



Tuolumne County Transportation Council

Unmet Transit Needs Findings Report for Fiscal Year 2008/09

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Approved by the Tuolumne County Transportation Council

February 27, 2008

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Introduction

The California Transportation Development Act (TDA), which provides two major sources of funding for public transportation, the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and State Transit Assistance Fund (STAF), requires an annual assessment of regional transit needs prior to making any allocation of TDA funds for streets and roads projects. The assessment requires the Tuolumne County Transportation Council, as the regional transportation planning agency, to:

- Consult with the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC).
- Identify the transit needs of the jurisdiction which have been considered as part of the transportation planning process.
- Identify the unmet transit needs of the jurisdiction and those needs that are reasonable to meet.
- Conduct at least one public hearing for the purpose of soliciting comments on the unmet transit needs that may exist within the jurisdiction and that might be reasonable to meet by establishing or contracting for new public transportation or specialized transportation services or by expanding existing services.
- Adopt by resolution a finding for the jurisdiction, after consideration of all available information that:
 - there are no unmet transit needs;
 - there are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet; or
 - there are unmet transit needs, including needs that are reasonable to meet.

If the TCTC adopts a finding that there are unmet transit needs, including needs that are reasonable to meet, then the unmet transit needs shall be funded before any allocation is made for streets and roads purposes.

The purpose of this report is to document the fulfillment of the above requirements. The Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for the Tuolumne County region is the Tuolumne County Transportation Council (TCTC). The current membership rosters for the Tuolumne County Transportation Council and their Social Services Transportation Advisory Council are included on the following page.

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Tuolumne County Transportation Council

Member	Position	Representing	Alternate
Cooper Kessel	At-Large, Chairman	Community at Large	
Richard Pland	County Supervisor, Vice Chair	District 5	Paolo Maffei
Ronald Stearn	City Council	City of Sonora	
Hank Russell	City Council	City of Sonora	
Mark Thornton	County Supervisor	District 4	Terri Murrison

Social Services Transportation Advisory Council

Member	Representing
Barry Smith, Chair	Social Service provider for persons with disabilities
Renee Diaz	Social Service provider for persons with disabilities that also provides transportation
Audrey Fatooh	Transit users who are 60 years of age or older
Allan Egleston	Transit users who have a disability
Gina Fox	Social Service provider for Seniors
Terri Haworth	Social Service provider for Seniors that also provides transportation
Melissa Parrish	Social Service provider for persons of limited means
Margaret Barbour	Social Service provider for persons of limited means
Monica Manuel	Local Consolidated Transportation Service Agency
Don Franklin	Local Consolidated Transportation Service Agency

System Background

The Tuolumne County Public Transportation System, Tuolumne County Transit, was established under a Federal Section 147 grant in December 1976. Tuolumne County Transit is managed and operated by a private transportation service provider through a contract with the County. The current transit contract is with MV Transportation, Incorporated and will expire on June 30, 2009.

Tuolumne County Transit is funded primarily by the California Transportation Development Act (TDA) (including Local Transportation Funds and State Transit Assistance Funds), Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 funds, charter revenue and farebox collections. TDA funds are provided by the State to the TCTC, who then allocates the funds to the claimants, the County of Tuolumne and the City of Sonora. Both the County and the City contribute funds to provide public transportation services in Tuolumne County.

Tuolumne County Transit Services

Tuolumne County Transit serves the communities of Sonora, Columbia, Jamestown, Tuolumne, Twain Harte, Mi-Wuk Village, Sugar Pine, Sierra Village and Groveland. Services include fixed route, flex route and dial-a-ride (demand response) services. Tuolumne County Transit also provides transportation to the participants of the Adult Day Health Care Program. These services are described in more detail under “Primary Transportation Services” later in this report.

Fare Structure

Tuolumne County Transit has a basic two zone fare structure for Fixed/Flex Route and Dial-A-Ride services. The Jamestown/Sonora/Columbia area is Zone 1, and all areas east of the Junction Shopping Center are in Zone 2. The Junction Shopping Center serves as a neutral location for zone transfers.

