



ITEM 5

September 10, 2024

MEMO TO: CITIZEN'S TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE/
SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CTAC/SSTAC)

FROM: DOLORES LOPEZ, REGIONAL TRANSIT PLANNER

SUBJECT: FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2025-26 TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT (TDA)
UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS (UTN) DEFINITIONS AND SCHEDULE

RECOMMENDATION:

- Review and approve the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Unmet Transit Needs definitions and schedule

BACKGROUND:

The State Transportation Development Act (TDA) requires that a public hearing be held to discuss public transit, take testimony on local/regional transit needs, and develop findings that ensure that all reasonable transit needs are satisfied before TDA funds can be allocated for street and road purposes. These UTN and Reasonable to Meet definitions were adopted by the Commission in 2009 and reviewed in 2023.

DISCUSSION:

The last update of Unmet Transit Needs definitions took place in 2023. During that process, VCTC hired a consultant to review its existing UTN definitions and confirmed that VCTC's thresholds are consistent with other agencies. In order to incorporate an equity component as part of the UTN evaluation process, VCTC adopted a Median Household Income (MHI) threshold to evaluate service requests in low-income areas. Using this method is commonly used by State funding agencies to identify disadvantaged communities,. While the existing 10 and 15 comment thresholds remain unchanged, evaluating services requests from an equity-focused lens helps to prioritize improvements in disadvantaged communities. For service requests deemed "Unreasonable to Meet" due to service constraints, the responsible agency will now provide a letter of commitment to study the request and/or seek grant funding for a potential demonstration service.

December 15, 2024, marks the beginning of the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Unmet Transit Needs multilingual (English, Spanish and Mandarin,) public outreach process with the online survey and the website landing page going live. Digital and print outreach will be posted on social media platforms and onboard vehicles, with community outreach events planned to engage the public directly. The required public hearing is scheduled for the February 2025 regular meeting of the Ventura County Transportation Commission.

By soliciting input through various formats, residents have several opportunities to be heard. Public comments received throughout the year and testimony received at the public hearing are reviewed against adopted Unmet Transit Needs and Reasonable to Meet definitions. The public hearing is required by the State as part of the TDA process in order to approve the UTN process (Attachment B).

With the Committee's approval of the definitions and schedule, this item will subsequently be taken to the Commission at the December meeting for final approval. The findings from the analysis will be brought back to CTAC/SSTAC for discussion and approval in April 2025 so appropriate action can be taken prior to staff's recommendation to the Commission in May 2025. In addition to the staff recommendation, CTAC/SSTAC also has the option of submitting a formal recommendation on or before the May 2025 Commission meeting.

Additionally, staff requests the committee provide any suggestions of agencies and/or locations they feel could help get the word out about the UTN process and increase feedback.

Attachment A: Unmet Transit Needs Definition (Fiscal Year 2025-26)

Attachment B: Unmet Transit Needs Schedule (Fiscal Year 2025-26)

UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS PROCESS

Definitions

Unmet Transit Need

Public transportation services identified by the public with sufficient broad-based community support that have not been funded or implemented. Unmet transit needs identified in a government-approved plan must meet the definition of an unmet transit need. Sufficient broad-based community support means that persons who will likely use the service on a routine basis demonstrate support: at least 15 requests for general public service and 10 requests for disabled service.

Common examples include:

- Public transit services not currently provided to reach employment, medical assistance, shop for food or clothing, to obtain social services such as health care, county welfare programs and education programs. Service must be needed by and benefit the general public.
- Service expansions including new routes, significant modifications to existing routes, and major increases in service hours and frequency

Excludes:

- Operational changes such as minor route changes, bus stop changes, or changes in schedule
- Requests for minor extended hours
- Service for groups or individuals that is not needed by or will not benefit the general public
- Comments about vehicles, facilities, driver performance and transit organizational structure
- Requests for better coordination
- Requests for reduced fares and changes to fare restrictions
- Improvements funded or scheduled for implementation in the following year
- Future transportation needs
- Duplication or replacement of existing service

“REASONABLE TO MEET”

