harness on wheelchair passengers without asking riders first if it is OK to do so.
5. Fixed Route drivers are not stopping at all designated route stops.
6. Route information posted at Bus stops is not legible (weathered).
7. Route schedules need to be adjusted so Bus drivers can make all route stops and Be able to stay on the route schedule.
8. Service contractor needs to teach dispatch skills to dispatch staff.

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 17, 2011

TO: SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

FROM: TERRI LEWIS, ASSOCIATE PLANNER

RE: UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS – FY2011

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the Transportation Development Act (TDA), three public hearings were conducted throughout Merced County to solicit public testimony regarding transit needs in Merced County.

If the SSTAC identifies an unmet transit need and determines the need is reasonable to meet, these transit needs must be met before any TDA funds are expended for non-transit uses, such as street and road projects. The definitions of “unmet transit needs” and “reasonable to meet” were adopted by the MCAG Governing board on March 20, 1997 and are attached for reference.

The SSTAC has three options when making a recommendation to the MCAG Governing Board based on public testimony and the application of the “unmet transit needs” and “reasonable to meet” definitions:

- There are *no unmet transit needs*; or
- There are *no unmet transit needs* that *are reasonable to meet*; or
- There are *unmet transit needs*, including *needs that are reasonable to meet*.

DISCUSSION

Staff has evaluated the unmet transit needs that were identified through the public hearing process.

The unmet transit needs identified were measured against the Board adopted definition of *unmet transit need* and *reasonable to meet*. Any unmet transit need must meet *all* of the criteria established by the MCAG Governing Board as *reasonable to meet*. Staff has evaluated each of the Unmet Transit Needs and applied the *reasonable to meet* criteria.

Additional public testimony was received regarding operational issues that will be addressed by the current contract service operator, Merced Transportation Company. Merced County Transit staff will provide Merced Transportation Company with the list of operational issues and address needed service improvements.

The SSTAC's role will be to review the unmet transit needs and assess the application of the MCAG Governing Board adopted definitions of *Unmet Transit Needs* and *Reasonable to Meet*.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Recommend the MCAG Governing Board adopt Resolution 2010/11-18-01 with a finding of fact for FY2011/12 that there are *Unmet Transit Needs that Are Reasonable to Meet, yet due to the Short Range Transit Plan Update in progress (complete in May 2012), implementation of any Unmet Needs will be addressed through the SRTP update and the amount of financial resources available.*

Attachment: Definitions of the Terms Unmet Transit Needs and Reasonable to Meet
Minutes of SSTAC Public Hearings (4)
Evaluation of unmet transit needs for consideration

RESOLUTION NO. 2011/11-17-01

RESOLUTION OF THE MERCED COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS GOVERNING BOARD APPROVING A FINDING OF FACT FOR UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS OF MERCED COUNTY FISCAL YEAR 2011/2012

WHEREAS, the **Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG)** is designated the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for Merced County, with the responsibility to administer the Transportation Development Act (TDA); and

WHEREAS, public transportation services in Merced County are provided to the general public through operation of Merced County Transit - *The Bus*; and

WHEREAS, Merced County Transit - *The Bus* proposes to serve, at a minimum, all claimant areas of Merced County at the level of public transportation services that are *reasonable to meet* as defined by the MCAG Governing Board; and

WHEREAS, the MCAG Governing Board has adopted definitions of *unmet transit needs* and *reasonable to meet* by Resolution 1997-3/20/1 on March 20, 1997 in accordance with Public Utilities Code (PUC) Division 10, Part 11, Chapter 4, Article 8, Section 99401.5; and

WHEREAS, MCAG has established a Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) and has consulted with such council pursuant to Section 99238 of the PUC; and

WHEREAS, the SSTAC conducted two public meetings and four public hearings in Merced County concerning said unmet transit needs in conformance with PUC Division 10, Part 11, Chapter 4, Article 3, Section 99238.5.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MCAG Transit Policy Board for Merced County, after consideration of said public hearings testimony and the recommendation of the SSTAC, adopts the following finding of fact:

There are Unmet Transit Needs and it is unknown where or not they are Reasonable to Meet, yet due to the Short Range Transit Plan Update in progress (complete in May 2012), implementation of any Unmet Needs that are Reasonable to Meet will be addressed through the SRTP update and contingent upon the amount of financial resources available.

The foregoing resolution was approved by the MCAG Transit Policy Board for Merced County on November 17, 2011 by _____ who moved its adoption, which motion was duly seconded by _____ and which was adopted by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Jesse Brown, Executive Director
MCAG Transit Policy Board

Hub Walsh, Chairperson
MCAG Transit Policy Board

DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS and REASONABLE TO MEET

UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS

An unmet transit need is an inadequacy in the public transit services, specialized transit/paratransit services and private transportation services for those persons recognized as transportation disadvantaged so as to provide themselves with the essentials necessary to maintain a minimum standard of living, as expressed through the public hearing process.

The **transportation disadvantaged** are those individuals who do not operate an automobile because of youth, advanced age or mental or physical impairment; and those persons who are not elderly or handicapped and who are unable to operate an automobile for reasons of low income.

The term unmet transit needs shall include transit or specialized transportation services identified in the Regional Transportation Plan, the Transit Service Plan, a finding of an unmet need by the MCAG Governing Board, or in the compliance plan for the Americans with Disabilities Act that have not been implemented or funded.

REASONABLE TO MEET

1. The new, expanded, or revised transit service, if implemented or funded, would allow the operator to meet farebox and revenue ratios as required under Public Utilities Code, Division 10, Part 11, Chapter 4, Article 4, Section 99268 and would not cause the operator to incur expenses in excess of the maximum allocation of Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds.
2. The new, expanded, or revised transit service is needed by, and will benefit, either the general public, the transportation disadvantaged, or the elderly and disabled population as a whole and support exists through the public hearing process or other means of communication.
3. The new, expanded, or revised transit service must be safe to operate, and there must be adequate roadways and turnouts for transit vehicles.
4. The new, expanded, or revised transit service, in conforming with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, will not impose an undue financial burden on the transit operator if complementary paratransit services are subsequently required.
5. The new, expanded, or revised transit service will not adversely effect the overall system's measure of efficiency and effectiveness, such as average passenger load per hour, average cost per passenger hour, passengers per mile, cost per mile, and cost per hour.
6. Implementation of the new, expanded, or revised service will be considered reasonable if the projected average cost per ride, by type of service can be provided at a cost no higher than 10% above the average existing cost per passenger by type of service within Merced County for a period no longer than one operating year.