

***Report & Findings
Fiscal Year 2005-2006***

***UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS
IN CALAVERAS COUNTY***

Prepared by:
Calaveras Council of
Governments
San Andreas, California

June 8, 2005

I. Overview of the Transportation Development Act

The Transportation Development Act (TDA) provides two major sources of funding for public transportation: the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and the State Transit Assistance fund (STA). These funds provide a stable, dedicated revenue source for the development and support of public transportation needs that exist in California. Allocations are made to counties based on population, taxable sales, and transit performance. TDA funds are administered at the local level via statutorily created Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPA). The California Department of Transportation; Division of Mass Transportation provides program oversight and ensures local planning agencies complete performance audits and an annual Unmet Transit Needs Report and Findings, as required for participation in the TDA program.

II. Description of Funding Sources

A. Local Transportation Fund (LTF)

Revenue is derived from $\frac{1}{4}$ cent of the 7.25 cent retail sales tax collected statewide. Each year, the amount of tax collected in each county is returned by the State Board of Equalization via the respective county's designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA). RTPA administrative responsibilities include the following:

1. Apportionment – The determination of each area's anticipated share of LTF,
2. Allocation – The discretionary action which designates funds for a specific purpose to claimants within the area, and
3. Payment – The distribution of LTF funds as authorized by allocation instructions issued by the RTPA.

Although the TDA allows some areas of predetermined flexibility in the types of projects eligible for LTF funds, the foremost objective is the development of public transportation services. In rural areas where transit needs can be met with less than the total available LTF, Article 8 claimants (i.e. a county with population less than 500,000) may request funds for certain non-public transportation related projects, including local streets and roads and facilities provided for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians. The RTPA can not allocate funds for non-public transportation projects, however, until all reasonable to meet transit needs have been funded first.

The Calaveras Council of Governments (CCOG) is the designated RTPA for the area of Calaveras County. Within this area lie two eligible claimants: Calaveras County and the City of Angels (the only incorporated city in Calaveras County). In Calaveras, the County is the operator and Article 8 claimant.

**Summary of LTF Allocation Purposes and Priorities
Relevant to Calaveras County**

PRIORITY	PURPOSE	AMOUNT AVAILABLE
1	TDA Administration	As necessary
2	Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities	Up to 2% of remaining money
Article 8 - Other Allocation (do not have any priority order after unmet transit needs are met)		
3a	Public Transportation Service Contract	Up to area apportionment
3b	Local Streets and Roads	Up to area apportionment
	Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects	Up to area apportionment

B. State Transit Assistance (STA)

Revenue is derived from a portion of the statewide sales tax on gasoline and diesel fuel. Funds are appropriated to the Controller by the Legislature, for allocation by formula to each RTPA. The formula allocates 50% of the funds according to population and the remaining 50% according to operator revenues from the prior fiscal year. STA allocations are deposited in each RTPA's STA fund, and then to eligible claimant(s) by resolution adopted by the RTPA's governing board.

STA funds can only be used for projects directly related to public transportation; they may not be allocated to fund administration or streets and roads projects.

III. Unmet Transit Needs Finding Process

Under the TDA, each RTPA is required to produce and submit an Unmet Transit Needs Finding to the California Department of Transportation; Division of Mass Transportation. The purpose of this document is to ensure that the TDA's primary intent is satisfied prior to any allocation for non-public transportation purposes. An Unmet Transit Needs Finding should include the following elements:

- ✓ Consultation with the Social Services Advisory Council (SSTAC),
- ✓ Assessment of the size and location of identifiable groups likely to be transit dependent or transit disadvantaged,
- ✓ Analysis of existing public transportation services in meeting identified needs,

- ✓ Analysis of alternative public transportation services that would meet identified needs, and
- ✓ Determination of identified needs as reasonable or unreasonable to meet.

This report documents the Calaveras COG's Unmet Transit Needs process for FY 2005/06.

1. Definitions of Unmet Transit Needs and Criteria for Determination of Transit Needs that are Reasonable to Meet

As required by Public Utilities Code Section 99401.5, the Calaveras COG adopted the following definition of “Unmet Transit Needs” on April 14, 1999:

Public transportation services, specialized transportation services, or facilities provided for the exclusive use of pedestrians and bicycles which are not currently available to identifiable groups likely to be transit dependent or transit disadvantaged, including individuals eligible for paratransit and other specialized transportation services (per Section 12143 of Title 42 of the United States Code) and persons of limited means, including recipients under the CalWORKS program.

Unmet transit needs specifically exclude: 1) minor operational improvements or changes, involving issues such as bus stops, schedules and minor route changes, which are being addressed by routine or normal planning processes; 2) improvements funded or scheduled for implementation in the fiscal year following the Unmet Needs Hearing; and, 3) future transportation needs.