Outcome	Definitions	Measures & Criteria
<i>Equity</i>	The proposed service will not cause reductions in existing transit services that have an equal or higher priority	Measures: Vehicle revenue service hours and revenue service miles. Criteria: Transit vehicle service hours and miles will not be reduced on existing routes to fund the proposed service
<i>Timing</i>	The proposed service is in response to an existing rather than future transit need	Criteria: Proposed service is in response to an existing rather than future transit need; based on public input
<i>Feasibility</i>	The proposed service can be provided with the existing fleet or under contract to a private provider	Measure: Vehicle spare ratio: Transit system must be able to maintain FTA's spare ratio requirement of 20% (buses in peak service divided by the total bus fleet cannot fall below 20%). If less than 20%, can additional buses be obtained (purchased or leased) or can service be provided under contract to a private provider?
<i>Feasibility</i>	There are adequate roadways to safely accommodate transit vehicles	Measure & Criteria: Route inspection to determine adequacy of infrastructure to accommodate transit vehicles and passengers.
<i>Cost Effectiveness</i>	The proposed service will not unduly affect the operator's ability to maintain the required passenger fare ratio for its system as a whole	Measure: Total estimate annual passenger fare revenue divided by total annual operating cost (the entire service including the proposed service) Criteria: Fare revenue/ operating cost cannot fall below the operator's required passenger fare ratio.
<i>Cost Effectiveness</i>	The proposed service will meet the scheduled passenger fare ratio standards described in Attachment A	Measures and criteria described below.
<i>Service Effectiveness</i>	Estimated passengers per hour for the proposed service will not be less than the system-wide average after five years.	Measure: Passengers per hour. Criteria: Projected passengers per hour for the proposed service is not less than 70% of the system-wide average (without the proposed service) at the end of 12 month of service, 85% at the end of 24 months of service, and 100% at the end of 60 months of service.

**The fact that an identified transit need cannot be fully met based on available resources shall not be the sole reason for finding that a transit need is not reasonable to meet. Comparing unmet transit needs with the needs for streets and roads is not allowable in determining transit needs that are reasonable to meet.*

PASSENGER FARE RATIOS

It is desirable for all proposed transit services in urban areas to achieve a 20% passenger fare ratio by the end of the fifth year of operation. A passenger fare ratio of 10% is desired for special services (i.e., elderly and disabled) and rural area services*. More detailed passenger fare ration standards, which will be used to evaluate services as they are proposed and implemented, are described below. Transit service both in urban and rural areas, per state law, may obtain an “intermediate” passenger fare ratio.

Urban Service	Rural Service	Recommended Action
New Service Performance Criteria: End of Twelve Months		
Less than 6%	Less than 3%	Provider may discontinue service
6% or more	3% or more	Provider will continue service, with modifications if needed
New Service Performance Criteria: End of Twenty-four Months		
Less than 10%	Less than 5%	Provider may discontinue service
10% or more	5% or more	Provider will continue service, with modifications if needed
New Service Performance Criteria: End of Sixty Months **		
Less than 15%	Less than 7%	Provider may discontinue service
15% to 19%	7% to 9%	Provider may consider modifying and continue service
20% or more	10% or more	Provider will continue service, with modifications if needed

**Per statute the VCTC may establish a lower fare for community transit (dial-a-ride) services.*

***A review will take place after 54 months to develop a preliminary determination regarding the discontinuation of proposed services*

Unmet Transit Needs
Public Hearing and Process Schedule
Fiscal Year 2025-26

- September 10, 2024 CTAC/SSTAC MEETING
Review and approve Unmet Transit Needs definitions and schedule
- December 6, 2024 VCTC MEETING
Approve Unmet Transit Needs definitions and schedule
- December 15, 2024 OUTREACH
Unmet Transit Needs information and survey posted to digital and print channels
- LEGAL NOTICES FOR PUBLIC HEARING PUBLISHED
- January 2, 2025 Local, Spanish-language newspaper of record (VIDA Newspaper)
January 2, 2025 Local, English-language Newspaper of record (Ventura County Star)
- February 7, 2025 PUBLIC HEARING
VCTC meeting at 9:00 a.m.
- April 8, 2025 CITIZENS TAC / SOCIAL SERVICES TAC MEETING
Approve Unmet Transit Needs findings and staff recommendation
- April 9, 2025 TRANSIT OPERATORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TRANSCOM) MEETING
Approve Unmet Transit Needs findings and staff recommendation
- May 9, 2025 VCTC MEETING
Staff presents Unmet Transit Needs findings
Adopt Unmet Transit Needs Assessment
- June 6, 2025 VCTC MEETING
Adopt Fiscal Year 2025-26 Transportation Development Act apportionments
- June 10, 2025 SUBMITTAL
Approved Unmet Transit Needs Findings are sent to the State of review
- August 15, 2025 DEADLINE
Deadline to submit findings to the State of California for review