1. *Regular Fares:* This fare is system wide, regardless of zone and allows one-way travel within a zone. The fare is \$2.00 for Dial-A-Ride and \$1.00 for Fixed/Flex Route services. Continuing travel can be accomplished through transferring as discussed below (No. 3).
2. *Discounted Fares:* Seniors (55+), disabled persons and youths (2-18) are eligible for a discounted fare of 75¢ within a zone on Fixed/Flex Route transportation only, with continuing travel as discussed in the next section.
3. *Transfers:* Transfers for continuing travel across zones are 25¢ for Fixed/Flex Route and 50¢ for Dial-A-Ride.

Ticket Books as well as All-Day, All-Service and Monthly Passes are available, with discounts offered to seniors, disabled persons and youths.

The Fares for specialized services are as follows:

Groveland General Public Dial-A-Ride (Tuesdays) - \$2.25 each one-way trip

Adult Day Health Care - Paid by Program, no fare charged directly to passengers.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Tuolumne County Transit is in full compliance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Persons with disabilities have an opportunity to receive ADA certification from Tuolumne County Transit and, therefore, receive priority scheduling for the Dial-A-Ride Services over other patrons. Additionally, all Tuolumne County Transit vehicles are wheelchair accessible and ADA compliant.

Service Performance

Tuolumne County’s Transit System is evaluated on a consistent basis by County and MV Transportation staff. Specific performance indicators, as described in Section 99246 of the Transportation Development Act (TDA), are monitored monthly and reported to the TCTC and Board of Supervisors on a regular basis.

Farebox Recovery Ratio

Pursuant to Public Utilities Code 99268 of the Transportation Development Act (TDA), the ratio of fare revenues to operating cost shall be at least ten percent (10%). The following table shows a comparison of the farebox recovery ratios for the Tuolumne County Transit services.

	December			Year Average		
	2005	2006	2007	FY06	FY07	FY08
Fixed Route	20%	14%	12%	20%	14%	13%
Flex Route	13%	9%	8%	13%	11%	8%
Dial-A-Ride	14%	13%	8%	13%	11%	8%
Saturday Dial-A-Ride	10%	9%	7%	9%	8%	6%
Groveland Dial-A-Ride (<i>Tuesdays</i>)	9%	5%	6%	8%	6%	6%

Passenger Trips per Vehicle Service Hour

The industry standard for **Fixed Route** services is 5.0 trips per hour or greater. The Tuolumne County Transit Contractor is expected to maintain an overall annual average above 6.0 passengers per hour, and anything above 7.0 is considered a preferred level of productivity.

Generally, demand response services (DAR) that exclusively transport elderly and disabled persons average 2.0 – 4.0 passengers per hour. The majority of our demand response services are available to the general public, with priority service provided to the elderly and disabled. The Transit Contractor is expected to maintain an overall annual average above 3.5 passengers per hour, and anything above 4.5 is considered a preferred level of productivity.

The following table shows a comparison of the average passenger trips per hour for the various services.

	December			Year Average		
	2005	2006	2007	FY06	FY07	FY08
Fixed Route	8.2	4.9	6.0	8.2	5.6	6.5
Flex Route	5.5	3.9	4.5	5.6	4.6	4.8
Dial-A-Ride	4.2	3.5	3.0	3.8	3.3	3.1
Saturday Dial-A-Ride	3.1	2.8	2.3	3.0	2.6	2.4
Groveland Dial-A-Ride (<i>Tuesdays</i>)	2.3	1.5	2.2	2.0	1.7	2.4

Marketing

In September 2005, the County hired a transit marketing consulting firm for the purpose of securing a professional marketing consultant to evaluate, assess and optimize the existing Tuolumne County Transit Marketing Program, with the goal of improving its performance to increase ridership and community exposure of Tuolumne County Transit services. Through this Contract, the Consultant developed a new TCT website

(www.tuolumnecountytransit.com) and implemented a bus advertising program with the goal of building a revenue stream to offset marketing costs.