The Calaveras COG also adopted the following criteria for “Unmet Needs that are Reasonable to Meet” on April 14, 1999:

- A) Financial Feasibility. 1) The proposed transit service, if implemented or funded, would not cause the responsible operator or service claimant to incur expenses in excess of the maximum allocation of Transportation Development Act funds, State Transit Assistance, FTA Section 5311 funds, and other transit-specific grants as may become available. 2) The proposed transit service, if implemented or funded, would allow the responsible operator or service claimant to meet the required farebox revenue to operating cost ratio of 10%. 3) Proposed transit system expansion must be monitored and evaluated after 6 months of operation (or other approved period of review) by the COG Board.*
- B) Cost Effectiveness. Supporting data demonstrates 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. Furthermore, cost per passenger is reasonable when compared to the level of service provided; benefit accrued to the community and to existing service cost per passenger.*
- C) Community Acceptance. There is sufficient public support for the proposed transit service, as indicated through the annual public hearing process.*
- D) Equity. The proposed transit service will benefit the general public, the elderly and disabled population as a whole. Transit service will not be*

provided favoring one group at the exclusion of any other.

- E) System Impact. It has been demonstrated to the COG Board that the proposed transit service combined with existing service will allow the system to meet or exceed performance standards such as 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.*
- F) Operational Feasibility. There are adequate roadways and turnouts to safely accommodate transit vehicles.*
- G) Availability of Service Provider. A qualified contract operator is available to implement the service.*

2. Description of Current Public Transportation Services in Calaveras County

Calaveras Transit assumed limited transit services provided by the Human Resources Council under the name Calaveras Stagecoach in October of 1999. Soon afterward, deviating fixed route service was made available throughout Calaveras County, including the communities of San Andreas, Angels Camp, Arnold, West Point, Mountain Ranch, Mokelumne Hill, Valley Springs, Murphys, and others in between. All deviating fixed routes operate Monday through Friday. Direct service to neighboring counties is also provided, including Tuolumne County (Columbia College), Amador County (Jackson), and San Joaquin County (Lodi).

A simplified fare structure makes it easy for county residents to use Calaveras Transit's deviating fixed-route service. One-way cash fare is \$1.00 (75¢ for seniors, students, and persons with disabilities). Inter-county service to Lodi requires an additional fare when crossing the Calaveras/San Joaquin county line. All-day passes, books of tickets, and monthly passes may also be purchased. Free transfers are included between any of Calaveras Transit's routes.

Key performance measures, including ridership and system revenue, continue to improve as the system matures.

3. Unmet Transit Needs Public Participation Process

In FY 2002/03, several FTA Section 5313(b) grants were awarded to the CCOG, including a Short Range Transit Plan, Intercity Service Study, and Transit Marketing Plan. Development of the FY 2004/05 Unmet Transit Needs report was coordinated and/or performed in conjunction with activities made possible under said grants, resulting in an unprecedented level of public outreach, data collection, and data analysis.

By design, the Short Range Transit Plan incorporated all prescribed requirements of an Unmet Transit Needs Finding, including:

- ✓ Consultation with the Social Services Advisory Council (SSTAC),
- ✓ Assessment of the size and location of identifiable groups likely to be transit dependent or transit disadvantaged,
- ✓ Analysis of existing public transportation services in meeting identified needs,
- ✓ Analysis of alternative public transportation services that would meet identified needs, and
- ✓ Determination of identified needs as reasonable or unreasonable to meet.

The Short Range Transit Plan carried out all public outreach methods cited by the TDA as well. In addition to an Unmet Transit Needs public hearing, the following outreach methods were employed:

- ✓ Statistically valid random telephone survey (+/-5%) of Calaveras County residents (number of responses balanced by community),
- ✓ System wide on-board survey conducted on all routes and on all service days/times,
- ✓ Electronic survey of government employees (response rate of over 50%)
- ✓ Professionally conducted one-on-one stakeholder interviews,
- ✓ Four community open houses held at locations throughout the county (advertised by radio and display ads in all local newspapers).

On April 13, 2005, a public hearing was held at the regular meeting of the Calaveras Council of Governments to receive public comment on Unmet Transit Needs. No comments were received.

I. 'Unmet Transit Need' Determination

**Summary of Transit Service Requests
and
Determination of 'Unmet Transit Need'**

Service Request	Meets Adopted UTN Definition?	Explanation
None Received	N/A	

4. “Reasonable to Meet” Determination

I. Overview

Transit service requests meeting the requirements of an ‘unmet transit need’ are next qualified as ‘reasonable to meet’ according to the following predetermined criteria: financial feasibility, cost effectiveness, community acceptance, equity, system impact, operations feasibility, and the availability of a service provider. Adopted definitions of both an ‘unmet transit need’ and ‘reasonable to meet’ criteria are documented in Chapter 1 of this report. Unmet Transit Needs that were identified but determined *unreasonable to meet* strictly due to financial obstacles (i.e. insufficient buses and/or operating expenses) were included as future phases of transit development. The implementation of future phasing should be triggered by the availability of adequate resources, public support for the initial modifications and improvements described in ‘Scenario A’ (see Short Range Transit Plan), and all other ‘reasonable to meet’ criteria.

5. Summary of Necessary Service Enhancements and/or Modifications

I. Finding

Pursuant to Section 99401.5 (c) of the Transportation Development Act, the Calaveras Council of Governments hereby declares a finding of no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet.

Attachment A

- **Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearing Notices**

Attachment B

Calaveras COG Board Minutes Defining “Reasonable to Meet”

Attachment C

Memorandum to Calaveras COG Board Report and Findings FY 2003-2004; Unmet Transit Needs in Calaveras County Draft Report

Attachment D

Calaveras COG Unmet Transit Needs Findings: FY 2003-2004 Board Resolution