

August 31, 2021

To: City Managers/County Administrative Officer
North Coast Tribal Transportation Commission
McKinleyville Municipal Advisory Committee
Manila Community Services District

From: Stephen Luther, HCAOG Associate Regional Planner

Re: Unmet Transit Needs Process – Public Hearings

Every year, as established by the California Transportation Development Act (TDA), the Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is required to conduct a citizen participation process to identify any “unmet transit need” (UTN) in the region. This process is required prior to allocations of TDA funding the following fiscal year. All comments deemed to meet the definition of an unmet transit need will then be analyzed to determine if the need is “reasonable to meet.” A summary of the process and the adopted definition and criteria used to determine if a need is reasonable to meet are provided in the attached document.

The HCAOG Board of Directors will hold a public hearing on Thursday, November 18, 2021. Though not required, we encourage your agency to also conduct a public hearing between the timeline of October 4th through the end of November. We also request that you forward us a record of all comments received.

Please provide your meeting date to Linda Reynolds at linda.reynolds@hcaog.net by **Tuesday, September 13, 2021**, to allow us to meet publishing and posting requirement deadlines. HCAOG will publish an ad in either the Times Standard or the North Coast Journal which will include a schedule of all hearing dates and times. Either I or a member of HCAOG’s Social Services Transportation Advisory Council will join your meeting to provide information or answer any questions. Thank you for your assistance.

Enclosure

cc: City Clerks



HUMBOLDT COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
Regional Transportation Planning Agency
Humboldt County Local Transportation Authority
Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies
611 I Street, Suite B
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 444-8208
www.hcaog.net

Citizen Participation Process for Assessing Unmet Transit Needs

Transportation Development Act

The Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is responsible for allocating Transportation Development Act funds for public transportation services within the region. Each year the Unmet Transit Needs process is carried out to identify and evaluate any potential needs that are not being met through existing public transportation services. HCAOG is required to assess unmet transit needs prior to allocating any TDA funds for purposes *not* directly related to public transit.

The effects of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) has been detrimental to all transit agencies statewide. This year HCAOG would like to get feedback from the public on improvements that could be implemented to encourage ridership.

Public Process to Make a Finding

HCAOG's Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) leads the public participation process. Although only one public hearing is required, approximately ten public meetings are held to gather public suggestions. The SSTAC considers all public testimony and input, determines if the suggestions meet the adopted definition of an unmet transit need and applies adopted criteria to determine if the need is "reasonable to meet".

At the end of the process, the SSTAC will forward one of the following findings to the HCAOG board for consideration:

- (a) there are no unmet transit needs; or
- (b) there are no unmet transit needs which are "reasonable to meet"; or
- (c) there are unmet transit needs, including those that are "reasonable to meet"

Transportation Development Act funds must be allocated first to unmet transit needs, which are found to be reasonable to meet within a jurisdiction, before any remaining funds can be allocated for non-transit purposes, such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities or streets and roads.

Opportunities for Public Comment on Unmet Transit Needs

- Comments can be submitted online at: <http://hcaog.net/documents/unmet-transit-needs>
- Utilization of Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) members for information sharing among the community; and
- One of ten public meetings.
- Comment submittals by email or telephone: marcella.clem@hcaog.net/444-8208

UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS DEFINITION & REASONABLE TO MEET CRITERIA

Unmet transit needs are, at a minimum:

- (1) Trips requested from residents who do not have access to public transportation, specialized transportation, or private transport services or resources for the purpose of traveling to medical care, shopping, social/recreational activities, education/training, and employment; or
- (2) Proposed public transportation, specialized transportation, or private transport services identified in the following, but not limited to: a Transportation Development Plan, Regional Transportation Plan, Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan.

HCAOG Plans can be found at: <http://hcaog.net/library>

Additionally, unmet transit needs do not include:

- ❖ Improvements funded or scheduled for implementation in the next fiscal year. Due to Covid-19, there are no new improvements funded or scheduled for the next fiscal year. Two potential new services that will be reevaluated this year are:
 - Express bus service between McKinleyville and Eureka during peak hours
 - Late Night Weekday Service on the Regional Transit System
- ❖ Minor operational improvements or changes such as bus stops, schedules, and minor route changes. Minor operational improvements are changes to service which do not affect the operating cost of the transit service either by requiring additional staff and/or additional vehicle hours of service or miles of service.
- ❖ Trips for primary or secondary school transportation
- ❖ Sidewalk improvements or street and road needs

Reasonable to meet criteria:

- (1) To be considered “reasonable to meet”, a service must be operationally feasible and financially sustainable, as defined below:
 - a) The service must have adequate roadways, and must be safe to operate.
 - b) Enough money should be available from identified sources of funding to pay for the marginal operating costs of the service continuously for three years.
- (2) The service must be projected to meet a minimum “marginal farebox-return-ratio” of 10 percent within 2 years. If multiple competing services are requested, other factors may also be considered such as estimated subsidy per passenger trip and passengers per vehicle hour of service. For new service, ridership and farebox-return-ratio thresholds will be considered.
- (3) Pursuant to the requirements of TDA Statutes (Public Utilities Code Section 99401.5c, a determination of needs that are “reasonable to meet” shall not be made by comparing unmet transit needs with the need for streets and roads, for the allocation of TDA funds.
- (4) Once a service is determined to be "reasonable to meet" and is implemented, it can be expected that the ridership in the first 1-2 years of the new service will be less than the projected optimal ridership. Ridership should be evaluated at 6-month intervals to determine if service is meeting performance standards adopted by the transit provider, and specifically, whether the service meets a minimum 10 percent marginal farebox-return-ratio. If the service is being adequately promoted and fails to be within 60 percent of the identified standards after six months, 90 percent with the first year, or 100 percent within two years, the service may be cancelled and deemed "no longer reasonable to meet." An exception to this rule is when a community or group is willing to participate in sharing the ongoing cost of the new service.