In August 2006, major changes were made to the TCT Fixed Route to expand services to the communities along Phoenix Lake, Campo Seco, Racetrack and Shaws Flat Roads, and add more frequent service in the Sonora/East Sonora core area. Service was also increased to Columbia College to improve interregional travel opportunities through connections with Calaveras Transit, which provides service on to the San Joaquin Valley.

Ridership on Tuolumne County Transit continues to grow each year, with a significant increase in 2005 and 2006, at which time the passenger count per year for all services combined surpassed the 100,000 mark. Another 8,696 passengers were added in 2007, a 8% increase. On average, 49% of TCT transit service is provided to the general public and 51% to disabled persons or seniors 55+ years of age.

Social Service Transportation Coordination

In 1990, the TCTC designated the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors as Tuolumne County's Consolidated Transportation Service Agency.

The Social Service Transportation Improvement Act requires Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPA) to consider consolidating social service transportation wherever feasible. In 1990, the County consolidated five different social service transportation programs operating in Tuolumne County under one provider. The programs included Tuolumne County Transit's Dial-A-Ride Service, Senior Nutrition Program, Senior Escort Program, Groveland Escort Program and Adult Day Health Care Program.

Through consolidation the following benefits were realized:

1. Major service improvements to the user in the form of expedited access to services through one point of contact, more equitable fares and greater access to service because of streamlined scheduling.
2. Cost savings by combining all transit services into one contract.
3. More efficient and cost-effective transportation services by eliminating redundancy of costly administrative functions.
4. More efficient use of vehicles through centralized dispatching.
5. Routine maintenance of ALL vehicles in the fleet at ONE location.
6. Cost effective use of resource dollars through consolidation of existing funding sources for social service transportation services.

The TCTC annually evaluates the feasibility of consolidating additional social service transportation services during the Unmet Transit Needs process. However, no further consolidation of services is feasible at this time.

It should be noted that, the Federal Transportation Act now requires Public Transit-Human Services Coordination Plans to qualify for certain funding programs utilized by the County Public Works Department to fund Tuolumne County Transit Services. Tuolumne County's plan is currently underway, estimated to be complete this Spring. Basically, these Coordinated Plans will identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults and people with low-income, and it will provide strategies for meeting those local needs and prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation.

Existing Social Service Transportation

As of the date of this report, the following social service transportation is known to be available in the Tuolumne County region:

County Transportation Services

- Tuolumne County Transit Fixed Route, Flex Route and Dial-A-Ride Services: Regular transit services provided to seniors, persons with disabilities and the general public within a designated service area including Sonora, Jamestown, Columbia, Tuolumne, Mono Village, Willow Springs, Twain Harte and Sierra Village. These services are generally available Monday through Friday, between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., and provided through a contract between the County and a private transit operator. The Saturday Dial-A-Ride Service is available to the general public and operates between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Tuolumne County Transit Groveland Dial-A-Ride Program: Curb-to-curb service from the Groveland area to Sonora and back on Tuesdays. This service is provided to seniors, persons with disabilities and the general public through a contract between the County and a private transit contractor.
- Tuolumne County Adult Day Health Care Transportation: Door-to-door service to and from the ADHC Program Center in Sonora. This service is provided to ADHC Program participants (disabled adults 18 years of age and older) through a contract between the County and a private transit operator.

Social Service Transportation

- Work Activities for the Tuolumne/Calaveras Handicapped (WATCH) Resources, Incorporated provides transportation for their program participants (approximately 180 developmentally disabled adults) from their homes to the program sites (WATCH and Thumbs Up) and back each day, and to various work and activity sites if needed. The program also transports their clients to evening and weekend social and recreational activities. Personal needs (medical appointments, shopping, personal errands, etc.) are also met through this service for their clients who live independently.
- Tuolumne County Department of Social Services provides inter-county transportation services for their clients for counseling, medical appointments and other personal needs. Transportation is also provided out of the County for visits to children or to major medical appointments.

- Tuolumne County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services provide transportation services in support of its Mental Health, Alcohol, Drug and Perinatal Programs. Transportation services are available 5 days a week for Tuolumne County residents enrolled in these various programs. Clients must have no other transportation options and the service must be requested by their primary clinician. Funding is provided through Federal, State and County matching funds. Clients are routinely transported to Modesto, Riverbank and Merced, and sometimes as far as Fresno, Sacramento, Reno and Bishop.
- The Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency (ATCAA) provides limited transportation to their clients based on need.
- Sierra Foothill Senior Management, Incorporated provides free transportation to seniors, 60 years of age or older, for medical related appointments, grocery shopping and other errands which otherwise may not be available to them.
- A number of care homes provide transportation to their residents for social and recreational activities, medical appointments, personal errands and shopping. Trips are provided both within and out of Tuolumne County. These care homes include, but are not limited to, Hillcrest Manor, Beverly Healthcare, Cresthaven, Skyline Place and Sierra Foothills Residential Care Home.

Currently, the Valley Mountain Regional Center, County Department of Social Services, Kingsview Behavioral Health, ATCAA, Mother Lode Job Training and the Tuolumne General Medical Facility (Long Term Care and ADHC) purchase tickets and/or passes from Tuolumne County Transit for their program participants to utilize the Tuolumne County Transit services.

Representatives from local social service agencies are encouraged to participate on the Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC). Currently, the Tuolumne Adult Day Health Care, Area 12 Agency on Aging, WATCH Resources, Mother Lode Independent Living Center, Tuolumne County Public Health and ATCAA have representatives on the SSTAC. The County's Transit Contractor also provides representation on the SSTAC from the General Manager and a Bus Driver.

Annual Assessment

Along with input from the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council, staff utilizes information reported in the Tuolumne County Transit Development Plan to assist in identifying the transit needs of the jurisdiction.

Typically, transit systems are evaluated and improved through a Transit Development Plan (TDP). Transit Development Plans are generally considered the guiding document for the provision of transit services and possible expansion of service for about a five year period. Tuolumne County's current TDP was developed through a cooperative effort between Tuolumne County and the Sonora Area Foundation, and covers the years 2002/03 through 2008/09. The TCTC plans to update this TDP in Fiscal Year 2008/09 to plan for the next five years.

The current TDP utilizes ridership projection models to analyze future service expansions and estimate ridership demands. From this data, an evaluation of the feasibility of various types of service expansion is ascertained. The TDP has proven to be a valuable tool in guiding TCT services.

Tuolumne County Transit is typical, in that most small rural bus transit networks cater to people without automobiles. Rural transit is generally quite different than large urban transit systems where traffic congestion, high cost and inconvenient parking make transit attractive to many "choice" riders as well.

Equity is an important concern in any public transit operation whose funding base draws on the tax dollar. However, this must be balanced against the poor cost-effectiveness of running under utilized services. The TDP proposed to solve this dilemma by focusing fixed route service in those areas where it has the potential to be most productive. The Sonora, Columbia and Jamestown routes are considered by the TDP to be the "core" services.

As stated earlier in this report, major revisions were made to the Fixed Route Service in August 2006 to expand services to the communities along Phoenix Lake, Campo Seco, Racetrack and Shaws Flat Roads, and to add more frequent service in the Sonora/East Sonora core area. More frequent service was also added to Columbia College to improve interregional travel opportunities through connections with Calaveras Transit, which provides service on to the San Joaquin Valley. This connection provides opportunities to transfer to more widespread mass transportation services such as Greyhound or Amtrak.

As illustrated in the Farebox Recovery Ratios and Passenger Trips Per Service Hour tables provided in the Service Performance section earlier in this report, performance indicators have declined since the implementation of the new Fixed Route Schedules in August of 2006. This decline was initially anticipated since service hours were added and ridership needs time to respond. Generally, new services should be evaluated over a two-year time period to determine the effectiveness and viability of continuing or modifying the additional services.

The significant ridership increases for the Fixed and Flex Routes shown in the following table for the year 2007 indicate a positive response to the schedule changes made last year. It should be noted that, the large increase shown for the Flex Route is partly attributed to the reconfiguration of the routes in the August 2006 revisions. Route 4, the Flex Route, now travels not only between Tuolumne and the Junction, but also to the Twain Harte and Phoenix Lake areas. It is important to highlight for the combined services the significant increase from 2006 of 11,246 (14.6%) passengers.

The slight decrease in Dial-A-Ride may indicate passengers moving from DAR to Fixed Route. This would be a benefit to the system since the cost to transport a DAR passenger is significantly higher (\$23) than on Fixed Route (\$10).

January – December Ridership by Year Increases/Decreases							
General Services:	2005	2006	Difference from 2005	Percent	2007	Difference from 2006	Percent
Fixed Route	58,469	57,523	(946)	-1.6%	64,240	6,717	10.5%
Flex Route	8,090	8,219	129	1.6%	12,748	4,529	35.5%
<i>General Services Totals:</i>	<i>66,559</i>	<i>65,742</i>	<i>(817)</i>	<i>-1.2%</i>	<i>76,988</i>	<i>11,246</i>	<i>14.6%</i>
Specialized Services:							
Dial-A-Ride (DAR)	24,467	25,649	1,182	4.6%	24,861	(788)	-3.2%
Saturday Gen. Public DAR	1,762	2,028	266	13%	2,107	79	3.7%
Groveland/Sonora DAR	681	531	(150)	-28.2%	516	(15)	-2.9%
<i>Specialized Services Totals:</i>	<i>26,910</i>	<i>28,208</i>	<i>1,298</i>	<i>4.6%</i>	<i>27,484</i>	<i>(724)</i>	<i>-2.6%</i>
All Services Combined:	93,469	93,950	481	0.5%	104,472	10,522	10%
Adult Day Health Care	10,042	8,477	(1,565)	-18.5%	6,651	(1,826)	-27.5%
Grant Totals incl. ADHC	103,511	102,427	(1,084)	-1%	111,123	8,696	7.8%

Unmet Transit Needs Definitions

Through Resolution No. 301-04, included in the appendix of this report, the TCTC previously adopted definitions of “Unmet Transit Needs” and criteria for “Unmet Transit Needs that are Reasonable to Meet.” These definitions and criteria are utilized to determine the unmet transit needs findings each year.

The Tuolumne County Transportation Council defines “Unmet Transit Needs” to specifically **exclude**:

1. Minor operational improvements or changes, involving issues such as bus stops, schedules and minor route changes;
2. Improvements funded or scheduled for implementation in the following fiscal year;
3. Trips for any purpose outside of Tuolumne County; and
4. Future Transportation needs.

The accepted criteria for unmet transit needs to be considered “reasonable” are the following:

- A) **Cost Effectiveness** 1) The new, expanded or revised transit service, if implemented or funded, would not cause the responsible operator or service claimant to incur expenses in excess of the maximum allocated of Transportation Development Act funds. 2) The new, expanded or revised transit service, if implemented or funded, would allow the responsible operator or service claimant to meet the required farebox revenue recovery ratios.

- B) **Community Acceptance** Support exists for the public subsidy of the new, expanded or revised transit service, as indicated through the public hearing process or other means of communication.
- C) **Equity** 1) 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. 2) Complementary paratransit services cannot exceed the level of service provided to the general public.
- D) **Operational Feasibility** 1) The new, expanded or revised transit service must be safe to operate and there must be adequate roadways and turnouts for transit vehicles. 2) Potential providers are available to implement the service.
- E) **Financial Feasibility** 1) Supporting data indicates sufficient ridership and revenue potential exists for the new, expanded or revised transit service to meet or exceed the required farebox revenue to operating cost ratios on a stand alone basis.
- F) **ADA Conformity** The new, expanded or revised transit service, in conforming to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), will not impose an undue financial burden on the transit operator or claimant if complementary paratransit services are subsequently required.
- G) **System Impact** The effect of the new, expanded or revised transit service on the overall system's measures of efficiency and effectiveness, such as the cost per passenger trip, cost per vehicle service hour, passenger trips per vehicle service hour, passenger trips per service mile, on-time performance and vehicle service hours per employee shall not have a significant adverse impact.
- H) **Impact Limits** Implementation of the new, expanded or revised transit service will be considered reasonable if the projected average cost per trip, by type of service, can be provided at a cost no higher than 10% above the average cost per passenger trip, by type of service, of the overall transit system.

The Tuolumne County Transportation Council defines "Unmet Transit Needs" to specifically include:

1. Transit or specialized transportation needs identified in Tuolumne County's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit plan which are not yet implemented or funded; and
2. Transit or specialized transportation needs identified and proven by the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council through testimony or reports' which are not yet implemented or funded.

If supporting information and appropriate documentation is not presented or readily available, unmet transit needs are generally not considered reasonable to meet at this time, and are usually deferred for further study.

Consultation

The TCTC established their Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) in 1986. The responsibilities of the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council are as follows:

- To annually participate in the identification of transit needs in Tuolumne County, including unmet transit needs that may exist and may be reasonable to meet by establishing or contracting for new public transportation or specialized transportation services or by expanding existing services;
- to annually review and recommend action by the Tuolumne County Transportation Council, which finds by resolution that, a) there are no unmet transit needs, b) there are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet, or c) there are unmet transit needs including needs that are reasonable to meet; and
- to advise the Tuolumne County Transportation Council on any other major transit issues.

To provide broad representation of social service and transit providers representing the elderly, disabled and persons of limited means, Section 99238, of the TDA, requires the following representation on the SSTAC:

- One representative of potential transit users who are 60 year of age or older.
- One representative of potential transit users who have a disability.
- Two representatives of a local social service provider for seniors, including one representative who provides transportation.
- Two representatives of local social service providers for persons 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.
- Two representatives from the local consolidated transportation service agency, if one exists, including one representative from an operator, if one exists.

The TCTC may appoint additional members in accordance with the following procedure:

Members of the SSTAC shall be appointed by the TCTC, which shall recruit candidates for appointment from a broad representation of social service and transportation providers representing the elderly, persons with disabilities and persons of limited means. In appointing SSTAC members, the TCTC shall strive to attain geographic and minority representation among SSTAC members.

The Social Service Transportation Advisory Council met prior to the October 24, 2007 Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearing to discuss potential unmet transit needs that may exist in Tuolumne County. This year, the SSTAC has determined that no unmet transit needs

currently exist in Tuolumne County. A formal letter from the SSTAC is included in the Appendix of this report.

Public Participation

The public outreach process included extensive advertising of the October 24, 2007 Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearing. Notices were published in the local newspaper, on the MyMotherLode.com webpage, announced on the local radio stations and posted on Tuolumne County Transit buses. In addition, notice of the Public Hearing was posted at various locations in the Tuolumne County Transportation Council's October Agenda. People were encouraged to submit comments in writing if they were not able to attend the Hearing.

To provide additional incentive, the TCTC offered free transportation to the Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearing to any person with no other way to attend. This offer was noted in the public notices. Unfortunately, no requests for transportation were made.

Public Testimony from the Unmet Transit Needs Hearing

All determinations made below are based upon the unmet transit needs definitions and reasonable to meet criteria adopted by the Tuolumne County Transportation Council in Resolution No. 301-04, a copy of which is included in the Appendix of this Report.

1. Public Transportation Service to the Dodge Ridge and Pinecrest recreational areas.

A representative from Dodge Ridge Ski Resort requested public transportation to the Dodge Ridge/Pinecrest recreational area, not only to benefit the general public, but to also transport their employees. She stated that they currently currently operate a 45 seat bus to transport their employees, but that there are at least 100 requiring transportation to and from work. She offered that Dodge Ridge would be willing to contribute a portion of the funding for such a service.

Determination: At this time, there is not sufficient data to determine whether this is an unmet transit need. Past efforts to provide public transit to the Dodge Ridge area were not successful in meeting farebox recovery ratios and were discontinued. This issue will be studied further in the update to the Transit Development Plan, scheduled to be completed in Fiscal Year 2009.

2. Drivers need to be more educated in understanding the requirements of special needs riders,

A Consultant for Tuolumne County Behavioral Health expressed that drivers need to be more educated in understanding the requirements of special needs riders. Her main concern was for persons with mental illnesses.

Determination: The County's Contract with MV Transportation, Incorporated, the current operator and manager of Tuolumne County Transit, includes a clause that requires the delivery of Diversity/Sensitivity Training to both dispatchers and drivers alike. The Contractor reports that this training was last completed on ???, and occurs on a quarterly

basis. *MV Transportation's Proposal to the County, which is part of the Contract, states, "MV pays particular attention to driver sensitivity and customer service training. We utilize proven modules from various segments of the industry to emphasize that we're here to serve our passengers no matter their economic or social status, disability or reasons for riding public transit."*

Service quality is an important aspect of County service delivery and we will continue to monitor Contractor compliance to ensure that it meets Tuolumne County standards. Although this is not determined to be an unmet transit need, it is a service quality issue and is an essential responsibility of the Transit Contractor, and will be monitored accordingly.

3. Increase flexibility of Dial-A-Ride scheduling by not requiring a 24 notice.

The Consultant for Tuolumne County Behavioral Health also expressed that she would like to see increased flexibility in scheduling for the Dial-A-Ride Service by eliminating the 24 hour advance notice.

Determination: The Dial-A-Ride Service currently requires patrons to schedule their trips at least one day in advance, which is a requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for ADA certified riders. As stated in the Tuolumne County Transit Rider's Guide, same day service is accommodated whenever feasible. To preserve the efficiency and effectiveness of this shared ride system, which is a benefit to the ridership as a whole, further trip reservation accommodations are not possible at this time. This is not determined to be an unmet transit need.

4. Provide an on demand dial-a-ride service for special needs persons.

The Consultant for Tuolumne County Behavioral Health also requested that an on demand dial-a-ride service for special needs persons be provided.

The current Dial-A-Ride Service provides priority service to the elderly and disabled population. Further priority is provided to ADA certified persons. Currently, ninety-seven (97%) of the riders on the Dial-A-Ride Service are seniors and disabled persons, seventy-nine (79%) of those are disabled. Within limited service areas the general public is also eligible for Dial-A-Ride but the above priorities are accommodated. This is not determined to be an unmet transit need since the Dial-A-Ride is already providing priority services to special needs persons, and the ridership reflects that the service is almost exclusively used by this segment of the population.

5. More shelters and better signage is needed at bus stops.

The Consultant for Tuolumne County Behavioral Health also stated that more shelters and better signage is needed at the Tuolumne County Transit bus stops.

Determination: A total of \$291,000 in Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and local funding has recently been programmed to the Transit Bus Stop Improvements Project. This project will construct improvements, such as shelters, signs and/or turnouts,

to Tuolumne County Transit Bus Stops. This is not determined to be an unmet transit need. The issue should be addressed with the completion of the above project.

Findings Regarding Public Testimony For Transit Service Improvements

It should be noted first that, the number of comments receiving at this year's Hearing is greatly reduced from the previous year where 26 comments were expressed. Only 3 individuals spoke at this year's Hearing. This, hopefully, indicates that current transit services in Tuolumne County have improved and are doing a better job meeting the transit needs of the community.

Therefore, the TCTC determines that there are no unmet transit needs that currently exist in the Tuolumne County Region.

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Appendix